lower limbs, and Evert Knutsson's on the different types of spastic restraint. The basic science contributions are more impressive, and include several excellent chapters on regeneration in the nervous system as well as an interesting account of the prevention of muscle atrophy after denervation by direct electrical stimulation in the rat.

This is a very expensive book which few individuals will wish to buy, but it is a useful source of ideas and references which would be valuable in any teaching hospital, medical school or basic science library.

DL MCLELLAN

Neurological Disturbances in Diabetes Mellitus. Revised 2nd Edition. By VM Prikhozhan. (Pp 528; £14.95.) Eastbourne: Bailliere Tindall/WB Saunders, 1985.

This book is mainly of interest in giving an insight into the clinical practice of medicine in Russia, since unfortunately our Russian colleagues are all too infrequently represented at international gatherings, and there is often difficulty in communication when they are there. It contains an obsessional documentation of all the neurological complications that can occur in diabetes. There is also an obsession with classification and wrangles over nomenclature. It is surprising to read that 30 to 39% of children born to diabetic mothers are mentally retarded and one wonders at the methods of diagnosis and definitions resulting in this statement. As a reminder that neurology is still a branch of neuropsychiatry in Russia, the importance of psychological factors in the precipitation of diabetes and the importance of psychotherapy in its management are discussed.

Although various theories of the aetiology of diabetic neuropathy that are under discussion in the western world, the sorbitol-myoinositol- Na^+K^+ ATPase story, the importance of intraneural microangiopathy and possible hypoxia of nerves are mentioned, they are given less prominence than by experts elsewhere and the experimental evidence which we consider relevant to this discussion is rarely cited.

In the section on therapy a list of spas providing physical treatment for diabetes is given with the particular characteristics of the water and mud available. The vogue of aldose reductase inhibition currently so popular in the west has not yet reached Russia. Vitamin therapy is given some prominence.

The book is very reasonably priced and is

recommended to anyone proposing to visit Russia or have contact with Russian colleagues to give a starting point for a dialogue.

PAMELA M LE QUESNE

Optic Neuritis. Edited by RF Hess and GT Plant. (Pp 310; £35.00.) Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986.

Is it possible to enjoy reading a book and yet not recommend it?

This volume is based on a symposium held in November 1984 on the occasion of the centenary of Nettleship's publication on *Retroocular Neuritis*, an abridged version of which forms the appendix. There are 13 chapters, only two of which are clinically orientated (an excellent one by Heron on differential diagnosis, the other being on optic neuritis of childhood). There are two chapters on neurophysiology, two on psychophysics, two on electrophysiology and two on virus induced demyelination in the mouse optic nerve, all of a very high scientific calibre. There are first class chapters on pathogenesis (McDonald) and immunology (Compston) but these would sit as happily in a book entitled *Multiple Sclerosis*.

The final chapter entitled "The Interior Journey and Beyond: An Artist's view of Optic Neuritis" is intriguing. It begins with a quote from Robert Louis Stevenson's *Travels with a Donkey*: "For my part I travel not to go anywhere but to go"—not an inappropriate summary for this book with its idiosyncratic eclecticism of choice of topics that is more likely to appeal to physiologists than clinical neurologists. The bare title of *Optic Neuritis* is misleading and perhaps a qualifying sub-heading should have been added. For these reasons, the answer to the question at the beginning of the review has to be answered in the affirmative.

F CLIFFORD ROSE

Molecular Mechanisms of Ischemic Brain Damage (*Progress in Brain Research Vol 63*) Edited by K Kogure, K-A Hossmann, BK Siesjo, FA Welsh. (Pp 264; \$79.75.) Amsterdam: Elsevier Biomedical Press, 1985.

Hitherto, basic research in cerebrovascular disease has concentrated mainly on cerebral

blood flow and on the metabolism of oxygen and glucose. This led in turn to work on the disturbance of acid-base balance, ATP and cations produced by ischaemia. Despite immense effort and great advance in knowledge a therapeutic break-through has not followed. Workers are therefore turning to the study of cellular mechanisms in ischaemia in their search for the key.

One example will serve to emphasise the importance of this approach. The major role of mitochondria is to synthesise ATP in aerobic cells yet, when presented with free CA^{2+} $10\text{ }\mu\text{g}$ or more, isolated mitochondria cease to synthesise ATP and accumulate the cation. This is observed in isolated mitochondria. What is happening *in vivo*? All neurons do not exhibit the same susceptibility to ischaemia. They differ at the neurochemical, microphysiological and molecular levels.

The present volume presents a valuable survey of the present state of knowledge in the field. The status of the four editors and of many of the contributors has ensured that the volume is succinct, readable and authoritative. It will be of great value not only to those working at the molecular level but to those with a broader interest in cerebral ischaemia who wish to learn in a relatively painless fashion of the present state of the art.

JOHN MARSHALL

Notice

Ninth International Congress of Neurological Surgery. This will be held in New Delhi, India, 8–13th October 1989. Information may be obtained from Dr AK Banerji, Organising Secretary, Post Box No 4543, New Delhi 110016.