

important thing now is for the SRC to indicate its willingness to support the 120-inch project once a suitable site has been found.

FACULTY DISMISSAL

Leprince-Ringuet Forced Out

THERE has been consternation at the Ecole Polytechnique at the dismissal of Professor Louis Leprince-Ringuet from the teaching body by the Minister of War, M. M. Messmer. M. Leprince-Ringuet has been professor at the Ecole Polytechnique for 35 years. Although he will no longer teach, the letter from M. Messmer says that he will remain the director of the particle physics laboratory at the Ecole Polytechnique. Like the other grandes écoles, the polytechnique is the direct responsibility of the armed services (and for this reason, for example, remains outside the programme of reform on which French universities are at present embarked). The dismissal of M. Leprince-Ringuet is possible under the terms of a law in force since the end of 1968 which introduces, among other things, contracts of fixed periods for the teaching staff.

Among the faculty at the Ecole Polytechnique, it is widely considered that M. Leprince-Ringuet is now paying the price for having taken part in a faculty-student examination of various proposals for reform of the structure of the polytechnique. During this period, questions of the relationship between the polytechnique and the University of Paris, the reform of the curriculum and the military status of the polytechnique were considered and held to be points at which changes would be desirable. It is known that the army is extremely sensitive about suggestions that the polytechnique should be less directly within its control. M. Messmer, in a statement published in *Le Monde*, has said that M. Leprince-Ringuet's involvement with the student committee is not the cause of his dismissal, citing as evidence the way in which other members of the faculty with well known left wing views have recently had their appointments renewed. In practice, however, it has in the past proved difficult to replace professors notably out of favour with the army on issues such as the Algerian war. It is ironical that a person of M. Leprince-Ringuet's distinction should have been singled out for this indignity.

AERONAUTICS

Return to Farnborough

FROM July 4 the Royal Aircraft Establishment, Farnborough, will have a new director, Sir Morien Morgan, at present Controller of Guided Weapons and Electronics at the Ministry of Technology. He succeeds Sir Robert Cockburn, who is retiring from public service.

Sir Morien has had a long association with Farnborough, beginning in 1935 when he joined the aerodynamics department as a junior scientific officer. He had already served an engineering apprenticeship with Mather and Platt Ltd in Manchester, where he went from Cambridge with a first in mechanical sciences. At Farnborough he soon specialized in the stability and control and general handling characteristics of aircraft, and this is still one of his principal



Sir Morien Morgan.

interests. At this time he was involved in the development of handling criteria for military and civil aircraft. In 1944 he obtained his pilot's licence. At this time several scientists at Farnborough learnt to fly so that they could communicate more easily with professional pilots.

In 1946, still at Farnborough, he became head of Aerodynamics Flight and two years later took over the guided weapons department, where he presided over the development of all Britain's first generation guided weapons. In 1959 Sir Morien left Farnborough, and his research activities, for ten years in Government administration, beginning as scientific adviser to the Air Ministry. He took up his present position at the Ministry of Technology in 1966.

He has been associated with Concorde from the beginning, first of all as chairman of the Supersonic Transport Aircraft Committee set up in 1956 to look after the initial researches. After the agreement to join forces with France he became chairman of the Anglo-French Technical and Administrative Sub-Committee, alternating with a French colleague. Later Sir Morien chaired the Committee of Officials which represented the two governments in steering the Concorde project.

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