

Book reviews

The Elderly Person with Failing Vision. A report to the Department of Health and Social Security, May 1979. Pp. 34. £2.00. The Disabled Living Foundation: London, 1979.

This booklet summarises the outcome of a series of seminars held under the aegis of the Disabled Living Foundation on the subject of 'The Elderly Person with Failing Vision', which had been held in various areas of the country between 1976 and 1978. A considerable amount of interesting information in respect of the problems of the aged is contained in the report, and a number of general recommendations are made, the implementation of which on a widespread basis would be likely to result in a considerable alleviation of the visual problems of the elderly. The factors which stand out as being of particular importance include the better understanding and education of the primary health care personnel concerned with the elderly; the very important part which adequate and appropriate lighting plays in achieving the best performance on the part of individuals; and, perhaps above all, the immense importance of the interrelationship between only slightly defective vision and the many other handicaps which may afflict the elderly.

A recurrent theme of the report suggests that, rather than there being necessarily a need for more resources and more knowledge, a better and a more selective application and distribution of existing facilities and information might yield the greatest benefit.

The report serves to emphasise that the visual difficulties of a large and increasing section of the population need to be a prime concern, not to be subordinate to the many other concerns of the aged, of all those working in the ophthalmic and visual fields. M. J. GILKES

Ophthalmic Dispensing. 3rd edn. By RUSSELL L. STIMSON. Pp. 697. \$29.75. Charles C Thomas: Springfield, Illinois, 1979.

This is the third edition of Russell Stimson's well-known book on ophthalmic dispensing. Written primarily for American student opticians, it covers every aspect of optical dispensing from the issue of a prescription for spectacles to the final fitting and adjusting of the appliance.

The first 4 chapters provide basic information on ocular anatomy, physiology, and optics. The historical development of various ophthalmic lens types is then traced, and chapters 6, 7, and 9 outline the principles of spectacle frame fitting. The cosmetic aspect of dispensing is covered and advice is given generally throughout the book on how to deal with patients courteously and efficiently. Chapters 10 and 11 on prescription analysis are very helpful, and the remainder of the book consists of individual chapters devoted to specific areas of interest such as the spectacle correction of aphakia, vocational lenses, protective lenses, low vision aids, and orthoptic devices. Additional references are given at the conclusion

of each chapter, and at the end of the book a glossary of terms is provided followed by a good page index.

This third edition is a sizeable volume, and the factual information it contains could probably be condensed into a less formidable book. Nevertheless, the author has presented here a textbook that is interesting and easy to read. The wealth of information this book contains cannot fail to provide anyone who reads it with a fuller understanding of the difficulties that patients can experience with spectacles. It is recommended reading for all dispensing opticians. ANDREW MILLIKEN

Perimetric Standards and Perimetric Glossary of the International Council of Ophthalmology. Ed. J. M. ENOCH *et al.* Pp. 133. Dutch Guilders 55.00. W. Junk: The Hague, Netherlands, 1979.

With the appearance of more and more devices of varying sophistication for measuring the visual field there arises the increasing need to compare their performances, and this requires strict standards for comparison. This booklet is helpful in this respect, being concerned with the definition of terms used in perimetry and with the standardisation of apparatus and procedures. A few years ago an International Perimetric Society (IPS) was formed, and so it is not surprising that the value of a multilingual perimetric glossary was soon recognised and work began on its compilation.

The first 14 pages deal with perimetric standards. This was the work of a committee chaired by Jay Enoch, with members from Germany, France, Switzerland, UK, the Netherlands, and Belgium, who were selected at a meeting of the Research Group on Standards of the IPS. The definitions given are straightforward and precise, and similar care is evident in the treatment of other topics such as target specification, contrast, duration of presentation, and image sharpness. Matters of practical interest such as the rate of target movement in kinetic perimetry and the influence of attention signals receive brief mention.

The remaining 118 pages of the book are occupied by the perimetric glossary, in which 515 terms covering the physiological, pathological, and technical aspects of the subject are given in 10 languages—English, French, German, Spanish, Russian (in Roman characters), Italian, Swedish, Dutch, Polish, and Japanese. The terms are given in 5 groupings: stimulation, perception, technique, normal visual field, and pathology. The translation was undertaken by an international committee of 16 members, the editor being Guy Verriest, and the resulting multilingual glossary has been submitted to the Concilium Ophthalmologicum Universale. There is also an alphabetical index of the English terms.

It is obvious that a lot of thought has gone into the wording of definitions, into compiling a comprehensive list of terms, and into their translation. The main purpose has been to contribute to international understanding in the usage of perimetric terminology and to help to develop research in all aspects of the visual field. This has clearly been achieved, and the booklet is likely to remain as a standard of reference for some time. J. GLOSTER