groups are traced clearly for laymen, to whom the connection between evolution and taxonomy may well be new.

This is a tidy book. The loose ends are pulled together: nesting habits, types and numbers of prey, anatomy of the larvae, methods of stinging and carrying prey, are all discussed and arranged in tentative order of complexity, efficiency and development, and with no hint of anthropomorphism. Even the scanty fossil record is brought in and the author traces tne relationships of wasps with other Hymenoptera and other orders.

Physically this is a neat little hard covered book, well presented and organized. The paper, type, and 16 text figures are good, as they should be at the price. There are 25 photographs by the author, with captions, but no reference to them in the text. At the end of each of the 15 chapters is a bibliography of significant papers and some general texts. At the ends of 12 chapters are listed the species described (50 in all), with Latin or Greek roots translated and the pronunciation indicated. Proper names are used throughout but not italicised. The book is a natural for the paperback trade.

—*H. R. MacCarthy*

BOOK REVIEW

The Insect Factor in Wood Decay, by Norman E. Hickin. London. Hutchinson & Co. Ltd. 1963. Pp. 336, illus., 2 colored plates. £2 10s.

The author regards conservation of building timber *in situ* as an important new technology that becomes more so as we use up forests and demand longer service from wood already in use. For pest control operators, inspectors, builders, lumberyard operators, and those in related work, he has produced a valuable reference book. It is clearly written and very well illustrated with numerous line drawings, some photographs and a spectacular colored fold-out plate of 9 longicorns. There is an adequate index. The high quality, paper, printing, and illustrations may account for the price.

There is one irritating feature: certain references, cited normally in the text by author and date, are omitted from the list at the end of each chapter. In a book so carefully written the omissions are probably deliberate, but they are not explained and they are disconcerting. In 33 pages of chapter III alone there are 9.

The book is written with special reference to Great Britain and the insects concerned are covered very thoroughly and mostly keyed. The coverage of *Anobium punctatum* de Geer and *Xestobium rufovillosum* de Geer is particularly detailed, since these anobiids are the most economically important insects in the field. The groups dealt with are: Anobiidae, Lyctidae, Bostrichidae, Buprestidae, Lymexilidae, Cossoninae, Cerambycidae, Scolytidae, the ambrosia beetles, termites, and wood-boring wasps and moths. Other chapters deal with the nature of wood, direct factors causing decay, the importance of the various wood-boring insects, and research on wood preservation.

—*Peter Zuk*