

Technical innovation

All change

Britain's newest think-tank, the Technical Change Centre, appears to be limbering up for thought. Sir Bruce Williams, director of the centre, announced recently the appointment of two assistant directors at the establishment, Professor Ronald Dore of the University of Sussex and Dr Alun Jones, deputy editor of *Nature* during 1972-73 and since then with the British Steel Corporation. Professor Roger Williams, of the department of government at the University of Manchester, will also join the centre on secondment from the beginning of 1982.



Jones: from *Nature* to nurture

The centre owes its existence to a substantial grant from the Leverhulme Trust and a consortium of research councils as well as to the now-defunct hope that there should be a centre in Britain equivalent to the Brookings Institution in Washington. Sir Bruce Williams and his deputy, Dr A.J. Kennedy, have been at work since July, and a research fellow started in September. With the appointments now announced, the centre is planning a pause on recruitment while consulting in government and industry on promising lines of enquiry.

One of the research projects at the centre will be the role of incremental changes in technology in the economies of industrial states. Other projects planned include a study of the response of managers to new projects, and in particular of their reactions to various motivations, the importance of new firms in the introduction of innovations and the launching of major manufacturing developments on the basis of research and development.

At least two of the centre's projects will be educational, concerned with the British educational system as an inhibitor of technical change. The centre says, however, that it is not exclusively concerned with change as a harbinger of economic growth but also with criteria for helping to strike a balance "between economic growth and improvements in the environment at work and at large".

Brazilian reactor

Unrestricted uranium

Rio de Janeiro

The Vice-President of the United States, George Bush, announced during his recent official visit to Brazil that the country was free to buy enriched uranium from elsewhere than the United States for the first reloading of its United States-built nuclear reactor Angra I.

The 620-megawatt Westinghouse plant will be fully operational by the end of 1981 and the first reloading will be due in two years' time. The gradual hardening of United States legislation on nuclear safeguards, coupled with the initial contract's demand that refuelling be provided exclusively by the United States, caused enough problems but Brazil's refusal to sign the Non-Proliferation Treaty made it practically impossible for the United States Department of Energy to authorize the exportation of enriched uranium to Brazil.

Following discrete negotiations between the Brazilian utility company Furnas and the United States Department of Energy, Mr Bush announced a diplomatic solution: he has bypassed United States law, declaring that "the Secretary of Energy opened an exception so that the penalty clause of the nuclear contract with Brazil could be dispensed with in the case of Brazil's purchase of the next fuel load for Angra I. . . . Brazil will acquire the next fuel load from another source". Brazil is already negotiating the acquisition of fuel rods from Euroenco.

This generosity may be short-lived as Mr Bush later reiterated that Brazil should join the category of "recently industrialized nation" and thus lose the benefits of economic and financial aid reserved for "developing" countries. **Maurice Bazin**

Yugoslav universities

Student mirage

The University of Kosovo in Pristina, the scene of last spring's demonstrations by students from Yugoslavia's Albanian ethnic minority, has mysteriously shrunk by more than 50 per cent during the course of the summer. After the demonstrations, a major investigation and reorganization of the university was carried out by a special party action committee, headed by Dr Redzep Gasi. Every student and academic in the university was screened politically, a process officially described as "differentiation". At the end of the investigation, it was found that the university did not have the 45,000 students it claimed last spring but a mere 20,434.

Last June, the Belgrade authorities had urged that the University of Kosovo should be reduced in size, to correspond with the needs of the Autonomous Province of Kosovo — whose total work force numbers

only some 180,000 — and admissions for the current years were accordingly reduced by 20 per cent. At the end of August, however, it was announced that the university was, in any case, less than half the size that had been supposed.

The whereabouts of the "missing" students are not clear. Part of the discrepancy is probably due to bad book-keeping. During the party purge, it was found that out of the 4,500 supposed members of the university's party organization, more than 1,000 had long since left the university. Since about 10 per cent of the students belong to the party, there are presumably a further 10,000 former students whose names have never been removed from the university's rolls.

Local patriotism seems also to have played some part. The university authorities have been willing enough to boast of rapid growth for an institution founded only ten years ago (with 10,000 students) as a central part of the development of the province.

The main reason for the discrepancy, though, appears to have been financial. As one of Yugoslavia's underdeveloped regions, Kosovo is eligible for federal subsidies which, in the case of the university, are based on the number of students. Commentators have suggested, therefore, that the figures had been deliberately doubled to obtain a bigger grant from Belgrade. **Vera Rich**

Press Council adjudicates

Following a complaint by Dr P. F. Browne of the University of Manchester Institute of Science and Technology that *Nature* breached its announced policy by failing to return an unpublished manuscript, the Press Council has issued the following adjudication:

Nature assures potential contributors that it will return one copy of manuscripts it decides not to publish. The accounts the Press Council has been given of the submission of material by Dr Browne and the exchanges between him and *Nature* have been detailed and complicated: within four weeks at the start of this matter he submitted nine copies of his manuscript in three versions.

His complaint about the failure to return manuscripts relates to those submitted before the present editor assumed the editorship.

The council finds no evidence of a deliberate breach by *Nature* of its announced policy of returning manuscripts but the journal has been unable to produce any evidence to support its belated assertion that the manuscripts were returned to Dr Browne and the council is satisfied he did not receive them.

It is incumbent on a journal of this type to keep a clear and accurate account of the way it has dealt with each manuscript sent to it.

The complaint against *Nature* is upheld.