

when Ariane and Spacelab end development. During the past year, however, things have changed. Several new programmes have been approved including Ariane IV, the next stage of Ariane development; a Spacelab follow-on programme; L-sat, the heavy telecommunication satellite; and a microgravity programme. Pressure of work has taken precedence over the ten-year plan. But when the delegates next turn to the long-term strategy they may well find that the events of the past year have ironed out some of their earlier differences.

Judy Redfearn

Agricultural Research Council

Cuts tempered

The Agricultural Research Council is having second thoughts about its intended reorganization of agricultural research. The livestock industry may have persuaded the council to cut the Animal Breeding Research Organization at Edinburgh by a half, not four-fifths as originally intended. But the proposal to halve the cost of the Long Ashton Research Station at Bristol is

to stand. The future of the two stations was the topic of a meeting last week between the council and representatives of the laboratories; final decisions will be taken at the end of March.

If the Edinburgh institute is partly reprieved, other council institutes will be on their guard. The council had hoped to save £3 million on its budget for 1983-84 by economies at the two establishments. Now, it will be £1 million short of its targets, and a call has gone to other institutes for self-imposed economies.

With the next financial year upon it, the council seems just now especially anxious to protect its interests in academic research. Last year, central government provided for only a 6 per cent rise on the wages bill but salaries rose by 7.5 per cent, leaving a shortfall of £0.8 million. As the council spends 95 per cent of its budget in its own institutes and units, and two-thirds of that on salaries, research budgets became unacceptably squeezed.

The council expects a more intense squeeze in coming years and fears a shortfall of £3-6 million in 1984-85. As grants to researchers in universities are to be protected and even increased, savings are being sought in institutes.

The council has nevertheless set its face against closing any institute that relies on commissions from the agriculture ministries for more than half its income. Other criteria used to decide which institutes to cut include the level of recent capital expenditure, future needs for facilities, overhead costs and the chances of successfully transferring work.

The proposal to cut the Animal Breeding Research Organization was based largely on internal assessments that had questioned the value of long-term animal breeding experiments. Originally, the council proposed to reduce the organization to only fundamental work, in particular on animal genetics. Representations from the livestock industry, however, seem to have rescued some breeding experiments, and the cattle blood-typing service may also now be retained.

Research on fruit is over-subscribed due to historical accident, according to the council — hence its decision to abandon pomology (apple-work) at Long Ashton and to transfer other work to the East Malling Research Station. Representations from strawberry, plum and mutant-apple growers, however, will now probably ensure some provision for research in these areas.

The council estimates that it will lose £0.5-1 million earned from ministry commissions. Other costs of the closures, including redundancy payments to approximately 220 staff, will initially increase the burden on the council's income. But much will depend on how many staff required to be mobile under the terms of their contracts can be redeployed in other institutes.

Judy Redfearn

Polish universities

Trouble in store

Further clashes between Polish university students and the representatives of the ruling Military Council for National Salvation are feared in the near future, according to a Warsaw Radio broadcast last Sunday. In one of the regular morning briefings on the state of the country, an unidentified speaker said that classes have resumed just when the anniversary of the "so-called March events" is approaching.

The speaker was referring to the expulsion on political grounds of two Warsaw university students, by a decision of the then Minister of Education and Enlightenment, now president, Henryk Jablonski (5 March 1968). Three days later, a mass protest was held in the university grounds, claiming that the expulsion was contrary to university regulations since it had not been made by the rector. The students and some sympathetic academics were forcibly dispersed, but the incident triggered similar protests at universities throughout Poland — and ultimately resulted in mass dismissals and expulsions of students and staff, and the closure of several university departments.

Last year, the March anniversary was marked by a rally of students and academics in Warsaw, and by the formal rehabilitation of the "victims of 1968", including the philosopher, Dr Leszek Kolakowski. Even in the relatively liberal climate of 1981, the commemorations did not take place unopposed; the new "Grunwald Patriotic Association" was set up to hold a counter-meeting to praise government action in 1968.

Last Sunday's broadcast pinpointed growing official fears that young people have not yet accepted the changed situation in Poland and, in particular, the outlawing of the Independent Students Association (NZS). Formally, all protests are attributed to manipulation by hostile elements and political provocateurs. A government leaflet addressed to young people urges them not to be duped into involving the country in a civil war which would be a "tragedy for millions". There are hints in the media of attempts to defuse the tense situation by suggesting that all is not lost. An article in the daily *Zycie Warszawy* on the reopening of the University of Warsaw said that so far, no student had been expelled as a result of martial law — not even those at present interned. At the same time, the danger of taking part in demonstrations is stressed; a Gdansk commentator noted that those students arrested in the demonstration of 30 January would "have to say goodbye to their studies, at least for some considerable time".

Significantly, the announced agenda for the session of the Sejm (parliament), next Friday and Saturday, makes no mention of the new higher education bill.

Vera Rich

Spain back to fold

The European Centre for Nuclear Physics (CERN) near Geneva has been in a pleasant spin for the past few weeks deciding how to react to an advance from the Spanish government. Spain wishes to rejoin (after a brief membership between 1961 and 1968) but there are few people at CERN who remember how such things are done.

In fact the last time a country joined CERN was 21 years ago, when the new adherent was Spain again. But they were early days for CERN, which is now an enormous institution with some 6,000 researchers and staff, massive experimental facilities for elementary particle physics and a £177 million annual budget to match. No official figures are available yet, but accession could cost Spain of the order of £10 million a year, something approaching a quarter of the present Spanish science budget.

The precise price which Spain must pay will be a matter for negotiation. Although members must pay in proportion to their gross national product, and Spain's is moderately high, it might be possible to negotiate step-by-step entry. However, all 12 members of the CERN council must agree to the terms, and there is an argument that Spain should pay entry fee in addition to the annual rate, to account for the fact that it will become part owner of the CERN accelerators. The lawyers are working on that, a spokesman said this week.

Robert Walgate