

Parliament in Britain

THE well informed debate on British Waterways in the House of Commons on November 18 was noteworthy for the firmness with which the Government's statement on transport policy and the annual report of the British Waterways Board was criticized for failing to recognize the inviability of through routes and for the inadequacy of a five year inspection period. Opinion expressed in the debate was almost unanimous that a 25 year guarantee was essential. Mr. Grant-Ferris also challenged the idea of closure of canals by statutory order instead of the normal procedure of a private Bill.

IN answering a question about disease in fish in the House of Lords on November 29, the Minister without Portfolio, Lord Champion, said research into columnaris disease in Great Britain and Northern Ireland started this year when the seriousness of the outbreaks in the Irish Republic first became evident. The work so far, which had been in close collaboration with scientists in the Irish Republic, had been directed mainly at elucidating the nature and causes of the disease and means of transmission. The three Fisheries Departments in England, Scotland and Northern Ireland, the Torry Research Laboratory of the Ministry of Technology, the Central Public Health Laboratories and the Freshwater Biological Association were all co-operating. Altogether nine scientists, with their supporting staffs, were now concentrating on the investigation, though not all exclusively, and the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food was recruiting an additional bacteriologist for full-time work.

IN reply to questions on aircraft noise in the House of Commons on November 30, Mr. J. Snow, Parliamentary Secretary to the Ministry of Aviation, said that in the present financial year £385,000 had been allocated for research aimed at reducing such noise. The new research facilities coming into operation, which included an anechoic chamber at Farnborough and the new laboratory at Ansty, Coventry, for examining noise problems on large scale compressors and intakes, were achieving some results, but although there was no shortage of money, there was a real shortage of ideas. The Minister of Aviation, Mr. F. Mulley, added that one of the *Concord* design objectives had been that noise on take-off and landing should not exceed that of the present large subsonic jet aircraft. Sonic bang was a different problem but it could not be alleviated significantly by changes in the design of the aircraft. We were concerned to keep the noise of take-off and landing down to a minimum. The *Concord* would climb rapidly and cruise at a very high altitude, and a noise attenuator was being developed which, if successful, would make a significant reduction in noise up to 5 decibels. Mr. Mulley also said that the industrial membership of the Aeronautical Research Council had been increased from three to five, and the council's terms of reference and structure would be revised in the light of current discussions. Pressed as to the programme for research, development and production, Mr. Mulley insisted that the programme must consist of specific projects and not generalities, and referred to a decision to increase research on helicopters.

University News:

Bradford

DR. W. L. WILKINSON, at present employed by the Atomic Energy Authority, has been appointed to the second chair in chemical engineering. He is known for his work on control systems for chemical process plants and on the properties of non-Newtonian fluids.

Edinburgh

DR. WILLIAM HAYES, at present director of the Medical Research Council's Microbial Genetics Research Unit and honorary senior lecturer at the Royal Post-graduate Medical School of London, has been appointed to a personal chair of molecular genetics. He is best known for his discovery of sexual differentiation in bacteria.

Appointments

DR. MILTON U. CLAUSER has been appointed director of the Lincoln Laboratory at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, and Mr. C. Robert Wieser has been appointed deputy director. Dr. Clauser has been concerned mainly with aeronautics, first with the Douglas Aircraft Company, and later at Purdue University and on N.A.S.A. committees. Mr. Wieser has been concerned with the control systems of ballistic missiles.

DR. LEON GOLDBERG has accepted a research chair in pathology and the associate directorship of the Institute of Experimental Pathology and Toxicology at Albany, New York, and will be leaving his present position as director of the British Industrial Biological Research Association in March 1967. He is known for his work on food additives and toxicology.

Announcements

PROF. H. W. THOMPSON, of St. John's College, Oxford, has been awarded the John Torrence Tate International Gold Medal, for distinguished service to physics. Prof. Thompson is known for his work on spectroscopy, principally in the infra-red region, and is foreign secretary of the Royal Society.

THE Medical Research Council has announced the formation of an Infant Nutrition Research Division in the Dunn Nutritional Laboratory at Cambridge under Dr. Elsie Widdowson. The new division is really a continuation of the Department of Experimental Medicine at Cambridge, the director of which, Prof. R. A. McCance, retired at the end of the last academic year. He has now become director of the Infantile Malnutrition Research Unit in Uganda.

A SYMPOSIUM on Astrogeology, sponsored by the Departments of Geology and Mineralogy and Astronomy in the University of Michigan, in co-operation with the Institute for Science and Technology and the Bendix Corporation, will be held in the University of Michigan during March 22-24. Recent research based on photographs and data transmitted to Earth by satellite and lunar landing vehicles will be discussed. Further information can be obtained from Prof. E. Wm. Heinrich, Department of Geology and Mineralogy, The University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, Michigan 48104.

A CONFERENCE on "Air Traffic Control Systems Engineering and Design", sponsored by the professional group on radio navigation and radio location of the I.E.E. Electronics Division and the radar and navigational aids group of the Institution of Electronic and Radio Engineers, will be held at the Institution of Electrical Engineers during March 13-17. The subjects to be covered are information services and data handling and displays. Further information can be obtained from the Joint Conference Secretariat, Institution of Electrical Engineers, Savoy Place, London, W.C.2.