

NEWS AND VIEWS

British Science Spending

THE threatened squeeze on the research councils, which seemed all too imminent only a few months ago, has been postponed for at least another year. According to the preliminary estimates for expenditure by the British Government in the financial year 1967-68 (*Vote on Account 1967-68*, Cmnd. 337, H.M.S.O., 2s. 3d.), the allocation to the four principal research councils will increase by 9.6 per cent to a total of £68.3 million. Understandably, there is a still sharper increase of the budget of the newly formed Social Science Research Council from £709,000 to £1,162,000. On the face of things, it may therefore seem that the research councils are doing as well as can be expected at a time of financial stringency, and they seem to be well pleased with the way that things have turned out, even though they have recently been used to an even faster rate of growth—an increase of 20 per cent between 1965-66 and 1966-67, for example. The budgets of some of the councils may be more elastic than those of others, so that some councils may be less well placed to undertake projects in the year ahead. The allocations to the four research councils dealing with the natural sciences in recent years, in millions of pounds, are as follows:

	1965-66	1966-67	1967-68
Science Research Council	28.6	33.9	36.6
National Engineering Research Council	3.5	6.2	7.7
Medical Research Council	10.3	11.9	12.0
Agricultural Research Council	9.3	10.3	12.0
Total	51.7	62.3	68.3

The cost of research and development carried out within the budget of the Ministry of Defence will be marginally less during the coming financial year than in 1966-67. According to the *Defence Estimates* published last week (Cmnd. 312, H.M.S.O., 19s.), the total cost of defence research and development in 1967-68 will amount to £260 million, compared with £275 million in the previous financial year. Much of the decrease is accounted for by reduced expenditure on aircraft research and development.

The Size of Technology

THE merging of the Ministry of Aviation with the Ministry of Technology on February 15 will have seemed much like a gnat swallowing an elephant. The entire cost of running the research and development establishments under the old Ministry of Technology was about £11 million, but those it has now acquired cost roughly £45 million a year to run (*Civil Estimates 1966-67*). But the Ministry of Technology is now also responsible for the expenditure of the Ministry of Aviation on industrial research and development, which cost £194 million last year, and support for the European Launcher Development Organization (ELDO), which cost £11.3 million. To round off Mr. Wedgwood Benn's new empire, there are the United Kingdom Atomic Energy Authority, whose civil activities cost £28.7 million in 1966-67, the National Research and Development Council, and the 48 research associations and the National Computing

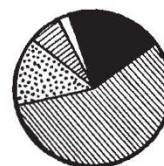
RESEARCH EXPENDITURE

	Expenditure (£)	
	Staff (salaries, etc.)	Capital and re-current expenses
Ministry of Technology		
Building Research Station	983,000	277,000
Fire Research Station	199,000	63,000
Forest Products Research Station	247,000	43,200
Hydraulics Research Station	281,000	95,200
Government Chemist Laboratory	591,000	86,200
National Engineering Laboratory	1,088,000	1,465,000
National Physical Laboratory	2,341,000	1,339,000
Torry Research Station	241,000	121,800
Warren Spring Laboratory	539,000	272,000
Water Pollution Research Laboratory	246,000	72,600
National Research Development Corp. U.K.A.E.A.		£7,400,000
Research Association grants		£28,723,000
National Computing Centre		£3,570,000
		£300,000
Ministry of Aviation		
Aeroplane and Armament Exptl. Est.	}	£44,830,000
Explosives R and D Establishment		
National Gas Turbine Establishment		
Rocket Propulsion Establishment		
Royal Aircraft Establishment		
Royal Radar Establishment		
Signals Research and D Est. U.K.A.E.A.		
		£54,900,000

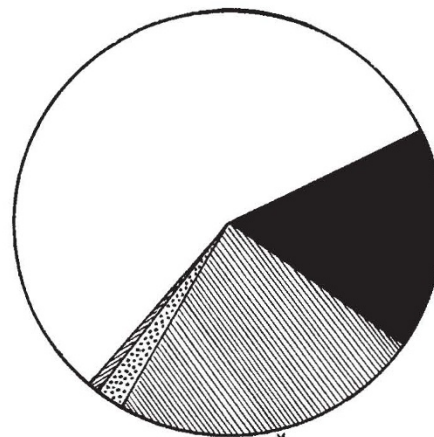
Centre which cost £3.6 million and £0.3 million a year respectively.

Not all the new establishments seem to fit easily into the Ministry of Technology. It is difficult to see, for example, how it will use the Explosives Research and Development Establishment, or the Aeroplane and Armament Experimental Establishment. It might have been more consistent with the Ministry's pre-occupation if these establishments had been hived off to the Ministry of Defence. They will, in fact, be controlled from the building of the Ministry of Defence, since Mr. John Stonehouse, looking after the new acquisitions as

Old Ministry of Technology, total £51.35 million



New Ministry of Technology, total £344.5 million



- Research Associations
- N.R.D.C.
- Research Establishments
- U.K.A.E.A.
- Industry

*This allocation includes the payment at present made by the Ministry of Aviation for special materials.