Book reviews

Intracranial Pressure IV. Edited by K Shulman, A Marmarou, JD Miller, DP Becker, GM Hochwald and M Brock. (Pp 696; DM119; \$70.30.) Heidelberg: Springer-Verlag, 1980.

Continuous monitoring of the intracranial pressure is very much an established technique both in clinical practice and experimental projects, as the large volume of published material relating to it bears witness. Indeed it may be considered a major growth industry if one compares the 346 pages of papers read at the 3rd International Symposium on Intracranial Pressure in 1976 and published as *Intracranial Pressure III* with the 676 pages contained in this volume, being the papers delivered at the 4th International Symposium on Intracranial Pressure held at Williamsburg, Virginia in 1979. The Symposium was divided into 12 sessions, the main topics including head injury, intracranial haemorrhage, brain oedema, hydrocephalus and anaesthesia and intracranial pressure. The papers read in each section represent the present state of our knowledge and include strictly clinical applications of the technique of pressure monitoring in addition to much basic research with both animal and human studies being included. As with any volume containing so many papers by an enormous number of authors, the quality of presentation understandably is extremely varied. It is obviously impossible in a short review such as this to summarise all the papers. To my mind one of the most valuable items is the closing discussion by Dr Thomas Langfitt "Where have we been, where are we now, and where do we go from here?" in which he correlates much of the important work on topics such as the volume/pressure relationships, cerebral oedema, and CSF dynamics, summarises the use of continuous intracranial pressure monitoring clinically in the management of patients with conditions such as hydrocephalus and head injury and mentions some of the work which he feels necessary in the future.

\$70.30 may seem to some a large amount of money to pay for the proceedings of a symposium particularly as most of those clinicians with a genuine interest in pressure monitoring will have their symposium copy, and it is probable that

this extremely useful book will be purchased as a reference volume by librarians rather than by casually interested individuals. Not least among its uses is the enormous list of references contained.

MICHAEL BRIGGS

Brain biopsy: the smear technique for neurosurgical biopsies. By J Hume Adams, David I Graham and David Doyle. (Pp 124; £15.00.) London: Chapman and Hall, 1981.

It is a pleasure to see a good well illustrated book on a useful simple and rapid diagnostic neuropathological technique. Related methods are known to reveal much cell detail in haematology and in tumour pathology in general. Smearing brains provides in addition a "three dimensional" impression which is an important factor in the diagnosis. Although smears are often made from a part of a small needle biopsy specimen, the results often match with what later emerges in conventional paraffin wax sections of the rest of the biopsy. Frozen sections—sometimes demanded by the clinicians—seldom, if ever, help in the study of small biopsy specimens; the authors write on the last page that "it is only when the tissue submitted is unusually tough that we have recourse to frozen sections".

Naturally there are problems, and in spite of the impressive overall accuracy at Glasgow, occasional diagnostic mistakes enrich our experience. The technique, as is shown in the book, need not be limited to intrinsic central nervous tumours and other lesions. It is worthwhile doing on pituitary lesions and on epidural cranial and spinal specimens. It deserves to be employed more widely than is the case at present, although experience in its use, in this country at least, is already quite widespread.

To conclude, it is also very good to see the importance stressed of everybody involved in a "case" knowing all that there is to know. Neuropathologists must, and generally do, closely co-operate with the neurosurgeons, neuroradiologists and others involved.

IVAN JANOTA

The Primary Acoustic Nuclei. By Rafael Lorente de No. (Pp 189; \$43.52.) New York: Raven Press, 1981.

The remarkable monograph by Lorente

de No on the primary acoustic nuclei is the result of his research completed by 1938 and revised in 1979. It was rescued from oblivion by Dr Victor Goodhill, Professor of Surgery at the University of California, Los Angeles with whom Lorente de No collaborated and who has also written the foreword. This book contains reproductions of over 100 original drawings by the author based on Golgi and Golgi-Cox preparations, and 19 photomicrographs of sections stained for myelin in order to demonstrate association tracts. The lucid text and the beautiful illustrations painlessly guide the reader through the complexities of the auditory system. The chapters on the cytoarchitecture and on the organisation of the cortex of the acoustic tubercle will contribute to the understanding of the role of this structure, appropriately named the "cerebellum of the acoustic system". Although it is primarily a morphological work, physiological interpretations of particular structures complement descriptive passages. This monograph, which no doubt will become a classical reference book, is in the best tradition of the Spanish school of neurohistology to which we owe so much of our present knowledge of the nervous system.

P LANC

Sleep, Dreams and Memory. Edited by William Fishbein. (Pp 255; £15.50.) Lancaster: MTP Press Ltd, 1981.

This highly specialised book by 15 American and three French authors examines the function of sleep and dreams. In the past this last vestige of armchair psychology has involved speculation undisciplined by hard experimental fact. The book sets out to correct the balance and includes a wealth of data. The range of subject matter is considerable and includes sleep deprivation experiments, changes in sleep patterns accompanying learning, Kekule's discovery of the nature of the benzene ring through a dream of snakes with their tails in their mouths, and the practical use of dreams by the Senoi people of the Malay peninsula who encourage their children to act out and enlarge positive dreams. Most of the authors examine the idea that sleep, and more specifically paradoxical sleep, is necessary for information processing and subsequent memory storage. Other topics include a discussion of the development of the Freudian theory of sleep and dreams