

learn a new language, and competitive pricing should help to encourage buyers. These moves come at a time of unprecedented weakness for IBM in the British market—it has even been suggested that IBM's share of the British market has fallen below 30 per cent. Whether or not this is true—IBM always refuses to divulge its market share—it is certainly true that Britain is proving a tougher market than some others. Because IBM does most of its production for Europe in France and West Germany, the effects of devaluation are likely to hit the company harder than others. Honeywell, which produces computers at its factory in Scotland, will be cheered by devaluation. ICT, on the other hand, still views the effects of devaluation with some suspicion. Colonel A. T. Maxwell, chairman of the company, presenting the annual report for 1967, said that the effect of the measures was still not clear. "We are inevitably faced with higher costs, but we shall so direct our affairs as to contain these as much as possible. We are also seizing the opportunity of increasing our exports."

Only one other computer manufacturer, Burroughs, has so far announced price increases of its own; they will work out at an average of about 7.5 per cent. So far, no other companies have followed IBM and Burroughs, but the betting is that some—perhaps including English Electric—will have to do so within the next few weeks.

## Policy for Research

THE British Government will shortly be issuing a long-awaited White Paper on research policy. At least one of the purposes of the White Paper will be to define ways in which the research establishments can help industry. Because there is plenty of room for disagreement—and misunderstanding—between the ministry and the industries it is trying to assist, the Electronic Engineering Association has got in first by producing a memorandum which sets out its own views on what the relationship should be. The report, which goes for discussion to the Development Council for the Electronics Industry next month, may differ in emphasis from the policy which the ministry must by now have agreed on. So far, though, any clashes between the association and the ministry are hypothetical.

The chief point which the report makes is that, when projects are jointly undertaken by government and industry, leadership should be very firmly in the hands of the industrial partners. Captain R. A. Villiers of the association points out that when research establishments were involved with military work they kept closely in touch with the military market, but the shift to civil work means that a new relationship with industry has to be worked out. He thinks that the ministry has much to learn by examining the records of other industrialized countries, which tend, among other things, to contract more work out to industry and to do less in the establishments. The main part the establishments can play on their own, he thinks, is in more basic research work—like, for example, the work on oceanography at Harwell.

Another idea which Captain Villiers puts forward involves the actual transfer of people from the establishments to industry and vice versa. Teams of people from the establishments should be able to join indus-

trial firms, and teams from industry should be seconded to government establishments to pick up know-how. To do this, he says, both sides must become more flexible about transferring pension rights. But so far he seems confident that there is no clash of views between himself and the Government. Others will await the White Paper before committing themselves so cheerfully.

## Swiss Smelting

THE Swiss Aluminium Company has submitted a tender to build an aluminium smelter in Britain. The company says the smelter could be built in 2.5 years at a cost of between £18 and £20 million and a maximum capacity of 100,000 tons. Other tenders have so far been made by Rio Tinto Zinc in conjunction with British Insulated Callender's Cables, by Alcan Aluminium of Canada and by British Aluminium. British Aluminium is jointly owned by Reynolds Metal Company of the United States and by Tube Investments.

The high cost of electricity in Britain has hitherto prohibited the development of a native aluminium smelting industry of any size. The decision by the British Government to invite tenders for a plant was made with the intention both of reducing imports and of creating new jobs in development areas. Tariffs being out of the question, the project is rendered commercially viable by the offer of cheap electricity and generous investment grants (see *Nature*, 216, 109; 1967). The Board of Trade is prepared to grant these incentives to foreign and British companies without discrimination. The Government envisages the construction of two plants with a total capacity of 240,000 tons a year. It is hoped that the first will begin production in 1970 and the second in 1974.

## Sediments for Peace

THE Parliamentary Group for World Government, which is based in London, seems well launched on its campaign to bring international law and order to the bottom of the deep oceans. Earlier this week the group made public the membership of the committee which has been formed to study some of the problems of arranging that the resources of the deep oceans should be exploited "for the benefit of all mankind". The chairman of the committee is a barrister, Mr Maurice Bathurst, and the ordinary membership seems equally divided between lawyers, scientists and those with more general interests. Lord Ritchie-Calder is perhaps most accurately described as the founder member of the movement, for he was one of the first to urge, a year ago, that there should be a United Nations agency empowered to exploit the resources of the oceans and to spend the proceeds on international peace-keeping forces. Other members include Dr G. E. R. Deacon, director of the National Institute of Oceanography, Commandant Cousteau, director of the Institut Océanographique at Monaco, Dr T. Gaskell, of British Petroleum Ltd, and Mr Oscar Gugen of the World Underwater Federation. Dr Thor Heyerdahl has promised his support to the committee, which has already met on two occasions and which is evidently prepared for a busy year ahead.

By all accounts, the committee will have to divide