

Book Reviews

MEDICAL ADMINISTRATOR

Wilson Jameson

Architect of National Health. By Neville M. Goodman. Pp. 216. (Allen and Unwin: London, March 1970.) 42s.

To write the biography of a successful administrator is never easy because administration is essentially a means to an end and not an end in itself. Therefore no discovery or successful venture remains to hold the imagination; but, instead, only an account of innumerable meetings, discussions and decisions taken which in the judgment of later experience may be questioned as to their sagacity. Nevertheless, effective administration is essential in all fields of human endeavour and requires not only skill, ability and human understanding, but the rare gift of being able to lead others and win their loyalty and affection. Jameson achieved this by his own dedication to the job in hand, his thoroughness, helpfulness, absence of pomposity and his human approach.

No doubt his administrative effectiveness was partly due to his early life in Aberdeen and the influence on his personality of his mother, a deeply religious woman with strict principles for scrupulous honesty. As a student, Jameson achieved considerable success in sport and also played a leading part in student activities. Among other things, he became president of the students' representative council and president of the union.

After qualification he, like many another Scot, came to London where, after acquiring a good professional training and further higher qualifications, he decided on public health as his career. Service in the RAMC in the First World War followed by a period as a medical officer of health in London boroughs all added to his experience and also led him to become a lecturer on public health at Guy's Hospital and to write the first edition of his *Synopsis of Hygiene* which is still a standard textbook and in its twelfth edition.

In 1929 he became professor of public health at the new London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine, and in 1931 was appointed dean. In this post he had to lead a galaxy of brilliant men and ensure that their efforts were directed for the good of the school both in teaching and research. He succeeded by dint of his own thoroughness in his teaching, and by showing an interest in the work of all his colleagues; as a result, the school rapidly achieved international acclaim. With the coming of the war in 1939 many of the school's activities had to be curtailed, but in November 1940, at very short notice, Jameson became Chief Medical Officer of the Ministry of Health and the Board of Education.

During the war, his contribution to maintaining the public health and medical care services greatly assisted towards winning the war. But it was in the midst of this turmoil that the beginnings of his greatest public service became apparent, namely to help to devise, construct and launch the National Health Service. This part of the book cannot be summarized and must be read in full, as the author has done an excellent job of giving a succinct account of the history of the evolution of the National Health Service and the vital part played by Jameson. After seeing the National Health Service through its first two difficult years he retired from the civil service but gave a further ten years of outstanding work with the King Edward's Hospital Fund. These are only some of

his interests; he was also deeply involved in the early beginnings of the World Health Organization, improvements in medical education, and many aspects of medical research, to mention only a few.

Dr Neville Goodman has not only produced a most interesting and sincere biography of one of the great medical men of the present century, he has also written into his text a succinct account of the contemporary medical history, for, as he states, "Wilson Jameson himself would have insisted on the historical background being sketched before his own figure was brought on the stage". This book should read by all those who are interested and concerned with the administrative changes envisaged in medical care at the present time. It will greatly assist in a better understanding of the reasons for the suggested changes, and certainly allay groundless forebodings on the coming events casting their shadows. Wilson Jameson would never have allowed any such negative attitude to deter him from getting to grips with the difficulties and working to solve them by means of common sense, discussion and diplomacy.

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MILITARY MEDICINE

Surgeons in the Field

By John Laffin. Pp. 306+44 photographs. (Dent: London, February 1970.) 50s.

THE few benefits of warfare include the advances achieved in medicine. It is surprising therefore that no scholarly and comprehensive survey of the terrestrial, maritime and airborne components of this theme has yet been attempted. This book, however, claims to be "... the full story of military medicine ...", told "... for the first time ...".

In it the medical aspects of war are traced from the time of the ancient Egyptians to the Second World War, and a great deal of primary and secondary material, chiefly British in origin, is drawn on. Each major conflict in recent centuries is discussed, although it is curious that the Spanish Civil War is given such scant mention. The author has amassed a wealth of data and the supporting illustrations are well chosen and mostly little known. His references are cited in rudimentary fashion and, although they include many excellent sources, the works are frequently of a popular type and there are some notable omissions. Thus the standard book on the history of military medicine by F. H. Garrison (1922) is not mentioned, nor is the classical account of *Medicine and the Navy* by Keevil, Lloyd and Coulter (1957-63), although naval medicine is dealt with. Even more curious is the total lack of reference to the official histories of the world wars. Admittedly these are technical treatises, but so are some of the books listed, and how, indeed, can a "full story" be told without them?

The author is not medically trained and it is difficult to know how a person without first-hand experience can discuss medical matters effectively. One of the outcomes of this is the selection of the individual casualties described, often needlessly and sometimes because of their dramatic nature rather than for any intrinsic medical importance. Although naval medicine is discussed, aviation medicine is not and the omission of its psychiatric and plastic surgery problems is certainly surprising.

Another shortcoming is the author's knowledge of the history of medicine; obviously, any history of a special part of medicine must be based on a wide and detailed knowledge of the more general developments in medicine and science. This results in unfortunate errors. Thus, Pythagoras cannot be called "the first to bring psychology into medicine" (p. 9), John Hunter can hardly be accredited with having "... done more to advance the art of healing than was probably achieved by any other man ..." (p. 191), Sydenham was not the "father of British medicine" (p. 191), William Beaumont used a gas-