

This principle of the quinquennial grant found general support in the debate on July 6, and the need for continuity was admitted even by the Government spokesman, Mr. Anthony Nutting, though he declined to commit the Government to any specific action on the report; by implication, he rejected the essential recommendation of the Committee, namely, that information work, whether conducted by the British Broadcasting Corporation, the British Council, the Central Office of Information or individual Government Departments, should be viewed as a whole with its strategy planned and its finances guaranteed over a period of years. While it would thus appear that the Government is unwilling to accept the Drogheda Committee's suggestion of a permanent Advisory Committee, Mr. Nutting joined with other speakers in repudiating emphatically the attacks made on the British Council and its work, particularly those being made in the Beaverbrook press. The British Council Staff Association has recently replied to these attacks by publishing at its own expense a pamphlet entitled "The Beaverbrook Press and the British Council" (pp. 12; 6d.), and this pamphlet was commended by the Minister. It is just such occurrences which the Press Council was formed to investigate, and it is to be hoped that the Council will in due course take up the matter.

#### Ciba Foundation: Support for Gerontological Studies

THE Ciba Foundation has decided to support experimental work and basic investigations into the problems of ageing as an additional item in its general programme for the promotion of international co-operation in medical and chemical research. An extra sum of money has consequently been set aside for gerontological studies over the next five years, and these studies will take the form of regular colloquia, informal discussion meetings, lectures, special awards and travelling fellowships. The recent colloquium on "Aspects of Ageing", held by the Foundation during July 14-16, was the first of a series in this field, and the proceedings of this colloquium will be published as a series of volumes on lines similar to the Foundation's well-known "Colloquia on Endocrinology". When the opportunity occurs, guests staying in the Foundation with special knowledge in gerontology will be invited to open informal discussion meetings. The annual Ciba Foundation Lectureship will be open to distinguished workers in the field. For the Foundation's awards for original researches, candidates are invited to submit unpublished work (though it may be under consideration for publication), and prize-winning entries may be printed in English and bound periodically to form a separate series of volumes representing international progress in the field. It is proposed to make five such awards in the first year, of an average value of £300 each, but the size and number of the awards may be varied according to circumstances. The Foundation will also from time to time make grants for travelling fellowships, especially where it is considered that candidates would benefit from a visit or visits to laboratories in another country.

#### Cairngorms Nature Reserve

THE declaration by the Nature Conservancy in Edinburgh on July 9 of the Cairngorms Nature Reserve brought into existence much the largest nature reserve in Great Britain and one of the largest in Europe. The 62 square miles, or 39,689 acres,

now declared omits Cairngorm but includes the three highest summits and is slightly larger than the 38,000-acre area originally recommended by the Scottish Wild Life Conservation Committee. Only about one-eighth of the area, covering the higher lands of Invereshie, has been bought by the Conservancy. The remainder is brought in under a series of nature reserve agreements which are the first under Section 16 of the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act, 1949, to be completed between the Nature Conservancy and private landowners. It is also planned later to enlarge the Reserve, which is intended to preserve as nearly as possible unchanged this grand stretch of country and its highly interesting wild life and vegetation for the enjoyment of the present and future generations and for scientific study. There will be no charge as regards access, but formalities will be required for those wishing to undertake research, to take specimens of animals or plants (which will be prohibited except for scientific purposes) or to obtain permits for camping. Applications for collecting or other scientific purposes should be addressed to the Nature Conservancy at 12 Hope Terrace, Edinburgh 2. Two Conservancy wardens are already in residence and will be glad to inform and assist visitors. Deer-stalking, grouse-shooting and the destruction of a few undesirable pests will continue, but special protection zones have been arranged for ptarmigan, and no birds of prey except sparrowhawks will be killed.

A strong Cairngorms Consultative Panel has been established to advise the Conservancy on all matters affecting public rights and interests, including mountain rescue arrangements, and the Conservancy hopes to assist in the provision of footbridges and the care of mountain shelters. The programme of scientific investigations will probably include the natural regeneration of native Scots pine in the remnants of the Caledonian Forest, the ecology of mountain birds, plants and insects, and high-altitude meteorology. The primary object of the Reserve, however, is to safeguard its characteristic Highland wild-life, including the golden eagle, ptarmigan, dotterel, snowbunting, blackcock, greenshank, crested tit and Scottish crossbill, as well as red deer and roe deer, wild cat and other mammals, and more than two hundred species of flowering plants and hundreds of species of non-flowering plants and invertebrates, many of which are of considerable rarity and interest.

#### Society for the Promotion of Nature Reserves

THE 1953 handbook of the Society for the Promotion of Nature Reserves gives an account of the eight reserves administered by the Society: Woodwalton Fen (Huntingdonshire), Dancer's End (Buckinghamshire), Meathop Moss (Westmorland), Badgeworth Marsh (Gloucestershire), the Coward Memorial Reserves (Cheshire), Mickfield Meadow (Suffolk), Sharpham Moor (Somerset) and Bellairs Great Wood (Essex). All these reserves were established in order to preserve certain rare plants, insects or birds, and each year their value becomes greater with increasing housing development and the consequent destruction of areas of interest to the naturalist. Among the species protected in the reserves are *Fritillaria meleagris*, *Ranunculus ophio-glossifolius*, *Carex evoluta* and *Salvia pratensis*. The international aspect of Nature protection is described in the report of the meeting at Salzburg of the International Union for the Protection of Nature,