BOOKS RECEIVED

Airborne transmission and airborne infection: the fourth international symposium on aerobiology held at Enschede, The Netherlands

Ed. by J. F. P. HERS and K. C. WINKLER. 1973. Utrecht; Oosthoek Publishing Co. Pp. xviii and 610. £16.00

What is aerobiology? In his introductory paper Dr W. C. Winkler, chairman of the organising committee of the symposium in 1972, explains that it is the study of "airborne transmission processes for a variety of sources, particles and targets" but that it does not include birds and insects. Aerobiologists seem to be interested mainly in microbes, minerals, and pollens. Whether or not the alliance that brings together such diverse interests is logical, there was much in this symposium to interest medical microbiologists.

After Dr Winkler's entertaining introduction, the papers are arranged in four main sections. In the first, on *detection and survival* of airborne microbes and other particles, five of the 40 papers are on the mysterious "open-air factor" that destroys germs and is not easily identifiable with any known bactericidal agent. For the section on *the landing site*, the scope of aerobiology has been stretched to include local and even systemic resistance to airborne microbes and allergens. The *transmission* studies are presented in papers on the control of long-range transport by meteorological factors, and the shedding and transmission of airborne microbes in hospitals. The fourth section on *protection of human patients by isolation and ventilation* deals with some aspects of the physics of air-filtration and ventilation systems; then with protective- and source-isolation of patients, and the ventilation of surgical operation rooms, for which the possible value of "laminar-flow" systems was one of the main topics.

In the foreword, the organising committee explain that their desire to produce the book in a reasonable time is the reason for the many typographical defects—of which there must be almost a record number. The very first is on the title page where this fourth symposium is shown as the VIth; the next is in the sentence immediately after the apology.

Among the 145 papers there are few that present new facts or concepts, but the whole volume is a useful and well-arranged presentation of current thoughts and trends in aerobiology. The next symposium is to be held "somewhere in Sweden about 1975".

R. BLOWERS

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