science policy for the Conservative Party. Indeed, in the nature of things, the Conservatives are not very interested in giving away their plans in advance. Given the difficulties of policy making in opposition, when front bench spokesmen can easily become out of touch, the seminar fulfilled a useful purpose. At least it indicated that the difficulties of producing a policy for science and technology will not be spirited away by a change of government. That much, perhaps, is common ground between the parties.

POLITICS

Science All-Pervading

To coincide with its 1 day seminar on science policy, the Conservative Political Centre published this week a pamphlet which sets out its ideas on the organization of science. The pamphlet, *Science and Public Policy*, is written by Mr David Price, Shadow Minister of Science and Technology. Its message is that a Conservative Government should attempt to bring science into the formulation and execution of all policy—summed up in the phrase “Science in all policy rather than a policy for all science”. But Mr Price admits that to achieve this admirable state of affairs “the whole ethos of Whitehall must change”. “Neither the present machinery of Government nor those who operate it, whether politicians or civil servants, are wholly adequate to respond with understanding to the opportunities and to the problems thrown up by the advances of science and technology”.

Mr Price says that Government cannot be changed by reorganizing departmental responsibilities; it means persuading or compelling every Government department to use the techniques of scientific management.

The real problem of technology in Britain, as Mr Price identifies it, is that there is an “exploitation gap”. The responsibility for filling this gap he places firmly with British industry, which he says should try to copy the success of the great international corporations. All that the Government needs to do is to provide a climate in which risk capital is readily available. In effect, this rests on the assumption that a Conservative Government would be better at managing the economy than the present one.

There are, it is true, some further tasks which Mr Price assigns to central government, but a solution to the problem of changing personal attitudes towards science and technology, he believes, cannot be imposed from above. At the same time, he does not exempt members of parliament from the charge that they have ignored science. Mr Price says, “This alienation of working politicians from science and technology... has been unfortunate. It must end soon if our parliamentary democracy is not to end first”.

SPACE POLITICS

ELDO on the Block

from a Special Correspondent

Bonn, November 12

THE ELDO ministers' meeting on November 11, which acted as a curtain raiser to the main European Space Conference on the following three days in Bonn, was as

inconclusive as ever. The main issues were transferred to the European Space Conference itself. What is clear, however, is that the Europa rocket still has some life in it.

Two set pieces opened the meeting. One was the tabling of the Spacy Committee's proposals after its month's work since appointment on October 2 (see *Nature*, 220, 315; 1968). The document was not published but is concerned with an overall European space programme conducted within a single European space body. It is understood to call for very ambitious communications satellite projects, continuing well beyond the completion of the Europa I and II programme, and with a proportionately large price tag. The implications of this are far-reaching and complex and are likely to be overtaken by events at the main space conference. Even among the ELDO meeting's members—Britain apart—there were differences of view on how the launchers were to be produced and on the mode of management and control.

There was more progress on the other set piece—proposals put forward by the ELDO Secretariat on how to prune the current Europa I and II programme so as to avoid the threatened over-expenditure of \$100 million. The extra cost has been caused by the failure of the French second stage of the Europa launcher on both occasions it has so far flown. The *F7* flight from Woomera, scheduled for November 17, will be the third attempt and the first to aim for an orbit (employing a test satellite). The new plan cuts out two full test flights (*F10* from Woomera and a geostationary injection attempt from Guiana) and the last two development flights (*F11* and *12*) will fly without apogee motor. The Italians would lose substantial amounts of work by the revised arrangement, so the French and German Governments have offered Italy a share in the apogee motor development for their bilateral Symphonic communications satellite project. Another achievement was that the British delegation has at last persuaded ELDO's continental members that it is in good faith when it offers to supply Blue Streaks even when Britain has ceased to take an active part in ELDO, after 1971. “The terms are sufficient,” the meeting's chairman, Belgian Research Minister M. Lefevre laconically remarked to the members when the meeting finally broke up late on Monday evening.

A final communiqué in the form of a resolution was issued later. The British abstained from this, and the Italians agreed only if they could refer it back to their government. The main British objection, it appears, is to sweeping plans for further studies including work on a future programme, beyond 1971, which may involve a fair sum of money out of the current budget. It is expected that Britain will put forward a counter-proposal at the European Space Conference for the use of the substantial budget now going to ELDO for point to point communications satellite projects under ESRO auspices.

RADIO TELESCOPES

Bigger Still to Come

FOR some years after 1970, West Germany may be expected to have the largest fully steerable radio telescope in the world. A 100 metre (333 feet) instrument