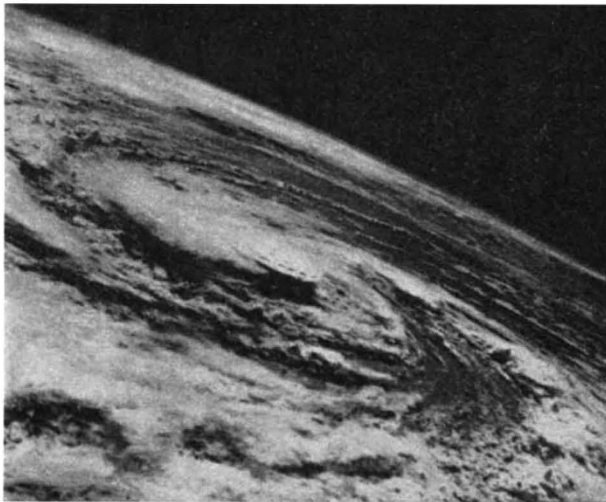


## Fermi Accelerator

The Atomic Energy Commission has announced that the 200 GeV accelerator now being built at the town of Batavia, Illinois, 30 miles west of Chicago, will be known as the Fermi Accelerator when it is completed towards the end of 1972. This decision is especially apt because of the close associations between Enrico Fermi and the University of Chicago where he spent much of his working life after moving to the United States.

## HURRICANES

### Apollo's Eye View



This remarkable photograph of the eye of hurricane Gladys was taken on October 17 last year by astronauts in Apollo 7 at an altitude of 97 nautical miles during the spacecraft's ninety-first revolution. At the time of the photograph the hurricane was about 150 miles south-west of Tampa, Florida. Cuba can be seen in the background.

## MEDICAL RESEARCH COUNCIL

### New Head for Brain Unit

DR G. W. ASHCROFT has been appointed director of the Medical Research Council's Brain Metabolism Unit at Edinburgh in succession to Professor W. L. M. Perry who has become vice-chancellor of the Open University. Dr Ashcroft has been a member of the unit since it was set up in 1965 and more recently its deputy director. By training he is a psychiatrist turned pharmacologist and hence commands the two disciplines which are central to the activities of the unit.

The unit is concerned with brain metabolites of possible importance in psychiatric and neurological disease. Much of its work has been on amines, particularly their diagnostic significance in cerebrospinal fluid, and this has involved the study of transport systems between various compartments of the brain. The unit

has recently taken a more general interest in brain metabolism, a trend that Dr Ashcroft expects will continue, and its programme has been extended to studies of protein, carbohydrate and RNA turnover.

The unit runs a ten bed research ward with the help of a dietician, a psychiatrist and a psychologist, and also conducts extensive animal studies to help with the interpretation of findings in humans. Dr Ashcroft's first task will be to supervise the move of the unit from the three laboratories it occupies at present into premises in the newly built department of pharmacology at Edinburgh. To cover the cost of new equipment the unit's budget has been increased from £62,000 to £116,000 for 1969-70.

## SPACE

### French Programme in Trouble

THE French are now facing economic problems with their space programme which has run into a heavy barrage of domestic criticism. There have been indications for some time that the French Government favoured cutting back on its ESRO (European Space Research Organization) commitments to bolster its national programme, and last month, at a meeting with Soviet officials on the two-year old programme of space research collaboration with the Soviet Union, it emerged that the biggest project under this agreement, the Roseau satellite, has had to be dropped because of France's financial stringency.

Roseau, planned for 1971-72, was to have been a very substantial affair indeed, compared with any other vehicle planned at present. It was to have had a highly elliptical orbit of 100 to 100,000 km, huge unfolding antennae for astronomical experiments, and would have been six feet in diameter weighing 300 kg. These specifications were beyond anything that the ELDO vehicle could launch in the early 1970s. "We know nothing about the Russian launcher—we are just told it will do the job" remarked a senior French space official during a discussion of the project in London last year. The experiments were to have been provided by the French. It is now hoped to salvage some of the astronomical instruments planned for Roseau and carry them on other spacecraft.

This spring the French space programme has been in hot water with *Le Monde*, which has made severe and detailed strictures under two heads, financial and technical. Too much of the NF 2,000 million allocated for 1966-70 has gone on infrastructure instead of on experiments. There is a three year gap in launching of French satellites caused largely by the costs of developing the Guyane launch range in equatorial America. The technical failures have involved the motors for the bottom stage of the Diamant B launcher (intended to put a bigger payload into orbit than France's initial satellite launcher, Diamant A) and the long-life constant-pressure balloons for the Eole weather monitoring project. While American balloons for these trials have lasted on average three months, the French ones have only survived three weeks.

In general, the French space programme has shown greater tenacity and strength of purpose than the British. Whether this will persist under a new President and a new government must be another question to exercise harassed French space officials.