

parents' attitudes towards their children's social and educational handicap. The survey stresses that parents need guidance and support in helping them to accept that their child may not make normal progress without special assistance.

Water Development

IN its annual report, whose principal conclusion is that Britain has too much water—not too little—the Water Resources Board gives details of some interesting research being carried out under its aegis. There has, for example, been a programme of research into the regulation of the river Dee. Work on the generation of synthetic river flow data has been in progress at the Water Research Association and Lancaster University, and mathematical models representing catchment response are being studied at Imperial College. At the same time, attention is being paid to the problems of fisheries in the river, and it is hoped to build a fish counting station with an experimental electric fish barrier.

Less progress has been made in investigations of artificial recharge as a means of augmenting resources, largely owing to lack of staff. The report suggests that, although desalination plants similar to those built and projected in the United States will not be profitable in Britain in the immediate future, there is sense in the use of flash distillation plants in conjunction with conventional surface reservoirs to meet intermittent excess demands. It is important, therefore, that operating experience of a multi-stage flash distillation plant should be obtained in Britain. The pilot electro dialysis plant in Essex for desalting brackish ground water from the chalk is now in operation, however, and there is a possibility that such a system could be used for reclamation of water from industrial and sewage effluents.

A most important part of the Water Resources Board's programme is the development of automatic hydrometric instrumentation. It is hoped that by mid-1968 equipment will be available for recording climatological and river water quality data on magnetic tape in such a way that the information can easily be fed into a computer. The board has negotiated with instrument manufacturers as a group, rather than individually, and feels sure that the advantages of this particular procedure have been significant. An ICT 1901(S) computer has very recently been acquired, and a team of staff to handle it recruited. The new computer section will serve all the divisions of the board. At present river flow data have been processed for river authorities, and the new computer will allow the service to be extended to cover climatic and other data.

The total expenditure of the board on research and on contributions for the support of university and river authority work was £212,500 last year.

Production in Japan

JAPAN is expected to overtake West Germany in the production of motor vehicles this year, and so become the second largest motor manufacturer in the world. More than three million cars will have been built, an increase of no less than 40 per cent since 1966. Nor will this rate of growth fall, for production in 1968 should easily exceed four million vehicles.

Japanese exports used to be thought of as imitative and voluminous. Japan's achievements in shipbuilding and light engineering have convinced Westerners that the first of these epithets is unjustified, but it would surprise many to know that Japan's exports in 1966 were little more than half those of Britain—\$8,450 m against \$14,000 m, at the old rate of exchange. But if those in the West have exaggerated Japan's export performance, they have paid little attention to her importance as a producer of goods, as the table shows.

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	Japan	many	Britain	France	Italy
Sulphuric acid	5.66	3.06	3.3	2.9	4.75 million tons
Synthetic fibres	1,098	1,025	846	475	650 million lb.
Steel	41	36	27	19	12.6 million tons
Motor vehicles	1.88	2.9	2.2	1.5	11.4 million
Electricity	180	172	148	101	82 thousand million units
TV sets	4.2	2.8	1.6	1.25	1.2 million
Ships	5.4	1.02	1.07	0.48	0.44 million tons launched

Statistics of Industrial Production, 1965.

The foregoing table demonstrates the somewhat surprising fact that even in 1965, Japan was producing more steel, electricity, television sets, and, of course, ships than France and Italy combined, and that her output of synthetic fibres and motor vehicles was even then comparable with the combined totals of those two countries. It is interesting to reflect on the difference between the economic and political weights of the first four countries listed here. Japan's reliance on the United States as a trading partner precludes extravagant political gestures. Perhaps the next few years will see Japan rise to a diplomatic importance commensurate with her strength.

Pooling Ocean Resources

TWENTY-EIGHT nations have joined in a proposal to set up a United Nations committee to study the peaceful international exploitation of the ocean floors of the world: the United States is a sponsor of the proposal.

According to a draft resolution presented to the General Assembly's main political committee, the proposed committee will be required to conduct a survey of the past and present activities of the United Nations and its various agencies regarding the ocean floor and of existing international agreements concerning them; to summarize the scientific, economic, technical, legal and other problems which are involved in international use of underwater resources; and, finally, to suggest the practical means by which international co-operation could be promoted in the exploration, conservation and use of the ocean floor and its sub-soil.

The recommendation grew out of a debate on the subject in the political committee, and it was Malta which suggested that resources beneath the sea should be exploited for the benefit of all mankind. In deference to national claims of territorial waters, the draft resolution restricts its recommendations to the "sea bed and the ocean floor, and the sub-soil thereof, underlying the high seas beyond the limits of present national jurisdiction". Before the new committee can be set up, however, the draft resolution must