

## NATIONAL PARKS IN BRITAIN

THE eighth annual report of the National Parks Commission\*, which includes confirmation of the Designation Order for the Brecon Beacons National Park, brought the number of National Parks established to ten, covering an area of 5,250 square miles. With the confirmation of the Commission's orders designating areas in the Gower Peninsula and in Lleyn and the Quantock Hills the first areas of outstanding natural beauty designated under Section 87 of the Act have been established, but the Minister's decision on the Surrey Hills area is awaited. Formal proposals for the designation of other areas on the Dorset coast and its hinterland, in Cornwall and Cannock Chase and on the Northumberland coast have been made to the local authorities concerned. The Commission also reports that though there has been no general relaxation of the restriction on capital expenditure, the Minister has enabled Park planning authorities to proceed with some tree planting and construction on car parks. Some quiet progress is reported in other matters also, such as the provision of cheap holiday accommodation for visitors with young families, anti-litter campaigns and caravan sites; but it is clear that, although in some areas progress has been made in the removal of misunderstandings and unreasonable criticism of the handling by the Park committees of applications for the supply of electricity, the Commission is still not entirely happy about the administrative arrangements resulting from the Minister's failure to insist on the provisions of the Act. There is also still room in all Park areas for the publicity activities which the Park Planning Board have been extending.

New rights of way were dedicated along some ten miles of the Pennine Way, leaving some 5½ miles outstanding, but progress in making footpath agreements for the approved Cornwall North and South Coast Paths remains slow. With the acquisition of some nine new miles along the Pembrokeshire Coast Path, 25 miles remain to be completed, and some 44 miles of new rights of way are still required

\* Eighth Report of the National Parks Commission for the Year ending 30th September, 1957. Pp. iv + 66 + 8 plates. (London: H.M. Stationery Office, 1958.) 5s. 6d. net.

for the Offa's Dyke route. Increasing attention is being given to publicity by the Commission itself, both for the Country Code and in attempts to make the National Parks more widely known and create public awareness of what is being done under the National Parks Act. Evidence was given to the Royal Commission on Common Land in which the National Parks Commission recommended that any body or person empowered to sanction change of use of commons, or to extinguish common rights, or to draw up schemes of management for commons, should, before any action were decided, receive representations from the local planning authority and, where National Parks or areas of outstanding natural beauty were concerned, from the National Parks Commission. The hope was expressed that common land would be given over to rotational cropping only where it was clearly in the national interest to do so, and that in forestry schemes landscape values would be protected so far as possible by the consultations already indicated. Management schemes designed to enhance the beauty of the landscape and preserve to the public the recreational use of the land were favoured, and the National Parks Commission stated that it would strongly oppose, save in cases of the most exceptional national importance, the use of common land for mineral extraction. An approach was again made, but without success, to the Chancellor of the Exchequer for provision in the Finance Bill, or in a separate Bill, for the reimbursement from the National Land Fund of expenditure on National Parks.

The outstanding feature of the Commission's report this year is once again that of development, and especially those represented by the proposals for a nuclear power station at Trawsfynydd. The Tryweryn Valley Water Scheme (in which the Liverpool Corporation withdrew entirely the Conway part of its scheme against which statutory and amenity bodies had petitioned) and developments at Milford Haven are going ahead, but the Commission affirms the view that large-scale industry should only be sited in National Parks in cases of over-riding and inescapable national necessity and in the absence of alternative sites elsewhere.

## RECRUITMENT OF TEACHERS

SIR EDWARD BOYLE, Parliamentary Secretary to the Ministry of Education, replying for the Government in a debate on February 14, on the recruitment and training of teachers, said that he did not think that unemployment among teachers in the nineteen-sixties was to be feared. The cornerstone of the Government's educational policy was that the first priority should be a reduction in the size of classes, and although Sir Edward did not discuss other objectives such as compulsory part-time day release and raising the school-leaving age to sixteen still required for full implementation of the 1944 Act, he pointed out that decision on the timing of these objectives would be governed by, *inter alia*, the supply of teachers. The debate was a little too early for him to give the full picture, but over the seven years that ended in 1956 the increase in the

number of teachers in maintained schools was about 6,500, but this now seemed to have dropped to just over 5,000. About 900 more training teachers should be going into the schools in 1958 than in 1957 and a further 700 in 1959. Recruits to teaching without professional training remained fairly steady at 700 a year, but there was a marked increase in graduates taking up first appointments in schools—from about 1,800 in the year ended March 31, 1956, to about 2,600 the following year. There had, however, been marked decline in the number of married women returning to teaching, from 2,300 in 1951-55, to just over 1,000 in 1956. Nearly 600 more teachers retired in 1957 than in 1956 and it seemed also that more women teachers resigned than in previous years. On this net annual increase of 5,000, if the present ratio of 21.5 pupils per full-time