

science training is still being maintained at a level that is difficult to justify at present.

In spite of this condemnation of the principle of dual support Sir Brian says that it is important that the universities be not wholly reliant on the research councils for support for their research. The SRC is perfectly right "to decide that it can only afford to support (say) five major university centres in a given topic," said Sir Brian "or to support only (say) 20 postgraduate schools of chemistry and to let the rest go hang". Then universities which were really determined "to achieve greatness" could spend their own money to achieve it and become one of the accepted universities at the expense of one of the others already on the list.

NUCLEAR POWER

Plans for the Future

By 1985 it is planned that 33 per cent of the electricity generated within the European Economic Community will arise from nuclear reactors. The European Commission recently approved a plan that sets as an objective a minimum output of 100,000MWe from nuclear power plants by the mid-1980s which will amount to ten per cent of the total energy needs (including oil and gas) of the community at that time.

At present the total community nuclear power capacity is 5,500MWe of which 3,250MWe are generated in England and Wales by the Central Electricity Generating Board. If plants under construction are taken into consideration the total community output in 1975 will be 12,000MWe and about 23,500MWe in 1977. In Britain five Advanced Gas Cooled Reactors are being built with a total capacity of about 6,500MWe which will be operational by 1980. These reactors are of course the first AGRs to be built.

The total electricity output in England and Wales is 56,000MWe at present which is projected to rise to 160,000 MWe by the end of the century. The CEGB estimates that one half of this will be produced by nuclear power.

If the European Commission's objective of 100,000MWe output from nuclear power in 1985 is to be realised then 45,000MWe should be produced by 1980. This, according to the community's Nuclear Information Programme, implies that 7,000MWe a year have to be added between now and 1975 and 11,000MWe to 12,000MWe a year between 1976 and 1980.

On a longer time scale the Nuclear Information Programme estimates that in 1990 the nuclear power output of the community should be 210,000MWe and 620,000MWe in 2,000.

But the community is not completely

ignoring the claims made by the coal industry for coal to be given its place in the energy equation. The European Commission has already issued a draft of its scheme for aiding the iron and steel industry within the community in buying coking coal and cokes. This draft is now before the Council of Ministers awaiting approval.

The British Coal Industry will no doubt welcome the community's interest in coal. When Britain joined the EEC in January the community's coal output increased from 170 million to 300 million tons a year. Late last year (see *Nature*, 240, 516; 1972) a document, *Coal and Energy Policy in Europe*, was produced by the National Coal Board, the National Union of Miners and other bodies which called for coal to be used to "its full and effective potential" within the European Community. This report pointed out that by 1980 there will be a gap between the energy produced within the community by natural gas, north sea oil, lignite, nuclear power and hydroelectricity, and the requirements at that time. This gap, which the report estimates to be almost 1,200 million tonnes of coal equivalent, will be filled by coal and imported oil. The plea of the British report was that "as large a part of this market as possible be supplied with coal".

VIVISECTION

Fund for Research

A FUND to encourage research techniques that do not involve vivisection has been set up. Following a two-day seminar held in London last week on the potential of humane non-animal research techniques, the National Anti-Vivisection Society announced that it was providing £10,000 to start the fund.

Known as the "Air Chief Marshal the Lord Dowding Fund for Humane Research", the fund will provide prizes or grants for scientists carrying out research "likely to lead to the alleviation of human or animal suffering, or likely to lead to the advancement of a new discovery which shall be useful for saving or prolonging life". The only caveats are that live animals must not be involved in the experiment at any stage, and applicants must not hold a licence for animal experimentation.

Mr Richard Body, MP, Vice-Chairman of the All-Party Parliamentary Humane Research Group, said that "we hope the grants will also encourage scientists to seek means of evaluating new drugs and medicines without resort to tests on live animals. Quite apart from the suffering inflicted on many of the 5.5 million animals now used annually in experiments in the United Kingdom the use of animal tests for the evaluation of new drugs is so unreliable in many respects that unless

more efficient methods are found many doctors and scientists fear we could be heading for another tragedy on the thalidomide scale".

CONSERVATION

Whale Imports Banned

THE British government has banned the import of the majority of whale products. The ban, which came into effect at midnight on March 15, comes after considerable pressure by environmental groups to get Britain to suit its actions to its words.

Britain has not been an active whaling nation since 1963 and is one of the nations that has supported moves within the International Whaling Commission to cut the whale catch substantially as it has become plain that many species of whales have been overhunted. But, while Britain has argued that whaling should be controlled, whale product imports have gone ahead unfettered.

But last week's ban is not a total one. Mr Anthony Stodart, Minister of State, Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Foods, announce that the Department of Trade and Industry's studies on alternatives to the use of whale products have shown that some industries can use substitutes for sperm oil but that others will have difficulty finding replacements. The decision, therefore, is to ban the use of all whale products except sperm whale oil used as engine lubricant, spermaceti wax, ambergris and whale products incorporated into manufactured products abroad and then imported.

Friends of the Earth, who have campaigned to prevent whale imports for more than a year now, are well pleased with the decision, although they are eager that the ban should be extended to cover sperm whale oil.

Nonetheless the government's action will produce a considerable reduction in whale product imports. Nineteen thousand tons of whale meat valued at £2.2 million were imported in 1970; by 1972 these figures had fallen to 8.8 thousand tons valued at £1 million. These imports are now banned. The import of whale oil, other than sperm whale oil, which is put at 850 tons last year is also banned.

Although sperm whale oil can still be imported the amounts entering the country have been diminishing over recent years. In 1972 only 7,600 tons were imported, a little over half the amount imported in 1970.

Studies of alternatives to sperm whale will continue, and Friends of the Earth hope to continue their campaign for the complete ban of whale product imports in June when the International Whaling Commission is again due to meet in London.