

real life situations and that, even if this were done, the design of the switching circuits required to effect optimal control would present quite formidable engineering problems. In consequence, the book should at present be viewed more as an account of new mathematical theory than as a manual which will be of immediate use in treating practical problems. As such, however, the book is well written and produced, even if the degree of mathematical rigour adopted exceeds most people's taste.

Nevertheless, this book is unlikely to be of more than general interest to operational research workers since few optimization problems currently encountered in operational research seem to have the structure that would make them amenable to attack by the method described. The book should, however, be of more specific interest to those working in the automation field.

M. L. CHAMBERS

Production Planning and Control.

ROBERT H. BOCK and WILLIAM K. HOLSTEIN.

Prentice-Hall, London, 1964. ix+417 pp. 60s.

This book is chiefly a collection of papers on aspects of stock and production control and resource planning: some introduction and comments are provided by the authors.

Apart from those on PERT, all but one of these papers have appeared in journals in the late 1950's, and therefore no additional comment is called for on their content. In general, they are presented in a sufficiently elementary manner to make very good reading for either management or beginners in operational research in this field.

The book is divided into three sections: Planning and Controlling Production Levels, Inventory Control and Facilities Planning. There are also appendixes developing what the authors suggest is a sufficient level of mathematics. In my view this is a pious hope, and it is unlikely that these mathematical expositions will mean anything to those who are not already familiar with the subject. They may act as a reminder to managers who, for better or for worse, have discarded all science during their careers.

The general effect of the book is to provide a number of interesting "case studies" at a level which makes easy reading. Undoubtedly those in line management who can be persuaded to read this book would benefit greatly, at least to the effect of questioning perhaps their own *modus operandi*. A broad range of industries is considered and, all in all, this would make a useful book on most bookshelves.

R. R. P. JACKSON