

BOOK REVIEWS

1. THE INSURANCE SOURCEBOOK.

Compiled by Robert Cunnew

Published by Longman in association with the CII

The longer one survives the harder it is to find something new. And then out of the blue it happens. The Insurance Sourcebook is one of those happenings. This is a 245 page A4 publication literally packed with information. Cornucopia is the word that springs readily to mind. The reader is entitled at this stage to wonder about the Sourcebook - source of what. Is not the source of insurance, insurers? This Sourcebook has been prepared in the words of The Chairman of Lloyds foreword because "information is the very bed-rock of insurance. The Broker needs a first class knowledge . . . the Underwriter needs as much information as he can get . . . "

After the first flush of enthusiasm one turns to names and organisations that are known and not unnaturally British Insurance Law Association was one of the first I looked at. It was a disappointing entry. Then I noticed the omission of The London Colloquium from the list of "regularly held conferences and meetings". This seemed to be the beginning of a disaster. However it is always easy to lose sight of the good by concentrating on the negatives.

The Sourcebook is good and is useful. It is the whisky bottle that is half full not half empty. Before full value can be obtained for the very modest outlay it is necessary to carefully appraise its contents. Organisationally the book is split into two sections: Organisations and individuals and Publications and Services. However it is the fairly complex layout of the sections that requires some study if full use is to be made of the book. The breadth of coverage is very wide: official sources, associations (including BILA) colleges and course, accountants, lawyers, intermediaries, PR consultants and stock brokers. All these and many others are included.

The second section is split into International Congresses (excluding The Colloquium), publications (including The Journal), reference books, text books, computer based services and libraries. The bulk of Section Two is further split into subject matter eg. reinsurance, life, health, aviation and marketing . The book concludes with three indices: name, title and subject.

That fact that Robert Cunnew who is well known to most BILA members as the CII Librarian, has put this book together as a result of the enquiries he receives indicates the tremendous resource that we have available in the CII. Information is essential to

us all and it can be time consuming culling all that is required. However the worst part is finding where to find it - this problem will largely be a thing of the past as the Sourcebook really does make that time consuming part so easy.

Although the book can be criticised for omissions (ARA Conference Services is not shown as organiser) and the brevity of some entries, it is a most valuable book which I feel will be in constant use in my office and in others who need a range of information going beyond the traditional little black book. I am looking forward to the second edition which I am sure will prove to be the magic whisky bottle which will then be at least three quarter full!

Michael Cohen

2. WHO'S WHO IN WORLD INSURANCE

Longman £35

Having got over the shock and disappointment in not finding my name listed in this year's Who's Who In World Insurance, I started playing my usual game to find who else was missing. I quickly became bored as either there are many or I know (or do not know) the wrong people.

Putting together some 3,421 names and details in a herculean task but that having been said I found myself wondering why this particular volume had been published.

Who should or should not be included can be debated but what do we know of those who are included? Their name, current appointment, current employer, business address and telephone. A very small proportion have qualifications or possibly we should say have qualifications shown. Even fewer show against "date of birth" information like "born 1932", some have "public appointments" although it is surprising to see DCL being shown as one.

In addition to the alphabetical index there are two others, company and geographical. The former shows the names of all companies which employ a listed person, and lists these names under that heading. The geographical index is by country where individuals work. It also tells us that it does not include in that section "references to personnel's nationality or place of birth". The strange thing is I could not find reference to this information in the other sections either.

Apart from listing names and addresses the book does little. It gives no real information on the individuals and it does not say the date at which it was compiled.