

UNIVERSITIES

Student Participation

THE University of Manchester seems to have been the first to react officially to the joint statement on student participation in academic affairs issued last October by the Committee of Vice-Chancellors and Principals and the National Union of Students. The report of a working party consisting of twelve members of staff appointed by Senate and thirteen students appointed by the University Union has been adopted by the University Senate.

The Manchester working party endorses the joint statement of the vice-chancellors and the NUS which said that student participation in academic affairs and decision making is not only desirable but essential to the smooth functioning of the university as a community. The working party recommends that there should be active staff-student committees at department, faculty and Senate levels. Student discussion, however, should be restricted to matters concerning content and structure of courses, efficiency of teaching methods and methods of assessment; certain subjects, including admissions, appointments, promotions and examination results, must be reserved for the academic staff.

The most important step forward is the suggestion for a Committee of Senate consisting of equal numbers of staff and students which would be able to report directly to Senate. Furthermore, it is suggested that some of the student members of the committee should be present at appropriate Senate meetings. This is certainly the biggest advance yet towards getting student representation on a Senate. Whether it will satisfy the radicals is doubtful, but it is to be hoped that other universities will follow Manchester's lead.

ADULT EDUCATION

Extramural Studies

THE extramural departments of British universities continue to expand at a rate of more than six per cent a year according to the annual report of the Universities Council for Adult Education. There was a grand total of more than 7,000 courses and 170,000 students last year. But the supply of tutorial classes still trails behind: there were 710 in 1967-68, and more than half came from just four centres—London, Leeds, Durham and Hull.

The newest universities are, however, beginning to stake out areas for themselves within adult education. Bath and Strathclyde, for example, started running courses a year ago, while Surrey is preparing to offer a wide programme. It is encouraging to see that extramural education is not being restricted to print culture. Bristol University has organized a course in archaeological air photography which involves flight, camera work and subsequent earthbound interpretation. Leicester has provided a course in making teaching films, while several universities run courses in television techniques. Other extramural departments have been experimenting with courses on local radio: this is most advanced at Nottingham, where arrangements have been made for pupils to meet their radio tutors.

The report makes much of the contribution of the

small corps of full time extramural tutors. They are a breed unique to Britain: university budgets are much ampler in the United States, but the lack of teachers fully committed to adult education sometimes means that evening extension courses are modelled too closely on daytime degree courses. Although the report does not make this point, it is remarkable how much we owe our present understanding of mass culture and social communication to a small group of men, Raymond Williams and Richard Hoggart among them, who have been full time extramural tutors.

The Open University is, of course, a big question-mark hanging over adult education. The radio and television university might compete with traditional extramural studies, it might collaborate with them, but it is unlikely to replace them. Solitary communings with a television screen are unlikely ever totally to replace the campus. As the report says: "One may look forward, perhaps, to the eventual time when it is generally accepted that men and women, from whatever walk of life, ought to spend at least an occasional few weeks as adult students on a university campus."

LIBRARIES

Success at Boston Spa

IN 1968, the number of requests for loans received at the National Lending Library for Science and Technology at Boston Spa was 715,700, and the total number of requests received since the library started lending passed the three million mark (*Report of the Department of Education and Science, 1968*, HMSO, 14s 6d). The demand for photocopies of articles is also increasing; 63,300 were requested in 1968, an increase of 9,240 since 1967, and 19,700 went overseas. The director of the library, Dr J. Urquhart (*Library Association Record* 71, 77; March 1969), is, however, disappointed that requests for photocopies have not increased still more now that the true cost of a loan for many libraries exceeds the true cost of a photocopy of less than ten pages.

The library carries nearly 32,000 current periodicals, but these are no longer all scientific or technological. As an experiment in 1966, the library began taking social science periodicals and the experiment seems to be working; it now has more than 4,000 current titles. A survey carried out last year by D. N. Wood and C. A. Bower of the library (*Library Association Record*, 71, 39; February 1969) showed that the library was meeting about 80 per cent of the requests for social science periodicals.

While the NLLST is widely known and used for loans of periodicals and photocopies, it is anxious to enlarge its holdings of books. In 1968 it lent 42,300 books, compared with 29,000 in the previous year and 22,234 in 1966, and it is adding some 30,000 books to its stock each year. As a lending library conducting all its business through the post, the NLLST can streamline its library routines. For example, the library does not catalogue its English language books even in the simplest way. On receipt, the books are bookplated and the first effective word of the title is underlined in pencil. The book is then put on the shelves according to its title, and the staff find it, if requested, without any reference indexes. Such a shorthand approach only works, of course, with a

collection that is predominantly modern, and in fields like science and technology where users tend to remember titles of books rather than the author's names.

It is difficult to get meaningful statistics of inter-library cooperation in the UK because so much is done informally at the local level, and it would be misleading to set up a league table for those libraries which do the most lending. But a recent survey carried out by the Office for Scientific and Technical Information (OSTI) suggests the part played by the NLLST in satisfying requests for loans (Clements, D. W., *Journal of Librarianship*, 1, 107; April 1969). Out of a total of 3,861 requests for loans in eight local areas in the UK, 1,216 (55.2 per cent) were satisfied at the NLLST, and for 95 per cent of these this library was the first location tried. 78 per cent of the requests met by the library were received by the applicants within a week, and 93 per cent within two weeks. There were 209 unsuccessful requests to the NLLST, representing an average failure of about 15 per cent. It is not surprising that the NLLST comes out well in this survey; 85 per cent of loan requests in the survey were in the scientific and technological fields, 62 per cent of the total requests were for periodicals, and where the date of the publication was recorded, 63 per cent of the periodicals required had been published after 1960; this is just the literature in which the NLLST specializes.

SCIENCE MUSEUM

Push Button Science

THE Science Museum in London has a bright and spacious new children's gallery and, although it is not yet completed, most of it has been opened in time for the school holidays. Because a special effort had been made to open before Easter, several exhibits are still in various stages of installation and are not yet working or have no explanatory labels. Nevertheless, the children are turning handles and pressing buttons on familiar as well as new exhibits now housed in the basement of the museum's new extension.

The aspiring Mr Universe can still try his strength on the weights and pulleys and see how different systems require more or less effort. The self-opening door is there too, although it must be much less of a wonder now that public buildings often have this system. The dioramas of lighting and transport through the ages now have their own small darkened galleries with seats for tired adults.

New exhibits include cut-away working models showing how various engines—steam, two-stroke, four-stroke, diesel, Wankel—work, and how electricity is generated. Another new and popular acquisition is the periscope from HM submarine Tiptoe through which can be seen, after patient queuing, the galleries above the basement. A hole in the wall reveals a dark universe with a brightly coloured Earth spinning on its axis, with the Moon speeding round it. The plane of the Moon's orbit continually changes, so that eclipses can be seen frequently. And among all this, looking as if it might have strayed in from the Victoria and Albert Museum nearby, is the highly decorated aeolian organ that Queen Victoria used to play at Balmoral Castle. This gift from the Queen is to be demonstrated every afternoon.

Parliament in Britain

Vivisection

RECOMMENDATIONS made by the Littlewood Committee about the setting up of special breeding units outside laboratories for the supply of animals to be used in experiments are under consideration. Mr Merlyn Rees, for the Home Department, said that the expansion of the biological sciences and the mandatory testing of biological substances were the main reasons for the 1.5 million increase in the number of experiments on live animals between 1965 and 1967. In 1967, there were 4,755,680 experiments, of which 14,962 were on dogs, 14,531 on cats and 471 on horses. (Written answer, March 31.)

Academic Salaries

THE machinery for negotiating salaries for university lecturers is being discussed by the Department of Education and Science, the Committee of Vice-Chancellors and the Association of University Teachers. Mr Eric Moonman (Billericay) claimed that many university teachers felt that they had had a raw deal in comparison with the awards made to doctors in the tenth report on salaries for doctors and dentists. Mr Harold Walker, for the Department of Employment and Productivity, said the Prices and Incomes Board would institute a review of university teachers' pay at the appropriate time. (Oral answer, March 31.)

Metrication of Maps

MR KENNETH ROBINSON, Minister for Planning and Land, said the conversion of Ordnance Survey maps to the metric system will cost £3 million and will be spread over the next fifteen years. On new and revised Ordnance Survey maps at the 1/1,250 and 1/2,500 scales, heights will be shown in metres and areas of parcels of land in hectares as well as acres. The six-inch map will be replaced by a 1/10,000 scale map with metric contours. So far there are no proposals for the conversion of the smaller scale maps. (Written answer, April 1.)

Social Science Research Council

MRS SHIRLEY WILLIAMS, for the Department of Education and Science, said the expenditure of the Social Science Research Council and the staff complements, for the years ending in March 1966, 1967, 1968 and 1969 were £22,000 and 15; £590,000 and 29; £870,000 and 43; and £1,470,000 (estimated) and 84 respectively. (Written answer, April 2.)

Parliamentary Inquiries

AFTER the Easter recess, the Select Committee on Science and Technology will split into two subcommittees for the remainder of the session to carry out two short investigations, one on the Natural Environment Research Council (NERC) and the other on the reorganization of the British nuclear power industry. Both investigations are expected to take only a few months. Subcommittee E, which is to deal with NERC, starts work on April 16, and subcommittee D, on the nuclear power industry, on the following day. The examination of NERC, the first research council to be investigated by the Select Committee, is expected to be the first of a series of inquiries into the workings of the research councils.