

NEW DEVELOPMENTS IN ELECTROMYOGRAPHY AND CLINICAL NEUROPHYSIOLOGY. Vols 1-3 Edited by J. E. Desmedt. (Pp. 2,094; illustrated; £76.20.) Karger: Basel. 1973.

These volumes represent a landmark in the development of electromyography. Starting as an adjunct of physical medicine, the techniques are now clearly established for the investigation of the neurophysiology of normal and diseased human subjects, with parallel studies in animals. The field is now so large that few workers now cover the whole subject. It is, therefore, valuable to have such a useful source of advanced material available in the laboratory. Professor Desmedt has based these volumes on some of the contributions to the Fourth International Congress of Electromyography held in Brussels in 1971 with further invited contributions from distinguished authors to complete a comprehensive survey of electromyography and related subjects. As with all such compilations, the standard is variable, and the critical discussions are omitted. Nonetheless, the volumes are very valuable for active workers. They are less useful for those requiring an entry to the field or a balanced survey giving due credit to work of the past and critical comment on current trends. The evanescence of many parts of the compilation make it unlikely that many will buy them for personal use. Comment about the cost of books is disappearing as money loses its value but the price of these volumes leaves the reviewer speechless.

J. A. SIMPSON

PRESENT LIMITS OF NEUROSURGERY Edited by I. Fusek and Z. Kunc. (Dfl. 120.00 (approx. £17).) Excerpta Medica: Amsterdam. 1972.

Despite the title this book represents the Proceedings of the Fourth European Congress of Neurosurgery, held in Prague in 1971. It contains 180 communications of varying length loosely grouped into sections on oncology, cerebrovascular disorders, stereotactic surgery, and trauma. In spite of the efforts of the editors there remains a fairly large miscellaneous section at the end of the book. The publication of conference proceedings in book form is now an established phenomenon, whatever book reviewers may feel about it. If properly handled, with emphasis on uniformity, brevity, and strict selection of papers and on promptness of publication, these books can serve a most useful purpose in presenting a lot of information on a main theme, well before it appears, scattered in many journals. Unfortunately, this book falls short of the ideal on many counts. The publication appeared 18 months after the conference, when six would have been desirable. The individual papers vary far too much in length, from 12 pages down to a single non-informative paragraph. The latter look

suspiciously like abstracts which have been included because the authors failed to provide a full manuscript. The indexing system is infuriating: it requires reference to three separate pages to locate each paper, and there is no single author or title index. The main criticism, however, is the implication from the title of the book that it is a definitive work describing the scope of modern neurosurgery. In such a context, many of the contributions, however admirable for paying the author's way to the congress, appear rather pedestrian. There is enough useful information in this volume to repay the browser who picks the book from the library shelf, but it can neither be recommended as a definitive book nor even a useful record of conference proceedings.

J. DOUGLAS MILLER

DICTIONARY OF EPILEPSY, Part I By H. Gastaut. (Pp. 75; £2.50.) WHO: Geneva. 1973.

The desirability of an agreed terminology in medicine and science requires no advocacy. In newly emerging subjects there is little problem but in a subject such as epilepsy with a literature extending back to the earliest medical literature before the era of rapid international communication the problems are formidable. Professor Gastaut and a panel of experts from 16 countries have prepared a dictionary of agreed terms with listing of terms considered obsolete or rejected for some reason.

Compilers of dictionaries and terminologies must expect criticism and often violent disagreement and few readers will be completely satisfied with this *Dictionary*. Nevertheless, the general approach is very good and the World Health Organization, its sponsors, invite comments and suggestions for future editions when the *Dictionary* has been tested by field use. Part II, which is in preparation, will be a multi-lingual index to Part I, giving the equivalent terms in the four different languages in which Part I will be published. The dictionary will then be an invaluable aid to international communication. Professor Gastaut and his team are to be congratulated for completing their task so acceptably.

J. A. SIMPSON

SYNOPTIC FUNCTIONAL NEUROANATOMY By Wendell J. S. Krieg. (Pp. 74; illustrated; \$6.00.) Brain Books: Evanston, Ill. 1973.

Professor Krieg is well known for his major textbooks of neuroanatomy. He now offers 'an ultimate synopsis of neuroanatomy'. Transparent colour-coded diagrams are used to build up a system of 'centres' and projections which are described in a short text. The latter is divided into three sections considered appropriate for (1) paramedical and