nature, which have influence on living organisms, especially the mammalian body".

There is a growing and not unnatural tendency to greet the creation of any new journal with some resentment at further encroachment on one's time and wallet and, more directly, with a challenge as to its *raison d'être*. *Environmental Physiology* assuages many of these feelings. Problems of environmental pollution and environmental toxicology are considered from the broadest possible standpoint of physiological perturbations and are thus rescued from restricted approaches of classical toxicology. The composition of the editorial and advisory boards has a strong international flavour, with the exception of the absence of any Japanese representation. The journal seems to be free from the heavy industrial domination and implicit constraints that characterize the established American and British toxicological journals.

The scientific quality and interest of the thirteen articles in the first two numbers of this journal are generally of a high order. A broad range of subjects is dealt with, including depression of proximal renal tubular function by methylmercury in the rat, placental transfer and foetotoxicity of polychlorinated biphenyls, the effects of aflatoxin on nucleic acid and protein synthesis in the perfused regenerating rat liver, the influence of weather on respiratory tract fluid, and the effects of altitude on myocardial lipids of animals indigenous to various altitudes, on gluconeogenesis in mice, and on maturation of the central nervous system in the chick embryo.

The two-column-page format makes for easy reading and the overall design is attractive. Articles are concise, averaging about six pages, and reflect careful and uniform editorial handling. The promise of rapid publication of articles by the paper is welcome, but should be evidenced by the customary statements of date of receipt.

This journal has got off to a good start. It is attempting to help fill in the void in the critical field of environmental concerns and for these reasons merits the widest possible interest and support.

SAMUEL S. EPSTEIN

Fungitoxicity

Chemistry of Fungicidal Action. By R. J. Lukens. Pp. xiii+136. (Chapman and Hall: London; Springer: Berlin and New York, 1971.) £5.

AN attempt has been made in this book to cover all aspects of fungicidal activity and "Fungicidal Action" would per-

haps have been a more appropriate title. The treatment is logical enough. After a chapter on measurement of fungitoxicity, consideration is given to the barriers which the fungicidal molecule must overcome in order to reach its site of action. Then there are a number of more chemical chapters dealing with sites of fungicidal action and the various mechanisms which might operate in fungitoxicity at cell level. Specific groups of fungicides are selected for consideration of structure/activity relationships and physical and biochemical factors by which the fungus might influence the fungicide are also considered. A special chapter is devoted to the effects of fungicides on enzymes. Then follows an appendix listing the more important fungicides and their uses.

A criticism of this book is that recent and other important work on fungicides is not referred to either in the text or in the list of references. Furthermore, it is surprising that the subject of systemic fungicides, which is developing rapidly at the present time, is barely mentioned in the text. Nevertheless, the volume provides useful reading for research workers and students taking postgraduate courses in this field.

There are a few errors in chemical formulae and the book is expensive but it is well produced and is useful in that it brings together in one volume many of the factors which can operate in fungicidal action.

R. L. WAIN

Organotins

Organotin Compounds. Edited by Albert K. Sawyer. Vol. 1. Pp. xiv+252. Vol. 2. Pp. xiv+253-623. (Marcel Dekker: New York, 1971.) \$30 each.

THESE are the first two volumes of a three volume compendium on organotin compounds. Approximately twenty authors have contributed chapters on various aspects of the subject.

That organotin chemistry is now an extensive subject is apparent from the appearance of three major works on the topic in recent years. Neumann's monograph appeared in 1967, followed by Poller's work in 1970, with the volumes under review appearing in 1971.

Although the contributors have given excellent accounts of their subjects, and these two volumes have almost three thousand five hundred references to the scientific literature, there is a worrying variation in the recency of the literature coverage. Thus, for example, in chapters 4 and 5, references to post-1968 literature are non-existent, while chapters 6 and 7 have about 10 per cent of their references after 1968. From the

way authors have had to "insert" references, there are indications of a serious production delay in these books.

Quite recent articles on many of the individual chapter topics are available in the review literature of chemistry (often by the same authors). Nevertheless, this collection of reviews does represent the most complete and up-to-date coverage of the field of organotin chemistry that is available, and provided the indices in Volume 3 are adequate it will provide an important work of reference for non-specialists who want rapid access to certain aspects of organotin chemistry. Organometallic chemists would do well to read at least some of the chapters, to gain a realization of the truly remarkable range of reactions that now come within the sphere of organotin chemistry.

While we have come to expect a steadily increasing price range in scientific monographs, it is salutary to note that the average (per page) price of these volumes is double that of the comparable books by Neumann and by Poller! The nuances of the economics of scientific book production never cease to fascinate me. The "thinner" (Volume 2) of these two volumes contains over one hundred more pages than the "fatter" (Volume 1); yet both are priced at a rather steep \$30 each.

EDWARD ABEL

Thin Films in Detail

Thin Films. By K. D. Leaver and B. N. Chapman. Pp. vii+112. (Wykeham: London and Winchester, December 1971.) £1.50.

A LIST of examples of the way in which thin films have contributed to modern technology would be quite long. Processes which only a few years ago were confined to the research back-room have now become commercially commonplace and have completely transformed many industrial processes, notably in the electronics field. The subject of thin films is therefore a natural one for the Wykeham Science series, which aims at introducing areas of current interest to students approaching science courses. The authors of this book are well known for their many contributions to the field and have covered a large number of topics of importance and interest in the field. The material is clearly presented, if in a rather unlively style. In places, the amount of detail given seems excessive for the type of reader for whom the book is intended, and a concluding chapter putting the subject in perspective would have been welcome. Nevertheless the book does provide a useful range of information not otherwise accessible in this form.

O. S. HEAVENS