

that the vegetation of the period was typical of a local interstadial and does not resemble Weichselian interstadial deposits. Third, the occurrence of glacial gravels and sands above the tool bearing layers rules out the possibility that they were deposited in the final Weichsel glaciation because in the breckland there is no evidence for Weichselian glacial deposits on this scale.

The flake tools of the characteristic High Lodge industry are stylistically related to Mousterian tools of the Weichsel and to ancestral types found in the Eemian interglacial, but they appear to have been made some 50,000 years earlier. On the other hand, they are quite distinct from and more sophisticated than the Clactonian flake tools found at Swanscombe. And the occurrence of flake tools before hand axes is no longer the problem it once seemed, for since the 1920s several sites have been discovered with alternating successions of flake and axe industries. Both types seem to have gone in and out of fashion and neither style necessarily predates the other.

UNIVERSITIES

Graduate Training

from a Correspondent

UNIVERSITY departments in Europe are usually smaller in numbers of staff than the larger schools in similar subjects in the United States. This tends to lead to the narrowing of the field covered in graduate courses, because there are not people available with first hand experience in all the areas which should ideally be covered. An interesting attempt to overcome these limitations has been initiated by the Department of Genetics at Edinburgh University. One of the graduate courses offered by this Department is in Epigenetics. This covers experimental embryology and related aspects of developmental biology, dealt with mainly in molecular terms as the working out of the instructions encoded in the genotype. The staff of the Edinburgh department has considerable research experience with embryos and other developmental systems derived from mammals, birds, amphibia, insects (particularly *Drosophila*), fungi and micro-organisms, but little with marine invertebrates such as echinoderms.

A grant from the Leverhulme Trust has now made it possible to organize an International Graduate School with participation of teaching staff from the department of Professor Alberto Monroy, one of the leading European workers on echinoderms, who is now at Palermo but is shortly moving to Naples; and from a leading American Department, that of Professor Eugene Bell at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. The course, which will start with a restricted intake of only six students a year, probably four from Britain and two from Italy, will be organized on the basis of a three year period. The first will be equivalent to an English honours year, while the second two will be devoted to research projects, leading to the PhD. There will not only be visits of three or four weeks by members of the Naples and MIT staff to Edinburgh, but it is intended that all the students of the course shall at some time spend about one month in the Naples laboratory, becoming acquainted with the experimental techniques used there and the biological materials available.

Parliament in Britain

University of the Air

THE British Broadcasting Corporation and the Open University Planning Committee have agreed in principle about the Open University radio and television programmes up to 1975. Senior academic staff have been appointed and next year regional directors will be appointed who will organize study facilities in their regions. Miss Jennie Lee, Minister of State in the Department of Education and Science, assured members that provision would be made for laboratory studies. An advisory service was being set up to help students decide whether they would benefit from the courses. Discussing the need for additional library facilities for Open University students, Miss Lee said that arrangements would have to be discussed between the university and the library authorities. (Oral and written answers, December 5.)

Nuclear Accelerator

ASKED whether the Government would reconsider its decision not to participate in the CERN 300 GeV nuclear accelerator in the light of the Nuclear Physics Board's recommendation that it should do so and should pay for participation by spending less on existing obsolescent accelerators, Mrs Shirley Williams, Minister of State in the Department of Education and Science, said no. She argued that the board had based its proposals on the assumption that the site would be in Britain, but that it would probably not be. She emphasized that the CERN Convention which is being drawn up allows countries to join in at a later stage so that it was still possible that Britain might participate. (Oral answer, December 5.)

Aluminium Smelting

THE Government's decision to install capacity for smelting 320,000 tons of aluminium a year should save Britain an average of about £40 million a year on imports of raw materials. The three new aluminium plants will use imported alumina which together with other raw materials and fuel should cost about £20 million a year while it would cost about £60 million to import an equivalent amount of aluminium. (Written answer, December 4.)

Contraception in Scotland

SCOTTISH local authorities cannot supply contraceptive advice or appliances on purely social grounds. Mr William Ross, Secretary of State for Scotland, said that he would like to alter this, but he had not yet been asked by any Scottish local authorities to change the ruling. (Oral answer, December 4.)

Ronan Point

MR ROBERT MELLISH, the Minister of Public Building and Works, said that he wished to qualify his general acceptance of the Ronan Point Tribunal's report. The Building Research Station (BRS) had informed the British Standards Institution Committee about the Comité Européen du Béton's warning of the dangers of progressive collapse of large panel structures. The BRS has carried out experiments on joints in pre-cast concrete structures and gave advice to designers of these structures. The tribunal did not take enough notice of the work done by the BRS and the NPL which may show that the risk of collapse from high wind loading is small compared with that from explosion. (Written answer, December 3.)