

for Education and Science, Mr Anthony Crosland, said that the building of eighty million pounds worth of new schools was begun in 1966-67. The rate at which Britain is building new schools has therefore returned to where it stood in 1962 and 1963.

At the same time as the news of this special allocation comes details of a slight increase in the amount education authorities will be able to spend on "minor works", worth less than £20,000, which do not require permission from Whitehall. The amount set aside for this will now be £27.5 million.

Britain by Numbers

THE latest *Abstract of Regional Statistics*, issued by the Central Statistical Office (HMSO, 10s.), covers a lot of ground. As well as the tables of population and area, fuel and power, production, construction, distribution, transport and education, there are three new tables. These cover the number of agricultural holdings, a survey of personal incomes in 1964-65, and a survey of average gross annual earnings.

Many of the tables reflect the erratic progress of the British economy in the past ten years. Unemployment, up to 2.6 per cent in 1963, was down again to 1.6 per cent in 1966—the last year for which figures are given in the abstract. Now it is up to near the 1963 peak once again. Steel production reached peaks in 1957, 1960 and 1965, but has now declined from the 1965 figure of 27 million tons to 24.3 million tons in 1966. Deep mined coal shows a steady decline since 1956, from 207 million tons, to 166.5 million tons in 1966. The profitable coalfields in Yorkshire and the East Midlands, on the other hand, show only a very slight decline. Over the ten year period, the number of miners in the pits has fallen from nearly 700 thousand to 426 thousand, while open cast mining has shown an even faster decline. Output per man-shift in coalmining has, however, increased rapidly, from 24.7 cwt. in 1956 to 36.4 cwt. in 1966.

New tables compiled by the Ministry of Social Security gave figures for annual earnings of people in civil employment in much greater detail than before. These show that the average gross earnings for men in the age range 18-64 increased from £1,033 in 1964-65 to £1,104 in 1965-66. The figures for women are far lower, £525 in 1964-65 and £558 in 1965-66. This includes married women, who tend to earn less than spinsters; the figure for unmarried women was £601 in 1964-65 and £638 in 1965-66. The earnings are also broken down by area; men in the GLC area earned an average of £1,204 in 1965-66, against the national average of £1,104. The worst paid men were those in East Anglia, with annual earnings of £1,007.

Problem Solving

THREE British research associations—the British Cast Iron Research Association, the British Welding Research Association and the Production Engineering Research Association—have formed one of the largest known organizations for solving production problems and improving manufacturing efficiency. The organization, called the Production Advisers Consortium (PRODAC), will provide a pool of more than 1,200 engineers, metallurgists, designers, economists and

other qualified people to carry out research into all problems of production from the initial raw metal to the final marketing and distribution.

Hitherto, companies wishing to sponsor research could only use the services of the associations of which they were members, but under the new scheme the research teams of all three of the associations will be at their disposal. The research and advisory service is available on a confidential fee-paying basis to any member of one of the research associations, with the exception of a member firm which has resigned from the research association whose advice is sought. PRODAC will not replace the normal service provided by each research association to its members, for it will be concerned solely with sponsored or repayment work.

The consortium will be controlled by a consultative board consisting of Dr D. F. Galloway, director of the Production Engineering Research Association, as chairman, Mr H. Morrogh, director of the British Cast Iron Research Association, and Dr R. Weck, director of the British Welding Research Association.

More Dead Birds

THIS Table, provided by the RSPCA, gives details of the commoner species of birds which, contaminated by oil from the Torrey Canyon, were sent to cleaning stations by April 17. Of the 443 birds listed as rehabilitated, many have since died either in captivity or on release.

Cleaning and reception station	Alive	Died	Guillemot	Razorbill	Shag	Puffin
St. Ives 1	76	3	318	62		
2	251	45				
Veryan	308	300	495	98	2	7
Newquay 1	153	62	175	38	1	1
2	268	406	558	112	1	3
St. Keverne	101	35	114	22		
Sennen	120	20	116	23		1
Mevagissey	20	9	28	1		
Perranporth	542	456	827	166	1	4
Scorrier	252	138	318	58	8	2
Hayle	325	154	399	78	1	1
Ruan Minor 1	16	4	18	2		
2	28	27	48	7		
Mousehole	3,351	379	2,946	717	27	23
Totals	5,811	2,038	6,355	1,384	41	42
Totals			335	103	3	2

Progress in Instruments

ANOTHER year of rapid expansion in the activities of the Scientific Instrument Research Association is reported by the chairman in his annual report for 1966. The industrial income in support of group-sponsored projects has risen by 380 per cent over the past three years to £66,800. Income from subscription has increased by 23 per cent over the three year period to £72,200 and income from sponsored research has increased to a record level of £100,711. As a result, the association is negotiating with the Ministry of Technology to increase the ceiling of its grant. The total budget of the association reached the figure of £438,000.

Expenditure on industrial measurement and control projects increased from £75,000 in 1965-66 to £145,000. The association has decided to recruit staff to undertake technically oriented market research and has set up an industrial communications group to provide a broader base for its information department and to help in the task of spreading technical knowledge by every possible means, especially in automation.