Caskey, Th.; White, R. L. (eds): Recombinant DNA Applications to Human Disease. Banbury Report 14. Cold Spring Harbor: Cold Spring Harbor Laboratory 1983. 375 pp., several figs. Hard bound $ 66.00.

The proceedings and discussions (called summaries) of a conference held in October 1982 in Cold Spring Harbor were attended, according to the list of participants, by 41 persons but in the photos (page II) at least three more are depicted. "The timing seems to have been very close to correct. The animated exchanges of participants within a substantive and not unduly speculative framework captures, I believe, both the excitement and promise of this new departure in approaches to many longstanding problems of clinical medicine" (quotation from the preface by Shodell). But to whom is this addressed? To the 41 official or some more inofficial attendants or to the reader of this Banbury Report?

Most of the 31 lectures in 6 sessions give information that has meanwhile been published in journals and is known to really interested workers. Those who are not working in the field will miss details on methods and for those readers "summaries" and comments are no help, especially not when the discussions are confused (p. 151: "What do you mean, "We don't know?" "We don't know any of this. Well how, does it – I mean, you can't prove it doesn't do it") or confusing (p. 139 "how many changes for a recombinant" or four lines further "how many chances of a combination"). The point to be made is, that for such rather expensive publications one can expect a bit more editorial and introductory work and a careful check on the printing of all tape-recorded verbal discussions.

Most articles are indeed exciting and promise fast and important developments in clinical medicine. Those who are willing to overcome the recombinant DNA gibberish, from Southern-blotting and cloned c-DNA to chromosome walking a.s.o. will be highly interested. This report really gives insight in the state of the art of studying the etiology and diagnosis of genetic diseases in man on the molecular level and on the possibilities to work out the human gene map.

S. J. Geerts, Nijmegen

Ingraham, J. L.; Maaløe, O.; Neidhart, F. C.: Growth of the Bacterial Cell. Sunderland (Mass.): Sinauer Associates 1983. xi + 435 pp., several figs and tabs. Hard bound £ 19.50.

Nearly 20 years after the appearance of "Control of Macromolecular Synthesis" by O. Maaløe and N. O. Kjeldgaard, this book now trys again to describe the various aspects of bacterial growth: morphology of organelles, the genetic apparatus, replication machinery and metabolic pathways. If one compares the information presented with that which can be found in current reviews on specialized aspects, one sees that the authors have selected carefully from the torrent of new data. Many of the sections, tables and figures are rich with new ideas, others are more reserved. In my opinion, the description of the bacterial nucleo-protein or the complex SOS response should be updated. In general, the authors were apparently stimulated by the advanced knowledge now available to verify the conclusions and to formulate more precisely questions about bacterial life. Therefore, readers of the book with a basic knowledge in general biochemistry and genetics will enjoy the eight chapters, as well as the exercises given in the appendices.

J. Hofemeister, Gaterseben