

INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS

APST

THE Association of Professional Scientists and Technologists (APST) is spreading its wings and learning to fly at least as far as the Industrial Relations Court and the Monopolies Commission. Last week the association submitted a statement to the Monopolies Commission on the takeover battle between Boots and Beecham for Glaxo, which the commission is at present investigating.

The association asked the commission to ensure that scientists' jobs were secure in spite of the takeover moves, and argued that if the British pharmaceutical industry is to continue to play a large part in the expanding world market in drugs it is necessary that research of a high standard be carried out. To ensure this, scientists in the industry must hold permanent appointments and there must be an acceptable career structure.

But the APST has not only been making representations to the Monopolies Commission. It has also appeared before the Industrial Relations Court, along with its friend and mentor the United Kingdom Association of Professional Engineers. The association is fighting for recognition as the bargaining agent at both C. A. Parsons, the Newcastle upon Tyne engineering company whose recent past has been anything but peaceful, and at Rolls-Royce (Derby), the marine engineers. The association is also negotiating with two other employers for recognition, but hopes it will not need to have recourse to the courts to obtain this.

The APST was formed in October last year at the instigation of the Council of Science and Technology Institutes (see *Nature*, 233, 440; 1972). But an energetic recruitment drive, intended to produce between five and ten thousand members for APST within a few months, failed to raise the numbers expected. Following a merger with the British Association of Chemists (BAC), however, which voted overwhelmingly to join with APST last month, the membership of the association will stand at more than 3,000 by next month, when the merger should be legally completed. One of the advantages of the merger is that it will allow APST to move out of its temporary offices at the Royal Institute of Chemistry and into the BAC's headquarters in Harley Street. This is a move that Mr Barry Henman, acting secretary of APST, will welcome, for one. He said last week "People have made it very clear that they do not want the association to be the poodle of the institute".

Mr Henman says that he is well pleased with APST's progress although no employers have yet recognized the

association and the huge influx of members that he was hoping for last year failed to materialize. Although the membership is not large the association has five or more members in almost sixty companies. Mr Henman hopes that these members will be the founders of thriving union branches.

The association is also pressing ahead with its plans for a Confederation of Professional and Executive Associations—a professional man's TUC, but working within the Industrial Relations Act (see *Nature*, 234, 117; 1972). That will be an uphill struggle which only a youthful body like the APST would tackle.

Three working parties, with members from APST, UKAPE and the Association of Supervisory and Executive Engineers, are studying the problems involved and trying to write a constitution for the confederation. Progress has been slower than expected—it was originally predicted by UKAPE that the confederation would be fully active by January this year—but Mr Henman hopes to see the new body in action towards the end of the year. "It is," he says, "not the sort of thing that can be dreamed up overnight."

ELECTRICITY

On Tap at Dinorwic?

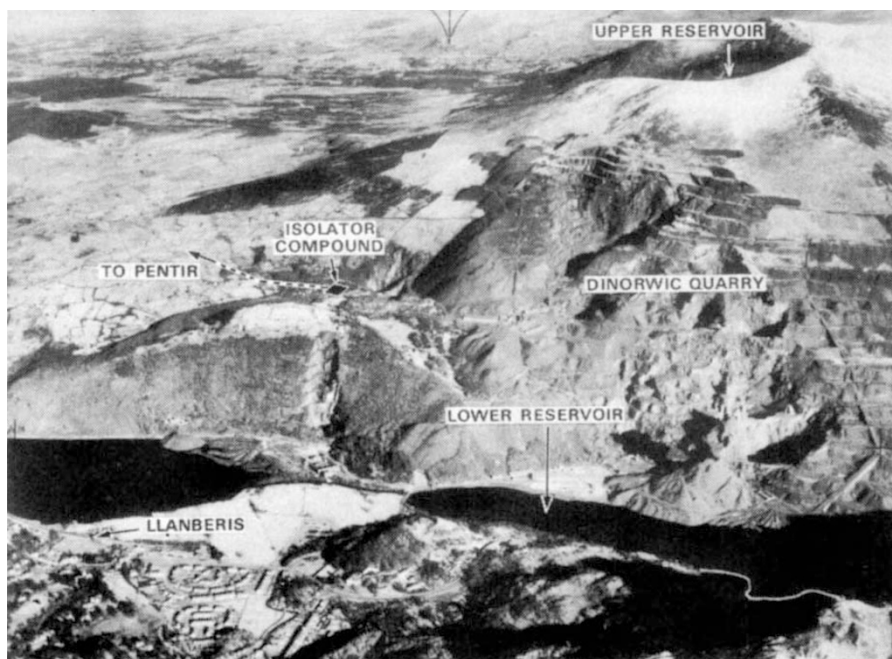
THE Central Electricity Generating Board last week announced its intention, subject to parliamentary approval, to start work on a 1,400 MW hydroelectric pumped storage scheme at Dinorwic in the Snowdonia National Park. If the plans are given the go-ahead, Dinorwic will become the second pumped storage system to be operated

by the CEBG; the first, the 360 MW Ffestiniog power station, is also situated in Snowdonia, and was commissioned in 1963. The cost of the Dinorwic project is estimated to be about £75 million, and the board hopes that it will be completed by 1979 at the latest.

Pumped storage systems work on the simple principle of using spare electricity during periods of low demand to pump water from one reservoir to another higher up; when demand is high, the additional water is allowed to flow through a hydroelectric power station and back into the lower reservoir. The advantage of such an arrangement is that electricity can be fed into the National Grid with very little delay. The Ffestiniog power station can, in fact, be started up and shut down automatically and within seconds by means of frequency sensitive relays.

An aerial view of the Dinorwic area, looking north, is shown in the Figure. The CEBG plans to make use of a lake, Llyn Peris, as the lower reservoir and Marchlyn Mawr reservoir as the upper one. The power station itself, the board says, would be built in a cavern some 175 metres long, excavated underneath the disused Dinorwic quarry.

If it comes to fruition, the scheme will involve the movement of about 6.5 million cubic metres of water between the reservoirs each day; this means the plant could generate 1,440 MW for some 5.4 hours a day and that 6 hours a day would have to be set aside for pumping. A necessary consequence is, of course, that both reservoirs would have to be enlarged to allow fluctuations in the water level. The CEBG envisages an embankment 13 metres high at each end of the lower reservoir and a single embankment about 40 metres high at



The Dinorwic area.