

to minimize delays. The Department of Scientific and Industrial Research was prepared to consider applications for post-doctoral fellowships from scientists who propose to leave for research experience overseas and who wish to take up fellowships on their return, and improvement in the scale of technical assistance for university research, recommended by the Robbins Committee, was being considered in this context. Increase in the number of senior posts in universities was closely related to questions of university salaries and must await the report of the National Incomes Commission. Steps to facilitate the return of scientists and technologists to Britain after research experience overseas, particularly by the work of the Joint Interviewing Board of Civil Service Commission, the Atomic Energy Authority and the Central Electricity Generating Board were being progressively improved, and the Department of Scientific and Industrial Research was giving the Board authority to appoint some suitable candidates interviewed in America direct to fellowships without reference back. The main answer to the emigration problem, Mr. Hogg thought, was the articulation and implementation of a scientific policy suited to Britain's national requirements.

Government Development Contracts and Grants

In a written answer to a question in the House of Commons on February 5 regarding development contracts and grants, the Minister for Science stated that eight development contracts had been placed by the Department of Scientific and Industrial Research. One was with the Staveley Industries, Ltd., for a numerically controlled machine tool at a total cost, to both parties, of £336,000; another with Dobbie McInnes (Electronics), Ltd., for an automatic cartographic equipment at a total cost of £57,000; five for research and development into advanced computer techniques with Mullards, Ltd., the Plessey Co. (U.K.), Ltd., Standard Telephones and Cables, Ltd., and Elliott Bros. (London), Ltd., at a total cost of £300,000, and with Craven Bros. (Manchester), Ltd., for a gear grinding machine at a total cost of £200,000—this contract was terminated in October 1963 because the design study plan revealed major obstacles in developing the basic design concept. An earmarked grant of up to £107,200 over six years had been placed with the British Welding Research Association for research into fatigue of welded structure, and five more earmarked grants had been offered but had not yet been accepted.

The Channel Tunnel

In a statement made simultaneously in both Houses of Parliament on February 6, the Government announced that as a result of investigations undertaken jointly both the British and the French Governments considered that the construction of a rail Channel tunnel was technically possible, and that in economic terms it would represent a sound investment of their resources. The two Governments had therefore decided to go ahead with this project, and the next step would be to discuss further in particular the legal and financial problems involved. Bearing in mind the very heavy burden of existing commitments and the many other competing claims on the national resources of the two countries, it remained to be decided when and how the expense involved could best be sustained. At the present stage of the discussions the two Governments had not decided whether there was a role, and, if so, in what form, for the participation of private equity capital; but it was clearly understood that, whatever happened, the Governments must have full control of any future operating company. This, together with the fact that private finance would require Government guarantees, must inevitably affect the final decision. Answering questions, the Earl of Dundee said that it was essentially a question of priorities in the use of materials and skilled labour, and that the estimates were based on an underground rail tunnel.

British Technical Co-operation Overseas

In a statement about the expansion of overseas service by young volunteers made in the House of Commons on February 12, the Secretary for Technical Co-operation, Mr. R. Carr, said that of 19,000 British men and women working in the developing countries, mainly in the Commonwealth, with Government assistance, about 550 were young volunteers, and under plans already announced this number would increase to 800 in September 1964. For the 1965 programme, the Government would contribute 75 per cent instead of 50 per cent of the British costs, and the number of volunteers would increase to 1,300, of whom 1,000 would be graduates. The Government's contribution would increase, accordingly, from £270,000 to about £650,000. The outstanding success of the services rendered by volunteers from Britain was attributed to their high quality and to the soundness of the projects to which they were assigned, and the Government had no doubt that the volunteers should continue to serve under the auspices of the independent voluntary societies, which would continue to work in close co-operation with the Department of Technical Co-operation, and their activities would be co-ordinated through the Joint Committee with Sir John Lockwood as chairman. The societies had now agreed to the establishment for three years in the first instance of a new Council for Volunteers Overseas to arouse public interest and support. Of this Council, Sir John Lockwood would be a member and the Duke of Edinburgh the first president. A similar statement was made simultaneously in the House of Lords. The statement was generally welcomed in Parliament, though some speakers criticized the scale of the effort. It was emphasized that the voluntary effort would be closely associated with the main professional effort and that the main demand from the developing countries was for graduates rather than school-leavers.

The Low Temperature Research Station, Cambridge

THE annual report for 1962 of the Low Temperature Research Station of the Agricultural Research Council, Cambridge, has recently been published (Pp. 43. London: H.M.S.O., 1963. 3s.). As in previous reports, a few items have been selected from the present work of the Station for a report in sufficient detail for their connexion with applied problems to be adequately described. In this way it is hoped to cover the programme of work every three years. This report includes the following: "The Contribution of Connective Tissue to the Toughness of Meat"; "Some Recent Histological Aspects of Texture in Meat"; "Physiological Considerations in the Production of Eggs and Table Poultry"; "Blackening of Plant Tissues"; "Ethylene Oxide and the Ripening of Fruit"; "Problems of Resistant Organisms in the Preservation of Foods with Antibiotics"; and "Radiation Chemistry in Food Research". Some sixty-nine original papers were published during the year. The report records that the year was a particularly eventful one for all food scientists. The Station took a leading part in the organization of the first International Congress of Food Science and Technology held in London during September 1962, and contributed some 27 papers to the scientific programme; a visit was paid to the Station by eighty overseas members of the Congress. Following the Congress, an advanced study course, sponsored by NATO, on "Biochemistry and Biophysics in Food Research" was held at the Low Temperature Research Station. Further manifestations of the vigour of this relatively new (though "rather ill-defined") branch of applied science were the setting up of new university teaching departments and the inauguration of an Institute of Food Science and Technology.

Catalogue of French Scientific and Technical Books

A SELECTED catalogue of scientific and technical books at present on sale and published by French publishers during 1960-62 is arranged systematically by subject