

rewards of, say, radio astronomy and medical research, nor is there any way of making sure that the funds available are shared fairly among the different kinds of institutions which are clamouring for them. Mrs Thatcher mentioned earlier this week the now familiar argument that the Agricultural Research Council should become a branch of the Ministry of Agriculture and there is a strong case for such a breach of the old Haldane principle

that there should be creative tension between government departments and research organizations. The point that will eventually be borne in on Mrs Thatcher is that the time has probably arrived in Britain when resources are insufficient to support all the research that the separate organizations would like to carry out and at the same time to provide the government departments with good advice.

Does Britain Belong to Europe ?

By this time next week, it should be clear what response the European Economic Community will have made to the crucial questions which have arisen about the proposal that Britain and other members of the free trade area should belong to the European community. As it turns out, the most stark issues have been left until the very end, so that it is plain that the past year of supposed negotiations has been hardly better than shadow boxing. Indeed, the discussions in Brussels have been dominated not by the important political questions now to be settled in a few weeks of how Britain and its associates could fit into the institutional framework which has been developed in the EEC in the past decade, nor even by the important economic issues still outstanding such as the industrial objectives to which an enlarged Europe would aim, but by an unseemly haggle about the contribution Britain would be expected to pay towards the unified budget of the EEC. In short, the negotiators have hardly begun to talk about long-term questions but, rather, have concentrated on strictly transitional matters.

What are the implications of membership of the EEC for the scientific and technical communities in Europe, on the mainland but also in Scandinavia and Britain? In the days of Mr Harold Wilson, there was always a great deal of talk of how it would be possible to multiply the effectiveness of industrial research and development within the EEC. And to Mr Wilson and previous Prime Ministers must be given credit for a host of collaborative technical enterprises, some successful and some less successful, which at present litter Europe. The truth, alas, is that technical enterprises will be industrially and commercially more effective in an integrated Europe only to the extent that they have free access to the common market and free access to the sources of capital in Europe. The new system will be more effective in its use of technical manpower only to the extent that in an enlarged community it will be possible for the efforts of a single team in research and development to carry out the work of several competing teams. Inevitably, an integrated EEC would be a place in which the rewards of technical development would be most apparent in the way in which scarce technical resources could be spared for work in fields which Europe at present cannot afford. Those wishing to make fortunes out of the enlargement of the EEC, assuming that it comes off, had better put their money on diversity rather than on the attempts which are conventionally made to bring about international collaboration on familiar projects. That is one elementary lesson to be learned.

The second and more important inference is that membership of the EEC by Britain and its associated countries would in the long run create opportunities for scientific developments which are at present undreamed

of in the patchwork of modern Europe. Although the benefits in technology of a larger community would be the chance to do tasks which are at present off the beaten track, in the long run the benefit would be the way in which the size of the European scientific community was multiplied by, say, three. The benefits here are not merely that a larger pool of technical people is more able to accomplish known objectives but that there are ways in which a larger group of mutually interested people is able to devise schemes which are beyond the reach of others. In this spirit, European scientists must by now be painfully aware that much of the creativity of science in the United States is a function of the way in which kindred spirits from different and distant institutions are able to seek each other out and work together. In the long run, if there is to be an integrated Europe, this is the way in which the European scientific community should be organized. Is it too soon to think of heading in that direction? Would it not be sensible—but perhaps it is now too late—to consider whether freedom of movement within the European university system, the common recognition of professional qualifications, and even access to such funds for research and development as may exist should be regarded as essential elements of a European policy?

100 Years Ago



NOTES

It is stated that the Astronomer Royal is to have the honour of a K.C.B. conferred upon him in recognition of his services in respect to the International Exhibition. We trust this rumour is not strictly correct; for unless it is to be generally understood that services are to be rewarded in the inverse ratio of their value, it is simply grotesque and unbecoming of the Government to ignore all the Astronomer Royal's services to Science, and all his unpaid services to the State in connection with subjects more important to the nation than all the exhibitions which ever have been or ever will be.

It is with very great pleasure that we print the following intelligence of the safety of Dr. Livingstone:—Despatches were received last week at the Foreign Office from Dr. Kirk, the Acting British Consul at Zanzibar, containing information of the safety of Dr. Livingstone in October last. The doctor was then at Manakoso, helpless, without means, and with few followers. Dr. Kirk had sent him supplies to meet his immediate necessities, which, it was hoped, would shortly reach him.

From Nature, 4, 31, May 11, 1871.