

GAS CHROMATOGRAPHY 1960, Edited by R. P. W. Scott (Butterworth Inc., Washington, D. C. 466 pp., 1960, \$17.50)

When the Third International Symposium on Gas Chromatography was held in Edinburgh in June 1960, over five hundred delegates from all over the world attended to hear 29 papers on the apparatus, technique, theory, and applications of gas chromatography. It is these 29 papers, replete with the record of the vigorous discussion that followed, which constitute the present book. A complete index is also included. Although none of these papers bears directly on fats and oils analysis, no serious student of the gas chromatographic analysis of these compounds can afford to deny himself the company of this book. He will find the many pages devoted to detector behavior invaluable in supplying him with the facts he needs to bolster his personal preference for whichever type of detector caught his fancy, or fitted his research budget.

While the matter of the argon versus the flame ionization detector was thoroughly discussed but not appreciably advanced, for lack of common standards of comparison, other parameters were examined with more agreement. A number of contributions on high speed chromatography, stability of stationary phases, and separating efficiency of packed and capillary columns, make excellent reading. All of this is highly pertinent to fatty acid ester analysis.

Obviously a book of this form has both weak and strong points. Its weakness lies in a lack of structure, inherent in a collection of 29 different papers by 54 different authors. And there may also be a danger of believing that 29 papers beautifully bound between hard covers are of greater intrinsic value and reliability than 29 similar papers scattered throughout the journals.

The real strength of this book is in the honest, in fact, sometimes painfully honest, reporting of the generally lively discussion that followed the presentation. There is an immediacy here, a chance to glimpse into the working of other's minds, that can be very stimulating and provocative of one's own creative ideas. Unfortunately, \$17.50 could not buy a ticket to Edinburgh; but if it can now buy some of the creative atmosphere that many of the delegates who went there last year experienced and enjoyed, the purchase of GAS CHROMATOGRAPHY 1960 will have been a sound investment.

DONALD A. M. MACKAY, General Foods Corporation, Tarrytown, N. Y.

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