

Book reviews

Toxic Metals, Pollution Control and Waste Protection by Marshall Sittig,
Noyes Data Corporation, Park Ridge, NJ, 1976, 350 pages, \$39.

This 350 page compilation brings together data on toxicity, detection, standards, handling procedures, removal techniques, waste disposal and costs of controls for 18 hazardous metals. Perhaps the one significant omission is uranium which presents particular hazards when mined, refined and used and would seem to have a wide enough application outside the nuclear power industry to justify its inclusion. Otherwise the traditional hazardous metals are covered in sections ranging from six to seventy pages.

The material is arranged in the book by element and the accounts presented, whilst readable, are often confusing and sometimes demonstrate the lack of a critical assessment, or at least the use of common units throughout each chapter. For instance on page 75 one reference apparently states that 0.01 to 10 ppm of cadmium is toxic to fish and twenty lines lower we learn that concentrations between 0.008 and 0.01 are lethal to 50% of a test batch of trout. Apart from the apparent inconsistency and the omission of concentration terms (presumably ppm) these apparent inconsistencies receive no comment. Similarly on p. 164 two quite different figures are quoted for tetraethyl lead levels in industrial waste waters without comment.

The general feel of the book is that it was created using scissors and paste on a few highly pertinent reports which brought together information on a particular environmental impact of a number of elements (for instance their toxicology, flow through the economy, or waste disposal). As such it serves a useful purpose in providing reference information in an easily analysed form, but there is no doubt that the reader intending to make use of the data will need to have access to the original reference sources and then to make his own critical appraisal.

F.S. FEATES

Disaster Technology: An Annotated Bibliography by Diana H. Manning,
London Technical Group, Pergamon Press, Oxford, 1976, 282 p.

Over 700 entries classified by numerical indices into seven sections including an Appendix of over 60 items added since the bibliography first appeared in 1973, a Review with references to entries drawn upon, a Postscript to bring the reader up to date with a discussion of some recent developments, a subject and an author index combine to make this more than a bibliography. It is the ready-reckoner of disaster technology.

Opinion about the emotive subject of natural disaster has for long suffered from the series of traditionally narrow, often 'blinkered' views, of members of