

geneous volume. Almost all the subjects are unusual and topical, including such exotica as Karate injuries and the hazards of the 'off-shore scene'. As might be expected from a work edited by Professor Mason, transport accidents are particularly well covered, and every pathologist involved in coroner's practice will find much of interest here. For the specialist forensic pathologist there are also fascinating tit-bits, such as the patterns of robbery with violence in Texas. Altogether a well written, original, and scholarly book which does credit to forensic pathology.

A. C. HUNT

**Stem Cells and Homeostasis.** British Society for Cell Biology Symposium 2 1977. Edited by B. I. Lord, C. S. Potten, and R. J. Cole. (Pp. viii + 368; illustrated; £18.50.) London, New York, Melbourne: Cambridge University Press. 1978.

This collection of papers from the symposium organised by the British Society for Cell Biology, held in Manchester in 1977, aims at reviewing the control of cell proliferation and differentiation.

Although such a large subject cannot be fully covered in a book this size, the selection of topics and their manner of presentation provide a surprisingly good view of the many problems involved. This has been achieved largely by concentrating on mammalian cells with excursions into lower organisms where this gives a useful different perspective. The first two papers are the most theoretical, dealing with rather different views of the underlying mechanism of differentiation. The first concentrates on the relationships of differentiation to the cell cycle, while the second emphasises the importance of spatial relationships between cells within a tissue. These consider essentially different aspects of the same problem rather than being antagonistic theories. Subsequent papers cover a range of topics including: development of the eye, cell kinetics of epithelial tissue, and a strong emphasis on haematological problems including the role of inhibitors and stimulators and the effect of viral agents, and a particularly good paper on lymphocytes. A single paper on plant root stem cells and one on insects provide a reminder that other organisms can provide useful information.

Any attempt at a concise review inevitably involves striking some sort of

balance between the extent to which one can cover the subject and the degree to which one demonstrates how and with what certainty particular conclusions are reached. Depending on one's knowledge of the topic, there will be considerable difference of opinion as to whether a particular author has concentrated too much on the wood or the trees.

Overall this book provides a useful coverage of many of the problems involved in understanding the very difficult but important problem of control of cell proliferation and cell differentiation.

N. M. BLACKETT

**Clinical Histocompatibility Testing.** Volume 2. Edited by Charles B. Carpenter. (Pp. ix + 227; \$22.75.) London: Grune and Stratton. 1977.

This is the hardcover edition of the December 1977 issue (Volume IX, No. 4) of the quarterly journal *Transplantation Proceedings*, an official publication of the Transplantation Society. It includes the papers presented at the third annual meeting of the American Association for Clinical Histocompatibility Testing (AA-CHT) held in April 1977 in New Orleans. The volume is not a collection of review articles, although it does include one or two short 'overviews' of the histocompatibility scene. It reflects the current preoccupations of workers in human histocompatibility, ie, better antigen definition, new antigen systems, new allelic products, matching for clinical transplantation, the effect of transfusion on renal graft survival, and the exciting new topic of HLA and disease association.

This is not a book for the newcomer to HLA, it is a book for the initiate. The few short review articles (by Kissmeyer-Nielsen and Kristensen, Zinkernagel and Grumet) serve only to summarise, in a very condensed fashion, the state of the art in spring 1977. The remaining contributions are short, synoptic presentations of individual observations. The topics covered are grouped into general areas of interest and include some papers on techniques for the detection of HLA antigens as well as original findings. Because this volume is really a collection of 'short papers' it lacks balance, and some topics are dealt with in a fragmentary fashion. Yet there is some gold in the sand, for example, a good summary of the role of HLA antigen matching in

renal and corneal graft rejection by Kissmeyer-Nielsen and Kristensen, and an appraisal of the relevance of granulocyte-specific antigens to neonatal and acquired thrombocytopenia. Indeed, the section on granulocyte antibodies is the most original in the book, and even it has been outdated by other recent publications dealing exclusively with this topic.

The section on HLA and disease suffers equally from having been overtaken by events. There is a good, if condensed, general introduction to the biological role of the MHC by Zinkernagel, followed by an introduction to some of the problems which beset studies on HLA antigens in disease by Grumet. The remainder of this section includes some short papers reporting HLA and disease associations, largely reflecting the current (1977) interests of some of the North American HLA workers.

The introductory segment of the book on 'Serologically defined antigens of the major histocompatibility complex' makes interesting historical reading but was clearly written and presented before the 7th International HLA Workshop, held in Oxford in September 1977. At the workshop the B-lymphocyte alloantigens were defined, named, and even counted, which is a long way ahead of the tentative findings presented here to AACHT.

This volume—and perhaps its successors, unless a more rapid method of publication is adopted—suffers from the problems inherent in publishing unrelated articles linked only by a general theme, dealing with a subject undergoing a rapid increase in available data. Clinical histocompatibility testing and its development do not lend themselves to this form of tardy presentation, which inevitably lags too far behind the real state of the art.

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