

THE DOOMSDAY BOOK

By Gordon Rattray Taylor. London: Thames & Hudson Limited, 1970, 335 pages, \$6.50.

Reviewed by Harley Forden,
Ontario.

"It is the future of the human race that we have been talking about." Thus speaks not Zarathustra but rather Gordon Rattray Taylor, the British journalist and broadcaster. Here is a book in which the author of *The Biological Time Bomb* presents us with a lucid and probing analysis of the trends of contemporary society. The changing world in which we counsellors live has become for Taylor "a nightmare world of technology." In the tradition of Barbara Ward and Buckminster Fuller the author's scalpel cuts deep as he attempts to make the predicted breakdown of Spaceship Earth as explicit as possible.

The difference between this book and the numerous indictments of our technological society now on the market lies in its careful documentation and its synthesis of a variety of trends which have previously been seen piecemeal and in isolation. Today we are faced, Rattray argues, with an inescapable question: must we apply each new advance as soon as it is made, or can we rather stop and think?

The amount of material taken from government documents, journals and other publications is most impressive. Taylor quotes several prominent scientists, statesmen, writers who are obviously quite close to what is happening in the areas of pollution, population control, and technological change.

What makes the book refreshing is that it is not a description of the present scene. Taylor has written a book about the next thirty years, a survey of the problems looming on the horizon. And counsellors, as agents for change, can assist Taylor in trying to prevent these problems. If, as Taylor claims, it is our way of life that has to be changed, then what role do counsellors perform in affecting such change?

"The Domsday Book" is not a sensational book aimed at an unsuspecting public. Taylor's sincerity is very evident. His section on the "technological treadmill" is most enlightening. Moreover, his discussion of the triple crisis in which man now finds himself should be considered basic reading for anyone concerned with the future of individuals and of society in general.

What are Taylor's projections for the future? Does he include a happy ending? Perhaps some readers might feel like tossing away the book and escaping to Australia or the South Seas. But Taylor reminds us that even those regions no longer offer security. The prophet-philosopher of youth, Bob Dylan, has written: "Something is happening here, but, you don't know what it is, do you Mr. Jones?" Gordon Rattray Taylor believes he does know what is happening and what may happen. To use the author's own words, "Are we too complacent or unimaginative to listen?"

In summary, this book is a valuable reference for counsellors and others who refuse to be complacent and accept their doom, but have decided instead to participate in whatever measures are necessary to overcome it.