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" A PLAN FOR EUROPE ? "

Extracts from a speech by Mr Robert MARJOLIN, Vice-President of the Commission of the European Economic Community, at the Congress of the Confédération nationale de la Mutualité, de la Coopération et du Crédit agricoles (the French National Confederation of Agricultural Mutual Insurance, Co-operative and Credit Organizations).

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..... It is clear that the manifold and profound changes which are now being wrought in the economic structure of our countries and which in days to come will go beyond anything we can possibly imagine, cannot and must not come about blindly. In every instance we must watch **them**; often we may have to set them in motion; sometimes we may have to keep them in bounds, slow them down, or steer them the way we want them to go.

I now come to the most delicate and most difficult part of what I have to say to you: do we need European planning of the kind that we now have in France and that will probably soon exist in Italy, Belgium and the United Kingdom, not to mention the Dutch Plan which, though very different from the French, is also an attempt to look into the future and mould it so far as is compatible with free enterprise? Should we recommend that such Plans be drawn up where they do not yet exist, so that we may later merge them into one which will take in the whole of the activities of the EEC?

In order to answer this fundamental question we must be quite clear about the nature and scope of French planning.

In the first place, it is not an authoritarian Plan. It sets the objectives, but does not in general say anything about the means by which they are to be attained. The objectives set for the various industries are not broken down into accurately defined targets for each enterprise. No sanctions are threatened if the Plan is not put through. In other words, it is not a matter of orders to be carried out, but rather of the State and the people deciding on what is necessary and desirable.

Further, what we call the "Plan" is in other countries called a "programme" without this terminological distinction denoting any basic difference of content. Over and above differences as to method and detailed forecasting, all the national plans I have mentioned have one thing in common: they represent an attempt at assessing the problems with which we are faced or with which we are ineluctably going to be faced.

I have no hesitation in saying that such an assessment is no less essential at the Community level than in each individual country. In fact, I shall show that in the absence of a Community-wide effort of this kind the national attempts at predicting the future will also come to naught.

Long-term forecasting or European planning does not mean that it is possible purely and simply to apply French principles and methods to Europe. A great deal of original and creative brainwork will be needed if a charter for common European action is ever to see the light of day.

It would therefore be Utopian to try to set European targets for each branch of industry; but it will not be Utopian to seek to define the maximum growth of output during the next five or ten years, having regard to the necessary reduction of working hours, and the contribution by each of the main economic sectors, industry, agriculture and services, to the general growth.

Nor would it be Utopian to attempt to define the economic and financial policies which will have to be adopted at a European level and in each member nation in order to achieve this optimum rate.

It is not my intention today to go into the details of such a forecast. Suffice it to say that this will enable us to draw the main outlines of European economic development in the immediate future; a development made possible by the expansion we have already achieved, and devoutly to be desired if the joint challenge of efficiency and equity which is the main feature of our age, is to be met.

Planning on these lines will provide a framework within which Governments and the Institutions of the Community will work, and a touchstone by which they can check whether what they are doing is efficient or whether additional means should be employed.

It becomes the more necessary as national plans or programmes get harder to establish and - once the Common Market is in operation - are likely to lose a great deal of their significance. Planning, including programme planning, presupposes an economy whose relations with the outside world are limited or can be restricted, should the necessity arise. Now, the six economies of the Common Market are becoming increasingly open to one another and will be completely so in a few years from now.

So as not to lose myself in generalities or a discussion of points too far removed from your immediate concern, I would say that clearly it will only be possible in a programme of European action to size up the difficulties and problems of Europe's agriculture, and find a solution to them.

Only an assessment of the situation at the Community level and covering the whole of the Community's economy will enable us to forecast the trend of demand for agricultural produce over the next few years and, in the light of planned or foreseeable imports and exports, to lay down guiding lines for the Community's work in agriculture.

Only an analysis at the Community level will help us to predict how many jobs will be created in the coming years, and to decide whether they will be sufficient to provide work for young people entering the labour market and for workers becoming redundant in sectors where manpower requirements will be reduced.

Such an analysis will have to go right down to the regional level, because wherever possible the balance between labour supply and demand should be sought within each region.

Should it turn out that the number of jobs created is insufficient, that would mean that the projected rate of growth is itself inadequate and that a greater effort is called for. But in view of the solidarity which the Common Market is establishing amongst the six economies, this **must** be a joint effort. Isolated national efforts would make for internal imbalances, which would jeopardize the outcome and threaten to tear the Community apart.

Finally, and this is the last example I propose to bring you, it is in a European setting and over a fairly long period that it will be possible to say what are the means by which European agriculture can be modernized, and how they can be put into practice.

Now that I am coming to the end of what I have to say on a European Plan or programme, and lest there should be any misunderstanding, I should like to repeat that to my mind there will not be any authoritarian planning at the level of the individual undertaking, but rather an exercise in intelligence and determination on the part of government and industry, that will determine the future of Europe and of the nations it comprises.
