

worked in detail with five stretches of water in Wyoming, using techniques of recording the level of the water surface to within 0.001 in. on some occasions. They have found that when a reach of river is virtually straight, the variance of the chosen parameters of shear and friction near the bed tends to be much higher than when nearby reaches on the same river are sinuous. These and other correlations tend to confirm what the authors have been suggesting for some time—that the rate of dissipation of energy along the length of a meandering river tends to be a constant.

<sup>1</sup> von Schelling, H., Report No. 64GL92 (General Electric Co., Schenectady, 1964).

<sup>2</sup> von Schelling, H., *Trans. Amer. Geophys. Union*, **32**, 222 (1964).

## Fisheries Research at Aberdeen

DR. P. T. GRANT writes:

"The new laboratory of the Natural Environment Research Council's Fisheries Biochemical Research Unit was formally opened on April 27 by Sir Rudolph Peters at a ceremony presided over by Dr. E. M. Wright, Principal and Vice-Chancellor of the University of Aberdeen, in the presence of Mr. R. J. H. Beverton, Secretary of the Natural Environment Research Council.

"Completed in November 1965, the new laboratory is located in the Torry district of Aberdeen, overlooking the sea and the estuary of the River Dee. It is adjacent to the Marine Laboratory of the Department of Agriculture and Fisheries for Scotland and to the Torry Research Station of the Ministry of Technology. The building is on two floors with a total area of 10,000 sq. ft. The main and upper floor contains the laboratories, library, cold room and offices. The flexible system of laboratory furniture was designed and manufactured locally. All service rooms are on the ground floor, which includes an animal house for small mammals and an aquarium. A sea-water reservoir of 10,000 gallons capacity serves to maintain marine organisms at controlled temperatures in glass-fibre or plastic tanks. The architects were Mackie, Ramsay and Taylor of Aberdeen and the main contractors, Alexander Hall and Son, Ltd.

"The running of this research laboratory is an interesting venture in co-operation between the University of Aberdeen and the Natural Environment Research Council in that the University employs the staff and administers the unit, with funds provided by the research council. Both bodies are equally represented on the joint management committee and the unit has close links with the Department of Biological Chemistry. As director of the Unit and a reader in the Department of Biological Chemistry, I find that this close association has greatly helped members of staff to take part in teaching activities of the appropriate university departments although, of course, their primary obligation is to research.

"The research programme is concerned with the basic biochemistry of marine and freshwater organisms and the laboratory is equipped to carry out a broad range of metabolic studies. Problems under investigation by the present research staff of five and two research students include studies on the function and biosynthesis of biologically active molecules such as enzymes and hormones. A study of the variants of enzymes present in the tissues of marine organisms should have a bearing on the genetics of fish."

## Parliament in Britain

IN the House of Commons on August 3, Mr. H. Jenkins was given leave under the Ten Minute Rule to introduce a Bill which would enable the Postmaster General to establish a Television and Radio Authority, to run the fourth television channel, and to set up a National Popular Radio Programme which would act as a parent station to local radio stations. Moreover, the Bill would enable the Postmaster General to abolish pirate radio stations within or without territorial waters. The new public authority would acquire its main revenue from advertising and its first task would be to replace the pirates in a manner acceptable to their audience and to the writers' and performers' unions and organizations. Mr. Jenkins mentioned that Radio 390, for example, was interfering with Swedish radio broadcasts and with shipping broadcasts on the Medway. The Authority would also support the University of the Air.

In a statement in the House of Commons on August 3, the Postmaster General, Mr. E. Short, said that the Post Office now faced considerable problems of expansion, modernization and reorganization. In considering the present appropriateness of the Civil Service context in which the Post Office functions, the Government had recently made a fundamental survey of its management, structure and functions. After careful consideration it had been decided that instead of being a Department of State with a Minister at its head, the Post Office should become a public corporation and its members would be appointed by and responsible to a Minister. A final decision on the exact form of the reorganization and of the structure of the internal management must await the report of the Select Committee on Nationalized Industries, which was now examining the Post Office, and the fullest consultation with representatives of the staff which would now take place. A White Paper setting out the Government's final proposals would be presented to the House in due course. Employees would cease to be civil servants, and as regards management he hoped there would be cross-fertilization with industry. The present system of regulations would not obtain, but whether or not the Savings Bank was managed by the new corporation, banking policy would remain in the hands of the Treasury. It was intended to separate the postal and telecommunications services as completely as possible.

IN a statement to the House of Commons on August 4, the Prime Minister, Mr. H. Wilson, announced that it was the Government's firm intention to find time to pass the Parliamentary Commissioner Bill through all its stages in both houses by the end of the year. The Bill was given its first reading on July 20. Meanwhile it had been decided that, without prejudice to full discussion of the Bill itself, it would be prudent to designate the first Parliamentary Commissioner, who would be an Officer of the House of Commons, with a high degree of independence, dealing with complaints transmitted to him by members and reporting back to them individually, to the House as a whole and to whatever Select Committee the House might appoint. Mr. Wilson's announcement of the choice of Sir Edmund Compton was warmly welcomed by the Leader of the Opposition, though the appointment was criticized by Mr. J. Grimond as an encroachment on parliamentary freedom.