BOOK REVIEWS

All reviews are prepared on invitation. Unsolicited reviews cannot be accepted.


This is a highly readable and informative book for the lay reader, telling how Norway and Great Britain have dealt with their problems of assuring the availability of medical care, and—for the United States of America—why we have not and what we should be doing about it. All three sections of the book are, on the whole, well-done; and the volume can be highly recommended.

Dr. Evang gives an excellent account of Norway's initially limited contributory health insurance program of 1911, and the evolution to a nation-wide program since 1956—with the support of the medical profession throughout its history. Though a nontechnical account, it is comprehensive on the insurance program and its coordination with public health services, and on its strengths and weaknesses. He is candid both in recounting the compromises which made the scheme generally acceptable in Norway, and in indicating needs for improvement in the patchwork system. He gives us a needed lesson on democracy in action in the field of health care; and, in passing, also gives us useful criteria for evaluation of proposals in the USA.

Dr. Murray, similarly, provides a readable and balanced account of the British National Health Service—its background, development, goals, operation, doctor-patient relations, and professional support; and he identifies major unresolved problems. And he does not forego the opportunity to reply to some of the nonsense about the British program which is circulated in the USA.

Since we have no parallel national insurance or service program in the United States, Dr. Lear devotes his part of the book to an account of what we do have, how it came about, its good and bad features, and what we ought to do toward improving the availability—especially the financing—of medical care. He concentrates his attention not on the need for a (new) national health insurance program but on improvements in the present voluntary insurance plans, and on enactment of a compulsory social security provision for the aged. His focus is on the "widening gap" between what can be and what is done in medical care, and how to keep the gap from widening further or how to narrow it. But he deals almost entirely with insurance, to the neglect of collateral fields (e.g., improvements in professional education, facilities and their planning, broadening community health programs, public education for health, and so on). Nevertheless, his is also a fast-moving, simple, and clear account, except that his review of the voluntary insurance origins may be somewhat confusing to some readers.

This is a good book which should serve useful purposes in the USA.

I. S. FALK


This book was first published by the World Health Organization in 1958. In August, 1962, WHO convened an Expert Committee to review the 1958
standards and this second edition is the outcome of its recommendations. Essential changes have been made in the standards previously published and a new section has been added on standards of quality for water sources to be used for water supplies. As in the first edition, a major part of the present work is devoted to approved methods for the bacteriological examination, chemical analysis, biological examination, and radiological examination of water.

The Expert Committee had emphasized that neither the standards themselves nor the laboratory methods should be considered as static or final and that they should be kept under continual study and review. It is hoped that this publication will stimulate further investigations into the problem of providing safe and potable water to all people.

GEORGE J. KUPCHIK


The several chapters of this book are based on discrete studies which were first published in “Progress in Health Services” (the monthly statistical bulletin distributed by the Health Information Foundation) and which have been extended and updated to 1960 for aggregation in this volume. No original data were gathered specifically for these studies, but diverse existing sources have been utilized for systematic illustrations of trends. The result is a series of focused pictures and analyses which give meaning to vast amounts of data and which point the way to further studies.

The scope of the chapters is broad, embracing trends in mortality, manpower and hospitals for health services, morbidity and impairments, and expenditures and insurance for medical care. A final section deals with some social consequences of declining mortality, measured through effects on longevity in general, on working lifetime, and on changes in family structure and composition.

The authors have brought together not so much a mass of data as a series of illuminating compilations and analyses on many sectors.

This should be a valuable source book and guide for all who work in the health field and are interested in quantitative data on trends in the USA over the first 60 years of this century.

I. S. FALK


This scholarly book is the report of a conference on the nurse in mental health practice held in Copenhagen in 1961. The 12 participants came from different European countries and represented psychiatric nursing, public health nursing, psychiatry, psychology, social anthropology, and statistics. The topics for discussion came from the participants who had each been asked to contribute a working paper for circulation prior to the conference. These same topics could be relevant to a conference in the United States. They included: social-cultural attitudes affecting the role of the nurse in mental health practice; modern psychiatric practices which affect the role of the nurse; the role of the nurse in mental health practice; implications of the role of the nurse for nursing education; and, implications of the role of the nurse for research. The content is focused on the nurse in the