

Thus, with \$50 million proposed in the Administration's budget for research and development on solar energy, and McCormack's bill providing another \$50 million over the next five years to exploit the technology, those who have been advocating this energy source for years must be delighted by the advent of the energy crisis.

The only cloud that slightly dims the outlook for this bill in particular, and for the solar energy programme in general, is that there may be a fight between Congress and the Administration over who should have charge of the effort. It became clear during debate on the bill that the Administration, acting through the Office of Management and Budget, suggested to several Congressmen that NASA is not the best home for such a programme, and that the bill should be delayed until more permanent arrangements have been worked out for the management of the federal government's entire energy research and development programme. Such an arrangement—the Energy Research and Development Administration (ERDA)—has already been approved by the House of Representatives, but may become becalmed in the Senate. In the event, however, the House decided to give the authority to NASA, but to transfer the programme to ERDA if, and when, it is established. It remains to be seen whether the Administration's opposition will have any effect on the Senate's consideration of the bill, but electoral appeal is likely to outweigh White House pressure.

Exciting end to British Chess Championship

Jonathan Penrose

THE British Chess Championship was first held in 1904 and since that time, with one or two breaks, has been an annual summer event lasting about a fortnight. The result of the 1973 championship held at Eastbourne ended in a tie between Michael Basman and William Hartston (both in their mid-twenties). There was no time for an immediate play-off for first prize so that the issue hung in the balance until the week of January 28-February 3, 1974 when a six-game match was duly played in the luxurious ballroom of the Heathrow Hotel.

The styles of the two players were sharply contrasted. Hartston has a sound knowledge of theoretical lines of play (based on systematic homework of opening developments in international play) and favours a logical plan of campaign, whereas Basman is a tactician who spurns orthodoxy and seeks to create unusual positions even in the earliest stages of the game. The course

of the match (a 4½-1½ win for Hartston) tended to illustrate how hard it is becoming to be truly original in chess and at the same time maintain a basic soundness in strategy. Hartston's first British Championship win was, however, well merited.

Other matches taking place early this year are those of the quarter-finals of the 'candidates' matches. These involve a series of knock-out matches to decide who is to challenge Fischer for the World Championship scheduled for 1975. Boris Spassky (the defeated champion in 1972) seems to have regained his form, having recently won the Soviet Championship, and he convincingly defeated Robert Byrne (United States) in one of the candidates matches. His opponent in the semi-finals will be the

young Soviet player Anatoly Karpov, who is hailed as a future world champion. The match between these two should be hard-fought and close. The other half of the draw for the candidates matches also seems likely to be dominated by Soviet players with Petrosyan and Korchnoy the most likely protagonists for the semi-finals.

In the shadow of these candidates matches lies the enigma of the role that Fischer is prepared to play in them. He has not played a single serious game since his match with Spassky in 1972 and whether or not he will play the winner of the candidates matches must still be considered an open question. All chess enthusiasts must surely hope that he will play.



James Hart

SCIENTISTS at the Royal Aircraft Establishment at Farnborough agree on a show of hands to take industrial action in support of their wages claim. The Farnborough men were among the 30,000 scientific workers whom the Institution of Professional Civil Servants (IPSC) was preparing for one-day strikes and half-day walkouts in order to stir up some enthusiasm for their claim in government circles. The dispute threatened to affect 16,000 Civil Service scientists and something like 15,000 related workers in the United Kingdom Atomic Energy Authority, the Research Councils and the Veterinary Service, as well as lecturers in defence colleges, patent examiners and even the Meteorological Office's television weather men. Thousands of members took part in half-day strikes or 'non-cooperative' working at establishments throughout the country and, after a week's respite called by the

union to let the government offer an interim increase or the Pay Board an early report, the scientists warned that they could escalate their action in order to hit at 'sensitive points' relying on IPSC scientists. The dispute was caused by a disparity between the pay of scientists and that of comparable grades in the executive branch of the Civil Service. The scientists have been trying to get their pay structure re-assessed since 1971 and expected a settlement in January. Instead, they were given the news that the Pay Board was unlikely to report before March at the earliest. The General Secretary of the IPSC, Mr William McCall, says the dispute is a story of a reasonable group of workers, opposed to militancy but driven to it by bitterness and anger. It is, in his view, a case bearing the hallmarks of the exploitation by a government of the industrially weak.