

side effects are not given enough weight, ought to be shamed out of existence if the contents of the monograph were properly digested. The second, and the more deep-rooted, is the moral objection to what is thought to be compulsory mass medication, an argument which would be difficult to counter with the most overwhelming weight of scientific evidence alone. Professor Ericsson does not help the cause by talking dismissively of "public resistance . . . mainly on psychological grounds", but in the same sentence he revives an alternative method of attack by noting that "the controlled enrichment of drinking water with fluoride was taught us by nature". Here, perhaps, is the conceptual shift needed to win friends for fluoride, and it provides a particularly powerful argument now that everybody wants to be his own ecologist: fluoride should be seen, not as an additive, but as the means of restoring water to its natural condition.

MUSEUMS

More Space for Dinosaurs

by our Planning Correspondent

PLANS and models of the planned new extension to the British Museum (Natural History) are on display in the museum's conversazione room until August 16 and public spirited museum lovers and others have been invited by the Ministry of Public Building and Works to comment on them. The extension, at the eastern end of the present museum, has been designed by architects of the Ministry of Public Building and Works and it is expected to cost about £1.35 million. The Royal Fine Art Commission has given the building its blessing but, before work can start, it has to be approved by the Kensington and Chelsea Council, the local planning authority.



Artist's impression of the proposed extension to the British Museum (Natural History) in South Kensington.

The council meets this month to consider the scheme, and, if the plans are approved, the building could be completed in about three years. It was the council that suggested that the extension should be set well back from the familiar frontage of the present museum, designed by Waterhouse in the 1870s, to preserve a feeling of space between this and the Victoria and Albert Museum and the other structures nearby. This recommendation has been followed by the ministry architects, but lovers of the Victorian extravaganza next door may feel that the extension would have been

more appropriate if it were less fussy and therefore less obtrusive. They may also wonder why yet another important public building in London has been left to the resources of the Ministry of Public Building and Works instead of to an architect chosen by public competition.

The extension will provide needed storage space and research facilities for the museum's palaeontological department. No more public exhibition galleries will be provided, but there will be more room for these in the main building after the fossils have been moved into the new wing.

The extension will be built from reinforced concrete with precast columns and bronzed fenestration. Inside, there will be full air conditioning. The basement will incorporate an existing strong room built in 1939 as wartime headquarters for the Civil Defence and said to be almost indestructible. Being vibration free, it will be ideal for electron and optical microscopy work. Above this will be five floors containing laboratories, storage rooms and the geological library. At the east end there will be an octagonal tower with a glass rotunda at the top for growing mosses and ferns. Linking this end of the building with the Geological Museum in Exhibition Road will be a lecture hall seating 200. The fine trees in the front of the site are being left untouched.

UNIVERSITY SALARIES

Following the Doctors

THE Association of University Teachers has put in a claim for increases of 20 per cent in the salaries of all its members. The claim, which will be the first to be heard by the new negotiating machinery for university teachers' salaries, goes against the recommendation of the Prices and Incomes Board that the 9 per cent interim increase which was awarded in April should last until October 1971. The AUT is asking for increases from October 1, 1970.

The AUT has based its claim on similar criteria to those used by the Kindersley Committee for recommending increases in doctors' salaries. Mr Laurie Sapper, general secretary of the AUT, said that the association has compared salaries of university staff with those of government employees in other fields, and it has also taken account of the recent awards to medical consultants. The 15 per cent increase in the salaries of staff in medical schools who hold honorary National Health Service contracts has already created considerable discrepancies in university salary scales, and the AUT is anxious to redress the balance (see *Nature*, 226, 786; 1970).

The claim would increase the minimum salaries for lecturers from £1,355 to £1,600 and their maximum salaries would be raised from just over £3,000 to £3,650. Professors would find themselves earning a minimum of £4,900 and the average professor's salary would be increased from about £5,000 to £6,000. The all-embracing claim is a departure from the previous submission to the Prices and Incomes Board. The AUT then asked for bigger increases for professors than for junior staff. The claim will now be talked over by the AUT and the vice chancellors, with representatives of the UGC listening in. An agreed claim which should emerge from those negotiations will then be put to the government. If no agreement can be reached,