BOOK REVIEWS

Children's Reception Centre, Mersham, Kent. Interim Report, 1948. 1950. Caldecott Community, Ashford, Kent. Pp. 35. Illus.

This report describes the first nine months' work in an experimental reception centre for children deprived of normal home life, set up by the Caldecott Community, with the help and co-operation of the Nuffield Medical Foundation and the Kent County authorities.

It was intended to provide a working model for other centres likely to be established as a result of the recommendations of the Curtis Committee and the Children Act, 1948.

The question of staffing such centres has obviously been fully considered; the staff plan of the Mersham centre seems to work excellently, each child's circumstances being reviewed in the light of reports from those members of the staff who have dealt with him while at the centre. Of particular interest are the descriptions of the duties of the psychiatric social worker who has been in contact with the authorities responsible for the child before admission, and of the psychiatrist under whose direction the case conferences are held.

Although the centre had been intended as a place where the needs of an unselected group of children deprived of normal home life could be assessed, the selection was in fact biased in favour of those who presented problems of social behaviour or mental health, since most of the applications for admission came from departments in touch with children who were in difficulties for those reasons.

The difficulty of placing children who leave the centre shows how inadequate are the present arrangements for the care of children away from home.

This report will be useful to all social workers dealing with problems of family health and welfare, as well as to those mainly concerned with the welfare of deprived children.

JANE E. PATERSON

Catalogue of Economic and Social Projects, 1950. United Nations Publication Sales No. 1950. II. D.1. H.M.S.O., London. Pp. 515. 27s. 6d. (\$3.75; Sw. Fr. 15).

This is the second of the series of Catalogues listing, describing, and classifying the range of projects in the economic and social fields carried on by United Nations Organization through its several agencies, which include the U.N. Food and Agriculture Organization, the World Health Organization, the International Labour Organization, and the Unesco. References to reports and publications bearing on the projects described add to the value of this compact work of reference.

The Biology of Human Starvation. By A. KEYS, J. BROŽEK, A. HENSCHER, O. MICKELSEN, and H. L. TAYLOR. 2 vols, 1950. University of Minnesota Press, Minneapolis. Geoffrey Cumberlege, London. Pp. 1,385+xxxii, 158 figs, 565 tab. £6 10s.

During a famine, conditions are unfavourable both for controlled observation and scientific measurement. Consequently the accounts of the reactions of the human body to chronic semi-starvation recorded by medical men in the field have inevitably lacked precision and left fundamental problems unsolved. Hitherto, most laboratory studies have been limited to experiments on professional starving men. The reports of widespread starvation in the war years led Professor Ancel Keys and his colleagues at the