NEW BOOKS

PROTEINS: THEIR CHEMISTRY AND POLITICS, by A. M. Altschul (Basic Books, Inc., New York, 337 pp., 1965, $7.50).

The title of this interesting book implies a fare somewhat different than is presented for the reader to digest. It is not a chemical or biochemical treatise on proteins, nor is it a discussion of governmental policies relating to protein resources. The chemistry is largely restricted to the first 91 pages, which deal with fundamental knowledge of amino acids, proteins, and proteolysis. Beyond the author's query, "Who can conceive of political stability in the face of hunger?", there is politics only in the restricted sense that ties the word to conduct of or policy in private affairs; this is the substance of the final 140 pages. The book is largely concerned with the nutrition, needs, and world supply of protein for humans.

Other authors have tackled segments of this broad problem, but Dr. Altschul has undertaken to interrelate them in a single treatise.

The book is written for a reader with minimal background in biochemistry or nutrition, and is in a lucid, easy-to-read style. The chemist-reader will find the sections dealing with protein composition and structure the least essential and the least current; few of the selected references are later than 1959. Some of the newer findings are not incorporated—for example, we can provide an answer to his question (p. 58), "If large enough fragments are synthesized and put together, will there be a preferred way of folding so that the cross-links come out at the right places?"

It is unfortunate that the Recommended Daily Dietary Allowances presented are the 1958 version rather than those published by the National Academy of Sciences in 1963.

On the other hand, many chemists will find much to ponder in the sections on proteins in food and the protein food supply. Dr. Altschul presents the problem, the challenge, and some possible solutions in this review of the protein needs of the growing population of the world. He assembles a convincing case for basic research on proteins in food science, in agriculture, in nutrition. The reader may not agree with his thesis that complex technology is more likely to come to grips with the basic problem of protein undernutrition or malnutrition than "simple solutions" applied at the village or home level. But the reader will profit from the picture which emerges from the discussion of alternatives in meeting protein needs of man. And Oil Chemists will find themselves on familar grounds in the extended discussion of the key role the oilseeds can play.

Some typographical errors or misstatements can be found, but in general they are not important. Perhaps the most serious is on p. 121, where the isoleucine requirement for women erroneously appears as 45 rather than 450 mg per day.

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ORGANIC SEMICONDUCTORS, Y. Okamoto and Walter Brenner (Reinhold Publishing Corporation, 184 pages, 1964, $9).

This book is a survey of recent literature on electrical conduction in organic materials. The book begins with a consideration of Electronic Conduction Mechanism in Organic Materials. Following chapters deal in turn with Measurement Techniques, Monomeric Organic Compounds, Charge-Transfer Complexes, Electronic Carbons (contributed by Dr. Alton F. Armington, of the U.S. Air Force Cambridge Laboratories), Polymers, and Biological Systems. The final chapter entitled "Future Trends" suggests possible applications and other benefits to be derived from the current research activity in this field.

The information presented should be of interest to readers of the *Journal of the American Oil Chemists' Society* because of the large number of potentially rewarding areas of research suggested. On the other hand, because of the relative infancy of this field of research, it remains for the reader to conduct a critical analysis of the various areas to determine which particular area is most suitable.

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