BOOKS RECEIVED

Recombinant DNA

Edited by K. J. DENNISTON and L. W. ENQUIST. 1981. Dowden, Hutchinson and Ross, Inc., New York. Pp. xiv and 389. US\$45.00.

This is the 15th volume in the Benchmark Papers in Microbiology series and consists of a collection of 38 reprinted papers that describe the development and exploitation of in-vitro recombinant techniques. The book is divided into five parts, each consisting of 4-10 papers covering a particular topic. Each part is introduced by 5-10 pages of masterly editors' comments that are lucid, instructive, jargon-free and give perspective to the papers that follow. For the non-specialist they should be of immense value and for the specialist they make enjoyable and useful reading.

Part I (Foundations) consists of papers that describe the two basic tools for in-vitro recombinant research, namely, the making of recombinants *in vitro*, by use of the cohesive ends generated by restriction endonucleases or by "tailing" the reactant molecules with complementary homopolymers, and the introduction and propagation (i.e., cloning) of such recombinants in cells. Parts II and III describe the types of hosts and vectors that have been used and the basic ancillary technology for obtaining and recognising recombinant clones. Parts IV and V describe how specific DNA sequences can be isolated from complex eukaryote genomes and how their expression has been obtained in *Escherichia coli*.

As the editors admit, the choice of papers is somewhat arbitrary—partly a reflection of their prejudices and partly a reflection of what papers had been given permission to be reprinted. Nevertheless, in general, coverage of the subject is exhaustive, though description and discussion of plasmid vectors is somewhat skimpy while that of lambda vectors is very extensive indeed and presumably reflects the viral background of the editors.

Here, then, is a comprehensive portfolio of many key papers in the field of in-vitro recombinant technology, bound together with 34 pages of instructive editorial comment. Though it should find a useful and used place on library shelves, I do not foresee it being bought by many individuals, partly because of its fairly high price and partly because scientists wishing to use in-vitro recombinant techniques will almost certainly be more attracted by the many currently available monographs and books that provide background and detailed "recipes" in easily digestible form.

D. SHERRATT

The medical mycology handbook

By MARY C. CAMPBELL and JOYCE L. STEWART. 1980. John Wiley and Son, Chichester. Pp. xvi and 436. £13.30.

The contents are subdivided into Part I with the heading "Understanding it" and Part II, "Doing it". After a brief historical introduction, Part I introduces the reader to the general characteristics and taxonomy of fungi, fungal toxins, allergies and infections, and gives brief descriptions of the infectious fungal diseases. Under "Getting ready: equipping a mycology laboratory", the authors state that "A laminar flow safety hood will be needed for work with systemic pathogenic fungi. (Yeast and dermatophyte identification can be done without a safety hood)". In the United Kingdom an exhaust-ventilated safety hood would be needed for work with what are currently classified as category B1 fungal pathogens and when such fungi as *Histoplasma capsulatum* are cultured at blood temperature it is the yeast form that grows.

The "Clinical laboratory methods" of Part II together with "Identification of individual fungal isolates" are commendable as concise, simple-to-follow sources of most of the mycological information needed in the diagnostic laboratory. There is a table on the "Setting up of clinical specimens", and there are flow charts for "Initial steps in identifying cultures".