

BOOK REVIEW

COMMERCE AND THE SPREAD OF PESTS AND DISEASE VECTORS. Edited by Marshall Laird. Praeger Publishers, New York. 1984. xiv + 354 pp. 34.95.

One of the symposia in the Entomology Section of the XV Pacific Science Congress (Dunedin, New Zealand, February, 1983) was organized by Professor Marshall Laird with "Accidental Introductions of Insects Through Human Agency" as the topic. Professor Laird has subsequently edited this book, the chapters of which were enlarged from papers given at the symposium. The book, like the Congress, reflects a predominant Pacific theme.

Case histories are presented in 14 chapters on a range of pests and disease vectors covering many aspects of international trade, transportation and public health throughout the Pacific. Professor Laird himself provides an "overview and perspectives" final chapter, in a characteristically entertaining, instructive and illustrative way. He argues strongly and persuasively that with today's fast jet passenger transport and containerized freight cargoes providing increased pest and disease introduction hazards, there is need for action at the supranational level to promote adequate airport/port vector and pest control along international transport routes.

The coverage of the case histories does not avoid overlap and this no doubt reflects the fact that each chapter originated from a presented paper at the symposium. The topics largely concern transportation of insects of public health importance; only two rather similar chapters examine pests of agriculture in tropical Polynesia and the South Pacific. They deal with the contribution of transport services in distributing plant pests and emphasize the protection that plant quarantine services have provided, and the

need for continued effective quarantine measures their enforcement. Dale and Maddison point out that "one of the greatest threats to quarantine is generosity, donors and recipients feel that nothing evil could accompany a selfless gesture and quarantine considerations are liable to be overlooked." It would have been useful to have had some discussion on the significance of natural dispersal, as a background to the accidental spread via human agencies that is the major topic of the book.

The point is made several times in the book that the isolation of various island nations has previously been a very effective barrier to some unwanted introductions, but with the advent of increased international air travel to and from the region, often involving travel to or via the tropics, the problem of imported disease will be intensified. Movement and importation of vectors is a component of that problem, demanding stringent controls at ports of entry. However, Goldsmid's chapter concludes that the movement of infected persons represents a more serious potential disease importation threat.

Overall, at \$US34.95, the book represents good value since it presents a generally very readable and challenging account of commerce and the spread of pests and disease vectors. It was disturbing to note Marshall Laird's view that the heightened vector, pest and disease hazards that we face in the Pacific and elsewhere are matched by attitudes on the part of officialdom and the public that have eroded worldwide effectiveness of aircraft disinsection and airport and port vector control. He concludes by calling for a real effort NOW to "clean up our disinsection act, as a contribution to WHO's professed goal of health for all by 2000 AD." J. F. Longworth, Entomology Division, Department of Scientific and Industrial Research, Private Bag, Auckland, New Zealand.