

less, according to the report, "overall, the money devoted to research associations has produced handsome benefits for industry and the economy".

The organization of food research in Britain also comes in for attack. The committee points out that there is no overall view taken by the government of food research activities and that there are no formal means of communication between the food research associations and government, Agriculture Research Council stations and the universities which are involved in food research. This has led to duplication of effort and overlap of research. The food research associations also complained to Lord Bessborough of a "lack of openness" on the part of government stations. The committee of enquiry suggests that all basic work done on food research at government and other institutions should be fed to the industries through the research associations.

The ARC spends about £18 million a year while the food research associations in 1970-71 spent only £365,000. ARC representatives sit on certain research association bodies but reciprocal arrangements are rare. The report even goes so far as to state that friction exists in some cases between the research associations and other institutes involved in food research. In spite of all these apparent disadvantages the committee reflects that it is the research associations rather than the ARC "which are more directly meeting the needs of the consumer".

## EUROPE

### Mergers Good and Bad

THE recent decision to merge the two nuclear power consortia in Britain was a move that will not benefit Europe, according to Mr Christopher Layton, lately *chef de cabinet* to Mr Altievo Spinelli, one of the Italian European commissioners, and now Director for Advanced Technology Industries at the EEC commission. Mr Layton was addressing a conference last week at the University of Sussex on cooperation in research and technology in Europe.

It would have been much better, said Mr Layton, if the British consortia had separately merged with other European nuclear power companies. If they had done so the Central Electricity Generating Board would not have been faced with the prospects of buying British or foreign—a choice that is now inevitable. Instead, it could have chosen between the rival claims of two companies each of which would have had a strong British representation.

Mr Layton came out strongly in favour of wholesale mergers of European companies in order that European industries can effectively compete with

companies in the United States and other parts of the world. In particular, Mr Layton thinks that there should be two strong computer companies in Europe. Siemens and Philips will soon bring out a common range of computers but ICL will not join with these companies because it has "a different philosophy". But the EEC would like to see ICL find a partner in Europe, and Mr Layton suggested that Nixdorf, the German company, might be suitable.

But computers and nuclear power are not the only fields where Mr Layton wants a few strong European companies, and he also mentioned the aircraft industry—"we've got Concorde and we cannot go on like that"—telecommunications, railways and the heavy electrical industry. But Mr Layton was not clear whether the EEC policy is to encourage one or more large companies within Europe in any given industry. In some fields it might turn out to be essential to have only one consortium to compete effectively with companies in the United States. It might turn out that this is essential in the computer industry but first Mr Layton would like to see two companies set up.

Euratom came in for some severe criticisms at the conference. First, Mr Layton said that much of Euratom's programme had failed and then Professor Christopher Freeman, of the Science Policy Research Unit at the University of Sussex, said that there was "clear evidence of considerable doubt" with the performance of this organization. Eldo was also criticized by Professor Freeman but he was loud in his praise of CERN. The success of CERN can be directly attributed to the fact that the organization and the users worked closely together. In fact, said Professor Freeman, an analysis of the success and failure of twenty or so European collaborative ventures in research has shown that no project can hope to be successful without it having a well defined objective and without it having a market for its end product.

Professor Freeman spent some time in detailed criticisms of the work of the MIT team on modelling the environment and economic conditions of the world. In spite of the detailed disagreement between him and Professor Dennis Meadows and colleagues, Professor Freeman stressed that mathematical simulation models are useful research tools and that where he diverges from the conclusions of the MIT team is in thinking that such models cannot as yet be used as guides for science policy.

But it was clear from the conference that the strong national feelings within the European Economic Community have not been removed by these countries signing the Treaty of Rome and that a lot more than legal pressure is needed to break down these barriers.

## ENVIRONMENT

### European Cooperation

CLOSER cooperation on European environment policies and a work list for the Council of Europe emerged from a meeting of 17 West European environment ministers held in Vienna recently. At the end of the meeting at which 23 countries, some of them non-member states of the Council of Europe, discussed ways and means of preserving the natural environment, resolutions were passed calling for a greater exchange of information between member states. "Close cooperation between governments is necessary in relation to national environment policies in Europe, and legislative and administrative actions and controls should be harmonized wherever possible," the ministers said.

The ministers also resolved to avoid duplication of work on the natural environment by examining the studies that are already being run by international organizations.

They also asked the Council of Europe to look into the possibility of drawing up a legal instrument to define the rights of the individual to an improved environment and to define his responsibilities within it.

Three formal resolutions were drawn up dealing with the management of the natural environment, the conservation of flora and fauna and the dissemination of information about the environment. All three involved work for the Council of Europe.

Lists of endangered species will have to be drawn up and the council will undertake specific studies of areas such as the Mediterranean. At the end of the meeting, and under considerable pressure from Mr Geoffrey Rippon, Britain's Secretary of State for the Environment, the ministers agreed to meet in Brussels in 1975 and in Switzerland at a later date to review progress towards a European conservation policy.

### Stoned in Brussels

BRITAIN may be in Europe and the European Commission may be furiously "harmonizing" everything in sight, but language remains obstinately unharmonizable. At last week's meeting of CERD (see page 427) one of the German delegates, speaking in his own language, inserted an aside to the effect that "Einstein war ein grosser Forscher" (Einstein was a great research scientist) which the French interpreter stolidly translated as "Une pierre était un grand chercheur". The non-German speaking French delegates looked a trifle blank.