

## Book Review

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*Spectroscopic properties of inorganic and organometallic compounds, Vol. 6* (a Chemical Society Specialist Periodical Report); N.N. Greenwood, Senior reporter, The Chemical Society, London, 1973, xv + 663 pp., £ 11.00.

Information retrieval is central to the science of chemistry above other cognate disciplines. Searching the chemical literature is learned early by the chemist, and the literature of chemistry is a central focus throughout the professional career. All chemists are archivists some of the time; some chemists are archivists all of the time; and all chemists should be concerned with access to the archives of chemistry all of the time. Lately an extensive and ambitious project has been underway in England which has the potential of changing the way chemists search the retrospective literature of their subject.

The idea had its genesis in the first volume of *Annual Reports on the Progress of Chemistry* published in 1904. The Introduction contained the following definition of the original purpose:

The object of these 'Reports' is to present an epitome of the principal definite steps in advance which have been accomplished in the preceding year. . . in order that specialists in any one department of the science may obtain without difficulty information as to the nature and extent of progress in other branches of the subject to which they have not paid special attention.

The editors, recognizing their inability to maintain comprehensiveness, split *Annual Reviews* into two separate sections with the 64th volume in 1967 (A: General, Physical and Inorganic, and B: Organic) which continue to be published, and to introduce a Series of Specialist Periodical Reports of which the title under review was, with the one Carbohydrate Chemistry, the first. The list is now nearing forty titles, ranging from Statistical Mechanics to Environmental Chemistry. Of particular interest to readers of this journal is Organometallic Chemistry (E.W. Abel and F.G.A. Stone, Senior Reporters) with volume two covering the literature published during 1972 now available. The development of new physical techniques not covered in the original volumes of Spectroscopic Properties of Inorganic and Organometallic Compounds gave rise to an additional subdivision, with Professor Greenwood concentrating on techniques which have as their reference the ground electronic states of molecules, while a new series covering excited state properties would be published as Electronic Structure and Magnetism of Inorganic Compounds, beginning with the literature for 1970. This latter volume includes photoelectron, ESCA and electronic spectroscopies, optical activity, magnetic susceptibility and theory, while Greenwood's volume concerns itself with NMR, NQR, vibrational, rotational and Mössbauer spectroscopies.

The series is now well established. In the present volume covering the literature published during 1972 over 5000 references are cited, over 2000 in NMR alone. Comments give evidence that the papers have been read critically

even appreciatively in some cases. The balkanization of the literature coverage has meant that many more chemists can contribute to the “. . . principal definite steps in advance. . .” as defined in 1904. Whether the Senior Reporter and his team have been overly anglocentric in their choices, either geographically or linguistically, can be tested against the leaders in number of papers cited: E.O. Fischer and F.G.A. Stone (23 each), R.B. King (21), M.F. Lappert (17), R. Okawara (16) and M. Green, J. Lewis and H. Schmidbaur (15 each).

Senior Reporter Greenwood and his editorial team are performing a badly needed service for the profession. The Chemical Society is to be congratulated for having undertaken this bold venture.

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