

government research. Sir Alec, however, took the argument one stage further; he claimed that repeated efforts of governments to associate themselves with growth industries or with advanced industrial projects had nearly always proved disastrous. He added that "neither government research establishments nor the public sector as a whole can take much of the credit for the technological improvements upon which the rise in living standards over the past half century rests". Sir Alec also claimed that the success of government policies in avoiding unemployment since the war reflects good luck rather than good guidance.

AIRCRAFT

Keeping Aircraft Quieter

NEW subsonic aircraft will have to pass a noise test after January 1, 1971, when the Order in Council laid before Parliament last week by Mr Roy Mason, President of the Board of Trade, is due to come into effect. Present day aircraft such as the Boeing 707 and the British VC-10 will be exempt from this restriction, the aim of which is to cut aircraft noise by 10 dB as measured at three specified points around an airfield, but new aircraft such as the projected American or European airbuses will not be allowed to land in Britain unless they possess a valid noise certificate. The first model of the Boeing 747 jumbo jet will not be affected by the new regulations, as planning started too long ago.

The need to devise some scheme for controlling aircraft noise became apparent at the international conference on aircraft noise held in London in 1966. The conference recognized that action must be taken at the manufacturing stage, and a certification scheme was put before a meeting of the International Civil Aviation Organization in Montreal last November. Britain is the first country to implement the recommendations of the Montreal conference, although the United States has already introduced a similar scheme to apply to American aircraft.

The recipe for evaluating noise levels is contained in a Board of Trade pamphlet entitled "Noise Measurements for Aircraft Design Purposes Including Noise Certification Purposes". The important quantity is the effective perceived noise level, measured in decibels, which was established by the International Organization for Standardization before the Montreal meeting. What this does is to reduce all spectral configurations to a simple formula, with corrections applied to take account of factors such as tone and duration. It is the effective perceived noise level which is to be reduced by about 10 dB, although the exact noise level permitted depends also on the weight of the aircraft. A heavy aircraft such as Concorde will be allowed a wider noise margin than some of its predecessors, although the new regulations have only been designed for subsonic aircraft.

The government is at present spending something over half a million pounds annually on research into improving the quality of engine noise. Much of the work is done in industry with supervision from the National Gas Turbine Establishment, but there are also important research programmes at the National Physical Laboratory, Southampton University and the College of Aeronautics. But so far no regulations governing supersonic aircraft are in sight. Although

some people claim to have heard the first supersonic test of Concorde 002, conducted last week off the west coast of England, the Ministry of Technology opines that Concorde was flying at too great a height for its boom to have been audible on land.

COMMUNICATION

Ici on Parle Anglais

FRENCHMEN who seek prestige in international science must first abandon their own language and become fluent in English or, at least, scientific English. At present a quarter of scientists in French-speaking universities invariably prefer to publish their papers in foreign journals, according to a survey reported in *Le Monde*. Some 86 per cent of French scientists read more than half of their source literature in a foreign language and 90 per cent of these use English most.

The survey, carried out by AUPELF, an association of French-speaking universities, was extended to 831 universities in Europe, Canada and Africa, more than 98 per cent of which consult literature in foreign languages as a matter of course during research. In teaching, too, linguistic chauvinism is a thing of the past—90 per cent of the universities recommend their students to read specific texts in foreign languages. So much does English dominate the scene that German was the only other language to win a significant mention, and even then only in specialized fields such as the social sciences.

The *Le Monde* article concludes that English is now "la véritable langue scientifique universelle" and has gained this inevitable status of *lingua franca* because the greatest part of the world's science is Anglo-Saxon. It is true that nearly half of the respondents choose French journals in which to publish their own work, but the proportion would probably be much less were it not for the difficulties of translation. Certainly in Canada less than a quarter of French speaking scientists write in French.

It is clearly a hard decision that faces the conscientious *enfant de la patrie*. "If he publishes in French, he will be little read but his work will automatically be judged French; if he publishes in English, his article will be more widely noticed among the international scientific community but the French character of his work will often be ignored. Which attitude is better for the French cause?" *Le Monde* does not take sides, but it seems that the surest way to *la gloire* is now to follow Lewis Carroll and only "speak in French when you can't think of the English for a thing".

DRUGS

Acid Report on Acid

LSD can awake the urge to kill oneself or others. It may cause deep depression or violent swings of mood, particularly in people who are unstable, and, contrary to popular belief, taking LSD may be dangerous even for those who are emotionally mature.

This catalogue of woes is detailed in a report prepared by the Advisory Committee on Drug Dependence (*The Amphetamines and Lysergic Acid Diethylamide*, HMSO, 6s, 1970), which goes some way towards explaining the tough line taken in the Misuse of Drugs Bill, and why, for example, the bill brackets LSD with