

## BOOK REVIEWS : BOEKBESPREKINGS

### HEALTH SERVICE

*Health Service, Society, and Medicine.* By Karl Evang, M.D. Pp. viii+167. 21s. 0d. South Africa agents: Oxford University Press, P.O. Box 1141, Cape Town. London: Oxford University Press, 1960.

This small volume, comprising the University of London Heath Clark Lectures for 1958, which were delivered at the London School for Hygiene and Tropical Medicine, covers the main types of existing health services, the rôle of the hospital, the place of the general practitioner, the evolvement of new drugs, and the public-health services as they apply to the more advanced and enlightened countries, but with special

reference to those adhering to the Western democratic system.

The author, who holds the important post of Director General of Health Services for Norway, covers, in the course of these lectures, his subject matter in its widest aspect.

As a medical administrator he can speak with great authority and some feeling on the outlook of the politicians, and their professional financial advisers when requested to provide monies for the various types of health services. An attempt to force the health administrator to justify the expenditure of such money in terms of the health is all too common a demand by such controlling bodies and is something which,

in my opinion, should be resisted with all one's power.

It is completely impossible to do justice to these lectures in a review of this sort, since they should be read in their entirety, not only by the public-health and medical administrator, but also by the medical specialist, as well as the general practitioner, if the messages which they contain are to be appreciated by those most concerned.

The author very succinctly covers the possible integration of the curative and preventative services at hospital level and draws attention to the many symposiums—including the World Health Assembly meeting of 1957—where the pros and cons were fully debated in an attempt to place this important principle in its correct perspective.

The place of the general practitioner in the health organization of most countries is also fully dealt with, together with his attitudes to his patient and the health organization of his country. The fact that the general practitioner tends to work in solitary isolation at a time when the main emphasis is on teamwork and correlation of effect, receives much emphasis by the author. The old adage of the doctor/patient relation-

ship is debunked and it is suggested that a 'superior' type of physician should be trained to deal with the multiplicity and extensive ramifications in which medicine finds itself at the present time.

These views will certainly not meet with the approval or the support of the majority of general practitioners today.

Many of the author's opinions are topical and urgent, and have been given serious thought and consideration following the many years afforded to him in discussing health organization with responsible persons in those many other countries which he has been able to visit. As he says, many of his views are not original, but they do at least reflect the author's present ideas, impressions, and the suggested means of implementation.

I have no hesitation in recommending to all my medical colleagues that this publication should be read, mainly with a view to stimulating critical appraisal of the suggestions offered and thereafter possibly applying those aspects which might suit the peculiar socio-economic pattern of the health services as they apply this country.

E.D.C.