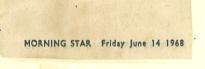
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## GOVT MADE THE **BEST GUNPOW**

From JOHN MOSS

FOR the first time in 400 years the Explosives Research and Development Establishment at Waltham Abbey (Essex) opened its doors yesterday to a big Press party. It is thought that gun-powder was made on the site at the time of the Spanish Armada. Evocation point in the Barada.

Evocative names like Powder-mill Lane, now a quiet, leafy road, reveal the potentially lethal experi-ments made there.

The Government bought John Walton's gunpowder factory on the site in 1787, after Gen. Sir William Congrevè disputed the claim that private manufacturers made cheaper and better gun-powder than did the Government. Congreve showed the superior-

powder.

Today 20 per cent of the work is on explosives, 50 per cent on rocket and other propellants, and 30 per cent on research into new materials, especially the new fibre-reinforced materials, said the director, Dr. L. J. Bellamy,

## NEW MATERIALS

Among these new materials are mixtures of nylon and asbestos, with the asbestos fibres lined up in the same direction to give maximum strength.

Both materials are cheap, and the result is better than glass fibre products.

Silicon carbide "whiskers," which are made of the material in very pure form, turn out to be stronger, weight for weight, when used to reinforce aluminium al-loys, than the best steel, titanium, or conventional aluminium alloys, and are expected to give light-weight strong, second generation aircraft materials in planes like Concorde.