

I find the ensemble like the Curate's egg, good in parts. Although there is a considerable assemblage of facts, particularly on leachate, no chemical or physical background is given and no particular system is critically analysed in this volume. The information may be present in companion volumes but if so there should be some reference to this effect. Research and experience outside the U.S.A. are almost totally ignored, except for the single chapter on U.K. practice.

To sum up, the book is not a comprehensive review of fixation techniques, but nonetheless provides a readable text on general background knowledge, especially with regard to leachates. The book is attractively presented, and other than the minor annoyance of seeing the book title on every page, is well worth taking down from the library shelf.

J.D. COOK

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*Hazardous Chemical Spill Cleanup* (Pollution Technology Review No. 59), by J.S. Robinson (Ed.), Noyes Data Corporation, Park Ridge, N.J., 1979, \$48.

When a compendium makes use of three conference proceedings volumes a reviewer has edited, and reprints almost verbatim one of the reviewer's own papers, it is difficult to objectively review the book. However, what follows is an attempt to do so.

The book, like many produced by Noyes, is a collection, collation and a reassemblage of government reports; in this book U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and U.S. Coast Guard reports form the main bulk of the material reprinted. Sprinkled liberally throughout are papers from the National Conferences on Control of Hazardous Material Spills held on alternate years from 1972 through 1978. Most of the information contained in the book could be obtained from the conference proceedings as most of the EPA and much of the Coast Guard research has been reported at the conferences and printed in the proceedings. Very little of the information in the book was new to the reviewer who has read most of the EPA reports with the exception of some Coast Guard reports on the fate of spilled chemicals.

For those who do not have the time or ability to acquire the original government reports, nor have access to the conference proceedings (at least the first two, 1972 and 1974, are out of print), I suppose this will be a useful book. However, biased as I am, I feel that the original proceedings are a better source of information. Not only are the full papers there (rather than summaries) but there is much other material not cited — including many descriptions of actual spill incidents, the accounts of which include not only the details surrounding the spill but cleanup and disposal procedure.

Due to my background, I prefer to work with the original material, but as I said, if these are not available, the book serves the purpose by summarizing and reprinting.

The chapters in the book are: 1. Introduction, 2. Procedures Leading to Cleanup, 3. Mechanical Cleanup Methods, 4. Chemical (Cleanup) Methods, 5. Sorbents, Gels and Foams, 6. Mobile Units.

There is a good introduction, listing the 44 summaries of the articles from the cited sources: 4 U.S. Coast Guard Reports, 11 U.S. EPA reports and the 4 National Conferences. The book runs to 406 pages; there is no index.

GARY F. BENNETT

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*Dioxin — Toxicological and Chemical Aspects*, Edited by Flaminio Cattabeni, Aldo Cavallaro and Giovanni Galli, SP Medical and Scientific Books, a Division of Spectrum Publications, New York, 1978, 222 pp, \$ 20.

“*Dioxin*” — the word has almost entered the language as the epitome of pollution of the environment by man-made chemicals. Any future historian of environmental pollution will soon learn that two of the “classical” cases in the late middle twentieth century involved this then little-known chemical, better known in the scientific field as TCDD. The first incident brought to public notice was the spraying of wide areas of Vietnam with a defoliant contaminated with this by-product of the synthesis of the trichlorophenol herbicide precursor and the other, the eruption of a reaction vessel at the ICMESA factory in Seveso, Italy, distributing a quantity of this uniquely toxic material over the local populace.

As our historian searches the published sources he will doubtless find this book with its black heading and stark cover picture of Seveso cut off from the world by barbed wire and may be led to think that he had discovered an authoritative description of the incident, especially as the three editors were senior scientists at local laboratories who were called in to advise as soon as the incident was admitted. But no, this beautifully printed and bound, expensive, slim volume is but a record of a “workshop”, held some three months after the disaster occurred, at which leading world experts on the chemistry and analysis of TCDD, its toxicity and its possible destruction by environmental processes lent their combined wisdom to the Italian officials and organisations landed with the unenviable task of clearing up the mess. The individual contributions reported, with the exception of chapter one — an apologia for the delays in informing the public in the affected areas what had happened — are commendably lucid, erudite and concise but, because of the nature of the meeting, are “unfinished” in the usual scientific paper sense, being reports on the “state of the arts” of detection, identification and estimation and reviews and surveys of the toxicology of TCDD. I suspect most of the information contained in these contributions has or will be published in greater detail in acknowledged scientific publications and this publication is too ephemeral for the physical form given it.