

which was organized in 1967. The AEC and WASP are to explode a nuclear device in the 50 kiloton range at a depth of 11,500 feet in the sandstones of the Merna region of south-western Wyoming.

Both project Rusilon, which is scheduled to be exploded at the end of May, and the Wyoming project, which is still in the early stages of planning, are modelled on Gasbuggy; their aim is to produce a chimney reservoir and fractures in the gas bearing but relatively impervious rock, which should make it more porous. These new projects are more ambitious than Gasbuggy, which was jointly financed by the AEC and the El Paso Natural Gas Company and which involved exploding a 26 kiloton device at a depth of 4,240 feet in north-western New Mexico.

Project Gasbuggy itself seems so far to have gone off without a hitch and to have fulfilled all the predictions made for it. The project has now reached the stage of six month production tests, and the results of a series of three 30 day production tests, which the AEC announced recently, are most encouraging. So far the Gasbuggy project has yielded 167 million cubic feet of gas, 109 million cubic feet of which were obtained during the three 30 day tests. By comparison a conventional well only 400 feet from the site of the Gasbuggy explosion has produced only 85 million cubic feet during nine months continuous operation.

Equally important, the quality of the gas has improved. During the 30 day tests, the hydrocarbon content of the gas increased by a third to 82 per cent, while the carbon dioxide content fell by a half to 12 per cent, as the reservoir of carbon dioxide produced when rocks were vaporized in the explosion was depleted. Hydrogen and other gases account for the other six per cent. The AEC also reported that the

PLANNING

Trust Battle Won



The British Government recently refused to give the Bath City Council permission to compulsorily purchase Rainbow Wood Farm from the National Trust. The Trust is delighted with the decision, but Bath University of Technology has suffered. The council is now withholding part of the land it promised the university, so delaying its development.

gas does not contain hazardous amounts of radioactive debris. But the commission says that the results so far, though encouraging, are too preliminary to allow a final assessment of the commercial feasibility of the technique and the crucial six month production tests have yet to be started, but the fact that two more private groups have decided to risk the cost of projects like Gasbuggy are straws showing which way the wind is blowing.

NUTRITION

Americans and Englishmen

THE American Institute of Nutrition has honoured the work of two men of British extraction at its annual meeting in Atlantic City. Professor Hamish N. Munro of MIT received the 1969 Osborne and Mendel award, which is worth \$1,000. Professor Munro is distinguished for his work on protein metabolism. At the same meeting, Dr S. K. Kon of Reading University was nominated a fellow of the American Institute of Nutrition. He was one of the first to recognize the part played by vitamin A in the visual process.

ARCHITECTURE

Watch on High Buildings

THE Royal Fine Art Commission, the watchdog of public amenity in England and Wales, would like to see a firm policy for the control of high buildings in London. The commissioners, who include Mr John Betjeman, Sir Hugh Casson, Lord Llewelyn-Davies and Sir Basil Spence, say in their latest progress report (HMSO, 3s 6d) that there are increasing pressures on the local authorities in London for planning consent for buildings above what used to be considered normal height limits, and there has been a failure so far to establish any firm policy for Greater London on such consents. But they believe that there is an opportunity to do so, now that there is one authority (the Greater London Council) covering almost the whole area. They hope that definite guidelines will soon be agreed between the GLC and the borough councils. In some areas, the commissioners recommend that buildings above a certain height should be banned altogether. "They should indeed have been banned already in such areas as the surroundings of the central parks, St Paul's and Westminster Abbey, and the river bank between them." They regret the building of the three tall buildings around Hyde Park—at Marble Arch, in Park Lane, and at Lancaster Gate—and they say that unless there is a stronger expression of public opinion on this issue, there may be more. "This will result in a gradual hemming in of parks by a wall of high buildings such as can be seen around Central Park, New York, which consequently looks half the size it really is."

Along the front of the River Thames, the commissioners suggest that development be kept not only low, but also small enough in scale not to diminish the sense of space provided by the river, and they criticize the decision of the governors of St Thomas's Hospital to build an immense ward block immediately across the river from the Palace of Westminster. Although they say they were not in a position to dispute the technical reasons for rebuilding London Bridge at the