The vallum (foreground and on right of the road) enclosing part of the land of St Columba's monastery, in which there are plans to build tea rooms and lavatories.

year the board toured Kent and was impressed with what it saw—especially the restoration of a Martello tower at Dymchurch—but the Board for England and Wales sounds some alarms. Cromwellian earthworks in Cambridge are once again threatened by the resurrected plan for an inner relief road scheme and, it says, “even excavation before destruction would be a very bad second to the preservation of such historic earthworks”. At Norwich the 2.25 mile long city walls are threatened with destruction by the local authority's road scheme especially because the authority owns both the walls and houses in some areas and an alternative route would cost a great deal of money chiefly in compensation. And even in remote Iona, as the Board for Scotland points out, the area formerly enclosed by the bank and ditch of St Columba's monastery, a feature of the site that was only rediscovered in 1930, is threatened with a tea room and lavatories. As the report says, to build such things within a unique monastic site “would seem to our successors wholly incomprehensible—if not, indeed, a betrayal of trust”. A plan to desecrate Iona with a urinal will not, of course, come as a surprise to anyone who has read the report of the Field Monuments Commission; progress must be had at any cost, but especially if the cost is only a few old stones or turves, not money from tax and rate payers.

FAMILY PLANNING

Mr Crossman Helps Out

from a Correspondent

THE Family Planning Association is launching a new campaign with the title “Every Child a Wanted Child” as the latest move in its long-standing drive “to make the act of birth control as habitual as the sex act”. The campaign was welcomed by Baroness Birk, chairman of the recently formed Health Education Council, at the opening of the association's annual national conference in London last week. Lady Birk, who has already made contraception first priority on the council's programme, criticized “the heavy aura of puritanism with its lingering overtones of sex for procreation but never for pleasure” which she believed still pervaded British society. This, she said, was responsible for “the half hearted way” the problem was approached.

One of the chief complaints within the FPA is the

lack of enthusiasm with which local authorities have received their obligations under the National Health Service (Family Planning) Act, 1967. The Secretary of State for Health and Social Security, Mr Richard Crossman, said he very much wanted to see local authorities provide a comprehensive service. He said that of 204 local authorities in England and Wales, only 34 at present provided an “adequate” service under the terms of the act. Regretting the fact that the act had come into effect at such a time of “financial stringency”, Mr Crossman—who last month granted the FPA its first-ever Government subsidy of £20,000 a year for five years—pointed out that on purely economic grounds the provision of an effective family planning service would lead to considerable reductions in other areas of welfare spending.

The main problem, however, as speaker after speaker reiterated, was not so much money—the FPA has an annual turnover in the region of £4 million—as the attitude of society as a whole. One of the most disturbing anomalies is the fact that while a doctor can perform an abortion on a girl under the age of sixteen, he is proscribed by law from prescribing contraceptives of any sort. As usual, it is inevitably the person who needs help most who is last to receive it. One doctor at the conference—after requesting that his professional anonymity be preserved—reported the cases of two 15-year-old girls on whom he had performed abortions: within three months they were pregnant again.

Mr Michael Schofield, author of *Sexual Behaviour of Young People*, observed that for most children nowadays formal sex education came too late, and that, especially in schools, such instruction as was given was frequently too erratic and inaccurate.

NUCLEAR REORGANIZATION

Mr Benn Explains

EVEN members of the cabinet are not secure in their jobs, Mr Anthony Wedgwood Benn, Minister of Technology, reminded last week's last public meeting of the House of Commons subcommittee on the nuclear power industry. He was answering questions about the fate of the nuclear scientists of the UKAEA in the reorganization he instigated a year ago. “The scientists whose work has led to major redundancies in the coal industry should be the last to complain about the effects of technological progress”, Mr Benn said, commenting on the reluctance of scientists to transfer to the two companies (TNPG and BNDC) which will be responsible for designing and building nuclear power stations. So far, forty members of the UKAEA fast reactor design office have accepted offers from TNPG and the remaining 100 are working for TNPG on secondment, but the Institution of Professional Civil Servants (the guardian of the UKAEA scientists) is advising against the terms offered by BNDC, presumably because BNDC is held to be the less viable of the two consortia. Mr Benn did not seem unduly worried, however. He did not accept the view that design teams should be kept together at all costs; some of the best teams are those which are brought together for a particular purpose. In any case, the scientists are employees of UKAEA, not of the Ministry of Technology, and it is up to the ministry to make the best uses of the resources of the UKAEA.