

won a closed shop agreement from Parsons in May 1970.

Mr Jack Hill, the most senior of the 38 engineers then involved, sued Parsons for wrongful dismissal and last month the Appeal Court declared in his favour. Mr Hill and UKAPE regarded it as a test case, but last week Parsons issued the new dismissal notices to the remaining engineers with periods of notice ranging from three to six months according to length of service. At the same time, new contracts were offered which include the taking up of membership of the AUEW—with which DATA has now merged—as a condition of employment.

UKAPE's reaction has been to apply to the newly established Industrial Relations Court for a sole bargaining agency on behalf of the engineers at Parsons. This means that the resolution of the dispute awaits the decision of the court some time next year. UKAPE is the first union to apply to the Industrial Relations Court, and the decision will be one of the first under the new law. The fact that UKAPE is a registered trade union under the Industrial Relations Act, while AUEW has deregistered, only complicates the issue.

The only comment that DATA and Parsons were prepared to make this week on the new dismissal notices is that they are honouring the closed shop that they both agreed to last year.

METEOROLOGY

Typhoon Troubles

from a Correspondent

ONE of the most absorbing lectures delivered at the Unesco seminar on the effect of wind on building and structure, held on November 22–26 at Manila, Philippines, was by Professor Sean

Mackey, University of Hong Kong. He discussed work on a ten storey building on Hong Kong island that has recently been built specially to study the effects of strong winds—in particular typhoons—on tall structures. The building, at Cape D'Aguiar, faces the sea and is particularly open towards the north-east from where the strongest winds blow when typhoons approach Hong Kong. So far only one such storm has occurred since the trials commenced and although this particular typhoon did not produce wind speeds of more than 100 mph other storms in Hong Kong have given gusts up to nearly 150 mph.

The building, as shown in Fig. 1, is 100 foot tall and of exposed structural steel construction. The floors are made partly of reinforced concrete solid-slab construction and partly of composite construction with a solid-reinforced concrete slab roof. The building can be divided into four sections, each coupled together at every floor level so that in strong winds the whole building acts as one unit.

On the right of Fig. 1 can be seen the four 175 foot high towers upon which a total of 44 anemometers have been fixed—one at each of eleven different levels on each tower, which are situated about 200 foot to the north-east of the building. To the left of the four main towers can be seen two additional masts, forty foot high, upon which are installed a further six anemometers to measure turbulence decay between the main recording point and the nearest building face. The white spots on the building face shown in Fig. 1 are several of a total of 102 pressure cells mounted in the glass wall panels. Special electro optical tracking instruments together with seismometers are also used to record sway and vibration characteristics of the building.



Fig. 1 General view of the testing site from the south-east

Although it is too early yet to assess results of actual typhoon winds the experiment and the Unesco seminar have drawn together meteorologists, architects, engineers and the building industry in an effort to draw attention to the urgent need to construct safe buildings which will stand up to the devastating effects of storm winds in typhoon prone areas.

EUROPEAN UNIVERSITIES

Common Problems

TEACHING ability should be taken into account when academics are considered for promotion, and inducements should be offered to them to ensure that they teach well. This was one of the themes that emerged from the Conference of European Rectors in Copenhagen last month, when representatives from the universities of twenty-five countries met to discuss the teaching role of the university.

Dr Albert Sloman, Vice-Chancellor of Essex University and president of the conference, said last week that he felt that all European universities are facing basically the same problems, but that they have reached them by different routes and therefore they might have to produce different solutions. For example, the call from university appointments officers and employers in Britain for more relevant courses is even louder in France where open access to university—as opposed to the selective access in Britain's universities—means that vast numbers of students are obtaining qualifications, particularly in the humanities and the social sciences, which are comparatively worthless as the staff-student relationship is too great for them to be well taught and the courses themselves are no real qualification for a job.

The conference, which has been meeting at six monthly intervals since Dr Sloman became president in 1969, is not an executive body, but simply meets for the rectors to exchange views; opinions differed most over the future role of universities. In his concluding remarks Dr Sloman suggested that it is very doubtful if society, with the cost of higher education rising, will allow every teacher the opportunity for substantial research. This could produce two types of institution—one heavily inclined to research and the other to teaching—as in Britain where both universities and colleges of technology and education exist. Alternatively there might be a single institution with people specializing in either teaching or research. Whichever is adopted Dr Sloman for one feels that there must be greater mobility of staff between research and teaching, as research should enrich teaching and teaching should enrich research.