

encouraging results so far have been with accessible small melanomas, which are highly malignant and often difficult to remove surgically, but skin defects such as "portwine" birthmarks and some tattoos absorb light readily and have been treated effectively. The surgeons' main worry about using lasers as scalpels is that the skin does not heal well. There is still no evidence that laser radiation has carcinogenic effects, although a group at Tulane University has found that the growth rate of human melanoma cells is increased by low doses of laser radiation.

PLANNING

No More Sports Centre

THE Minister of Housing and Local Government, Mr Anthony Greenwood, has refused planning permission for a 1,000-acre holiday sports centre in the Eden Valley near Appleby, Westmorland (see *Nature*, 222, 317; 1969). The scheme, which had the support of the Westmorland County Council, the North Westmorland Rural Council and Appleby Borough Council, included plans for an artificial lake, swimming pools, a skating rink, halls for indoor entertainment, hotels, a motel and shops at Flakebridge about one mile north-east of Appleby; and artificial ski slopes and a ski lift on Murton Pike. The total cost would have been about £2.75 million. Objectors to the scheme included the Friends of the Lake District, the Council for the Preservation of Rural England and other amenity organizations, and farmers and holders of common grazing rights. At the public inquiry last December it was stated that the scheme would spoil one of the few still completely undeveloped parts of rural England and that it would harm agricultural interests without any compensating benefit to the locality. The minister has turned down the application in a way which will make it hard for similar proposals for the same area to get very far.

CONSERVATION

New Head Keeper

MR ROBERT BOOTE, deputy director (conservation and management) of the Nature Conservancy, has been appointed chairman of the Council of Europe Committee for the Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources. One of the responsibilities of the committee is the preparation and organization of European Conservation Year 1970, in which twenty-one nations are taking part. The principal event will be a European Conservation Conference at Strasbourg from February 9-13, 1970. The participants will prepare a "European Conservation Declaration" which will be distributed throughout Europe. Mr Boote is also secretary to the standing committee of the "Countryside in 1970", which is the official UK organizer of ECY 1970.

Parliament in Britain

Inter-University Council

THE Inter-University Council for Higher Education was originally established by British universities to advise and assist development of higher education in the then

colonies. Now, at the invitation of Mr R. Prentice, Minister of Overseas Development, it has assumed responsibility for all current British arrangements for providing aid to universities in the developing countries except those in the Indian sub-continent and some Latin American countries. The council will be the Government's main source of advice for initiatives in aid projects to overseas universities. (Written answer, June 30.)

Fulbright Awards Cut

MISS JENNIE LEE, of the Department of Education and Science, said that under the terms of the agreement between Britain and the United States, the ratio of British and American contributions to the Fulbright Commission's funds is 1 to 4. The British contribution had therefore been cut, in line with the cut in American funds announced last autumn. (Written answer, June 30.)

Abortion

IT takes little to become the world's abortion capital, as British newspapers enjoy describing London. Mr R. Crossman said that in the three months March to May 1969, only 7 per cent of all abortions and 17.5 per cent of all private abortions were performed on foreign women. The anomalous situation in which it is harder to obtain an abortion in Birmingham than in London or Manchester is underlined by the figures for abortions notified up to the end of 1968. Of Birmingham women who had abortions, 37.8 per cent travelled to private clinics in London whereas only 12.5 per cent of Manchester women did this. The total numbers of abortions on citizens of the two cities were 1,455 and 1,433 respectively. (Written answer, June 30.)

Government Research

MRS SHIRLEY WILLIAMS, replying for the Ministry of Technology, said that the gross expenditure on basic research within government establishments in 1966-67 was £34,700,000; the corresponding figure for applied research was £62,598,000. Mrs Williams also gave a breakdown of expenditure between civil and defence work and within and outside the establishments.

Table 1. GOVERNMENT EXPENDITURE ON RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT, 1966-67 (£ MILLION)

	Government establishments	Non-government sector	Total
Defence	86.7	183.0	269.6
Civil	118.3	146.2	264.6
Total	205.0	329.2	534.2

Sea-bed Reserve

LORD CHALFONT said that there were at present no plans to create nature reserves on suitable parts of the sea-bed. NERC, advised by its Nature Conservancy and Oceanography and Fisheries Committees, is apparently considering the idea. (Oral answer, July 2.)

Ancient Monuments

MR JOHN SILKIN, Minister of Public Building and Works, told the House that 329 of the 408 ancient monuments that had been recommended for scheduling in 1968 had now been scheduled. All the sites in private hands had been scheduled. The 79 that still have to be scheduled are Crown property and scheduling is not legally binding on the Crown although the authorities concerned had been notified and they will shortly be scheduled. (Written answer, July 4.)