BOOKS RECEIVED

A colour atlas of microbiology

by R. J. OLDS. 1986. Wolfe Medical Publications Ltd, London. Pp. 288. £16.00.

The soft-back version of the original Colour Atlas of Microbiology by Dr Olds covers a wide area of practical aspects of medical microbiology, including colour prints of biochemical tests and mycology. The colour reproductions are generally excellent, especially the macroscopic presentations. Microscopic reproductions are not always easy to attain and some of the prints are of poor quality. Nevertheless, this colour atlas is a useful practical reference handbook for students of medical microbiology and laboratory-orientated courses. It would have been even more useful if the text was organised in terms of related infections, with a brief description of each infection and infecting agent.

D. K. BANERJEE

Animal models: assessing the scope of their use in biomedical research

Edited by J. KAWAMATA and E. C. MELBY, JR. 1987. Alan R. Liss, Inc., New York. Pp. 398. £44.00.

The papers in this volume, the Proceedings of the Sixth Charles River International Symposium on Laboratory Animals, held in Kyoto, Japan, October 8–9, 1985,

describe the use of experimental animals for a wide range of biomedical investigations. These include, for example, studies on hypertension for which naturally occurring rat models are used, degenerative neurological disease, muscular diseases in Japan, acquired immune deficiency syndrome and screening systems for anticancer agents. In addition to providing an overview of selected animal models, the papers also go some way to justifying, publicly, the reason why certain animals are used for particular purposes in biomedical research. Whilst this may not have been a primary object of the symposium it is welcome at a time when there is still much public concern about the proper use of experimental animals. This justification is particularly well illustrated in the excellent paper on the genetic significance of some common primate models in biomedical research. The publication presents a brief summary of the evidence on the genetic similarity of human and non-human primates at the chromosomal, protein and DNA levels and the unique role that non-human primates are playing as animal models of some human diseases that have genetic components.

There is no doubt that the organisers of the symposium have achieved their objective of providing an overview of current animal models in various areas of research. Whilst a publication of this kind may be of some interest to microbiologists and others who have reasons to be involved in animal research in general terms, it is unlikely to be of great value to the specialist who, most likely, will be familiar already with publications describing the usefulness of animals for studies in their own fields.

C. R. COID