

## BOOK REVIEW

Lamb, K. P. 1974. *Economic Entomology in the Tropics*. Academic Press, London, 195 pp. £4.00.

In this brave and successful book the publisher presents something of a puzzle. Well printed and illustrated on good quality paper, it is elegantly hard-bound in AP livery; but it is a small book which would fit into a paperback format no bigger than a thinnish Penguin. Even as a reference and teaching text it must surely soon be replaced by more detailed, regional texts. Perhaps, hopefully, the present hard-wearing library format means that it is a trail breaker and the forerunner of a series for graduate students and district agriculturists based on crops or insect groups or major regions. Any of these subdivisions is enough to absorb several lifetimes of research and review, but in a chauvinistic world, the last-named may be the most promising.

The organization by chapters is as follows: four pages on insects, good and bad; five pages on classification based on the C.S.I.R.O.'s *Insects of Australia* (1970); then short chapters on primitive and some aquatic insects; cockroaches and mantids; termites; Orthoptera and Dermaptera; Hemiptera; Lepidoptera; flies and fleas; beetles; Hymenoptera; the ecology of pest control; insecticides; malaria; and a summary of major pests of coffee, tea, cotton, cocoa, sugar cane, rice and coconuts. These, except for part of the rice crop, are cash

crops and export items. Missing, except for passing mention, are pests of major local subsistence crops: bananas, citrus, cassava, pulses, millet, sorghum, mango, and maize.

The chapters on various orders include tables of selected pests, with common names, hosts, and distribution. Since keys are not possible, the tables exist in something of a vacuum, and become almost unmanageably long even when subdivided by hosts or groups of crops attacked. For instance, there are tables dealing with 50 Pyralids, 36 Noctuids, 31 scales, and 81 weevils; with distributions given as e.g.: the Americas, Africa, India, or even in desperation, pan-tropical. Prof. Lamb assumes considerable familiarity with scientific nomenclature. His English is clear and scholarly and by no means condescending or over-simplified. Mistakes, misspellings and misprints are at an irreducible minimum. The five to eight references with each chapter are carefully chosen. Most are generalized works, monographs and books rather than research papers. Eleven of the 97 are in French, four in German.

The dust jacket calls this: "A short, highly condensed, immensely practical book . . . the first broad review of economic insects in the tropics." As such it promises to be an invaluable starting point for problem solving, a teaching text, and the basis for more detailed successors.

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