

plexing to metals), that on Synthetic Applications and Reactivity of Alkoxy Radicals by P. Brun and B. Waegell (60 pages, 155 refs.), and that on Homolytic Substitution by Alkyl Radicals by M. Tiecco and L. Testaferrì (51 pages, 112 refs.).

The remaining three chapters are of direct interest to inorganic and/or organometallic chemists, namely those on Chemistry of Selenium and Tellurium Atoms by J. R. Marquart, R. L. Belford, and L. C. Graziano (60 pages, 210 refs.), Radical Reactions of Silanes by J. W. Wilt (85 pages, 311 refs.), and Phosphoranyl Radicals by W. G. Bentrude (100 pages, 186 refs.); all three are well organized reviews by active contributors to the respective fields. The chapter by Wilt is eminently readable, containing as it does numerous comments by the author as well as much factual information.

My one criticism of this volume concerns the time between the completion of the literature surveys and the appearance of the reviews in print, and presumably the editor and/or publishers must take responsibility for this. The chapter by Rappoport has a substantial number of 1980 references, but for the others the literature seems to have been covered only up to the end of 1979 (although there are a few isolated later references, apparently added subsequently). This aspect is all the more disappointing because in other respects the editor and publishers have done well in their choice of authors and in the production of the book, which, with its conventional printing is so much more attractive and easier to read than those (sadly an increasing proportion) which use reproduction of typescript. Furthermore the price is exceptionally low for these days.

Colin Eaborn

Nitrogen Fixation, The Chemical-Biochemical-Genetic Interface, Ed. by A. Muller and W. E. Newton, Plenum Press, New York, 1983, pp. 379, \$55.

This book represents the proceedings of a conference held at Bielefeld, Zentrum für Interdisziplinäre Forschung, in 1981. The preface states that it constitutes the proceedings of the conference. This is not the case. The book is much more valuable than that.

The problem is that many organisers like to have a volume to present to the world to prove that their conference happened. The vital part of the conference, the discussion both public and private, can never be conveyed adequately in a book. In any case, the interest is often limited. Rather than attempt to convey that discussion, this volume presents a series of authoritative reviews in the area of nitrogen fixation, grouped under the headings of Biochemistry and Genetics, and Chemistry. The authors are all noted contributors to their fields, and all have attempted comprehensive reviews of their selected areas. Consequently, we have a book which can be read with profit both by researchers in the field and those who simply wish to be informed.

About half the book is chemical in content and half genetic and biochemical. The subject coverage is reasonably complete, leaning towards model sulphur compounds on the one hand and towards biochemical genetics on the other. Thus it is not a complete guide to nitrogen fixation, but nevertheless of clear interest to the chemist throughout.

If all conferences produced books of this quality, this aspect of the literature would be far more valuable and the book-consuming public a little less cynical. This book is strongly recommended.

G. J. Leigh