

about one ton into low altitude orbits from Woomera. Up to now there have been nine firings of Europa 1, and it seems that Hawker Siddeley have built or are building a further seven Blue Streaks for both Europa 1 and Europa 2.

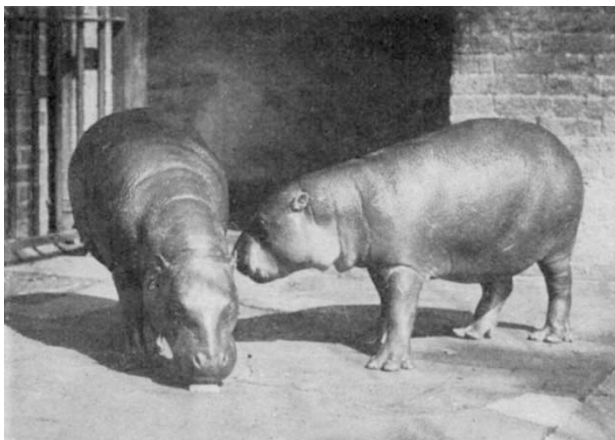
The ELDO council decision was to earmark \$600,000 for the study of the Europa 3 design based on the L-120 first stage. The council's view of Europa 3 will, of course, have to be vetted by the European space conference of ministers which is to take place at the end of June, as will the decision also reached by the ELDO council last week to set aside \$500,000 to study how Europe might take up the offer from the United States of participation in the space shuttle project.

Indeed it is the European Space Conference, which oversees the European cooperative space ventures of ELDO and its confrère the European Space Research Organization (ESRO), where the real decisions will be taken. By the time the conference meets, the French government should have decided on its space policy; on May 14 a French interministerial committee meeting to discuss a report which the government commissioned and which recommends support for both the French national programme and for the European ventures (see *Nature*, 226, 393; 1970). But apparently the report recommends that only about 40 per cent of the expenditure be devoted to European projects out of an annual expenditure of about \$200 million. In Britain, however, public discussion of the options is noticeably lacking.

LIBERIA

Threat to the Hippo

A GLOOMY picture of the present state of wildlife in Liberia has been presented to the Liberian government by the International Union for Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources (IUCN). Nowhere in the country are animals protected by national parks or nature reserves; hunting is indiscriminate, so that many species, including the rare pigmy hippopotamus (*Choeropsis liberiensis*) and a forest antelope (*Cephalophus jentinki*), are in danger of extinction; and continual inroads are being made into the rain forest, the natural climax vegetation of the country and the



Female pigmy hippopotamus and its baby. Zoological Society of London.

habitat of most of the game animals. Without a national plan for the conservation and management of wildlife, the country may lose one of its most valuable natural resources within a few decades. But sound use of land and a conservation programme could raise considerably the yield from animal resources through meat production, hides, furs, hunting licences, fees from national parks and nature reserves.

Suggestions for action are given by the IUCN in a report prepared by Mr Kai Curry-Lindahl, vice-chairman of the IUCN's Survival Service Commission and the International Commission on National Parks (*Report to the Government of Liberia on Conservation, Management and Utilization of Wildlife Resources*. IUCN Supplementary Paper No. 23, 1969). First, there must be a period of restoration in which selected areas should be set aside as game reserves for later cropping schemes; animal life in all the present forest reserves should be protected so that these in their turn become game reserves; and national parks and nature reserves should be established for scientific, cultural and recreational purposes. Other recommendations include the establishment of buffer zones around the forest game reserves and the national parks in which hunting could be controlled and regulated, a moratorium on hunting for three to five years or so in selected areas to allow the recovery of game populations, and game legislation. Finally, a Bureau of Wildlife Conservation should be set up within the Department of Agriculture.

TECHNOLOGY

Preserving the Steam Age

GRANTS of up to £60,000 a year would be necessary to ensure that the finest relics of nineteenth-century British technology are preserved. This is the conclusion of a survey of Victorian technology carried out by a group from Imperial College, London, which for the past two years has been looking at mines, mills and gasworks up and down the country and sorting out what might be historically valuable. Some of the money should be spent on maintaining industrial monuments that cannot be moved, and the rest should support museums to accommodate early vehicles or mobile machinery, according to the group's report (N. A. F. Smith, *Victorian Technology*; Leicester University Press, 1970; £1).

The survey was originally inspired by the possibility that a national technological museum might be set up, perhaps in London. While the Imperial College group would eventually like to see a new central museum, they now give priority to smaller projects run by local centres, chiefly because it is in the provinces that most of the best industrial relics are to be found. In some parts of Britain, notably the Bristol area, technological preservation has been thriving, but many masterpieces of engineering have disappeared. The railways are faring particularly badly in the course of modernization, one substantial loss being the whole series of timber viaducts that Brunel designed for the Great Western Railway.

The money which the survey would like to be spent may not be too hard to come by if the voluntary contributions of £250,000 given to restore the early steamship Great Britain are anything to go by. The Great Britain, which has rusted on a sandbank in the