

Book Selection

Edited by J. HOUGH

PHILIP M. MORSE: In at the Beginnings: a Physicist's Life	1243
HERBERT A. SIMON: Models of Discovery	1244
N. N. VOROB'EV: Games Theory—Lectures for Economists and Systems Scientists	1244
BELA ANDRASFAI: Introductory Graph Theory	1245
C. C. NEW: Managing the Manufacture of Complex Products	1246
LEONARD J. KAZMIER: Theory and Problems of Business Statistics	1246
JOHN E. ULLMAN: Theory and Problems of Quantitative Methods in Management	1246
ALBERT BATTERSBY: Network Analysis for Planning and Scheduling (3rd Edition)	1247

In at the Beginnings: a Physicist's Life

PHILIP M. MORSE

M.I.T. Press, Cambridge, MA, U.S.A. and London, 1977. 374 pp. £10.50

It is possible to convey the content and flavour of some memoirs in the compass of a review. This book of memoirs is not one of them for it is at once a summary of Professor Morse's busy, varied and fruitful life and, at the same time, a gloss on his published work in physics, operations research and computation. It has to be read *in toto*. This is no hardship for, except at the end, it is well-written in an easy, anecdotal style.

The main interest of the book to readers of this Journal must be in the chapters devoted to Professor Morse's wartime and post-war experiences in operations research. The technical content and product of those experiences is well-known through his admirable texts, *Methods of Operations Research* (written with the late George Kimball) and *Queues, Inventories and Maintenance*. In the present volume Professor Morse fills in some of their human and socio-political background. The narrative confirms what some of us have known from personal acquaintance—that Philip Morse became an important and highly respected figure in the world of operational research because he combines both technical and scientific expertise with sound, human judgement and commonsense. One story illustrates the merits of this combination of talents. Dating from the immediate post-war years, it tells of the involvement of the Weapons Systems Evaluation Group (of which Morse was Deputy Director) with the Strategic Air Command in the decision whether or not to go "banco" on the B-36 long-range bomber. Morse's dealings with the formidable chief of SAC—General Curtis Le May—offer a lesson in calculated diplomacy.

At the end of the book events, honours and appointments crowd the narrative which begins to resemble extracts from a calendar of events. This is a common tendency in the autobiographical writings of celebrated musicians and sportsmen; it is a pity. The evidence is nevertheless clear; if Philip Morse had not already received the Silver Medal of the Operational Research Society, it would have had to be awarded to him now. Few have done as much to advance the cause of operational research.

A. M. LEE