

Address of Mr. Jean Rey, President of the Group on Foreign Relations of the Commission of the European Economic Community, at the Federal Bar Association's Institute on the Legal Aspects of the European Community, Washington, D. C., February 11, 1960.

THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITY--A PILLAR OF THE FREE WORLD

I should like to begin by telling you briefly why I am here in your midst. The first reason is that you have been good enough to invite me.

After all, that one reason might perhaps be sufficient. No doubt you know the story of the Emperor Napoleon arriving in a little French township and being received by the mayor with the following words: "Sire, there are three reasons why we did not fire a salute upon your arrival: the first is that we do not have a gun." - "Very well, Mr. Mayor," answered the Emperor, "you need not explain the others."

I might leave it at the fact that you have been courteous enough to invite me. But I should like to add that my presence is also a token of gratitude for the interest which your great association is taking in the problems of the Common Market. Since you are devoting your entire annual conference to the study of the problems which are those of the European Economic Community, it seemed to us fitting that a member of our Commission, in particular the one who is responsible for external relations and is at the same time at the head of the Joint Legal Service of the European Executives, should come to greet you on behalf of the Executive of the Common Market and to tell you how happy he is to join with you in your work.

I should also like to say how happy I am to find myself among lawyers. Before I became Minister of Economics in my own country, and later a Member of the Commission of the Common Market, I had for 30 years been a barrister at the Appeal Court of Liège. There I learned what it means to fight for one's ideas. There I learned the meaning of honesty in discussion; there I learned also how much the rule of law is part and parcel of civilization itself. What would our society be if it were not entirely built up on a legal structure which not only protects the rights of the individual but also organizes and preserves liberty?

Law distinguishes civilization from barbarism, and in an era when society seems to be growing increasingly technical, when technical progress fills our daily round and even celestial space, the law still is and will continue to be the main pillar of society.

If we are to understand the force of the movement which led our peoples to unite, we must recall the situation in which Europe found itself at the end of the last war.

We, all of us, suffered far too much in that war. We, all of us, felt that the time had really come to put an end to these quarrels which were more like civil than international war.

When we, my colleagues and I, the nine members of the Common Market Commission, sit around our conference table, we find that we have each borne arms one against the other. One served in the Africa Corps, another wore a French uniform, I myself took part in the 1940 campaign and spent five years in German captivity as a Belgian officer. Perhaps it is because we have had our fight together that we are now absolutely resolved to work together as friends.

There is also another reason: the world is changing before our eyes and is moving from organization on the national scale to organization on the continental scale. The European nations no longer measure up individually to the problems facing the world. If, however, Europe unites, it can still play a vital role in shaping the fate of the free world, and even of the world as a whole.

It was in this spirit that, once the war was over, we brought together the three large continental nations of Germany, France and Italy and the three small Benelux countries, the Netherlands, the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg, and Belgium, in a common effort for European integration which has now produced the powerful Community of our six countries. To start with, it was a Coal and Steel Community which was established in 1952, and now we also have an Atomic Energy Community and a European Economic Community, better known as the Common Market, which covers all other economic activities.

Allow me to review briefly the problems with which the Common Market is faced at present:

It is two years since the Treaty came into force and the progress made in that short time has been much greater than one could have hoped in the beginning.

Three things stand out:

1. All the institutions have been set up and are working: the Commission, of which I am a member, and its administrative services; the Council of Ministers, which meets regularly each month; the European Parliament with its seat in Strasbourg and the Court of Justice which sits in Luxembourg. In addition to all these we have such supporting organizations as the European Investment Bank, the Economic and Social Committee, the European Social Fund, and the Development Fund for the Overseas Countries and Territories. All the machinery is there and is functioning exactly as planned.
2. All the policies which were to be worked out are now rapidly unfolding. The authors of the Treaty did not think that between 1955 and 1957 they could settle everything for several generations ahead. They felt that certain common policies should be elaborated and they merely drew up the general principles, leaving it to the institutions to work out details and further developments. In this way it fell to us to draw up the common agricultural policy, the complete draft of which is now ready; its provisions are being jointly studied by ourselves and the Council of Ministers; the same is true of policies in the field of social affairs and transport and of the common commercial policy which is to be gradually introduced during the transition period.

In all these fields we are ahead of the original timetable and we feel that the work of the Common Market is progressing normally.

3. Finally, and this is clearly the most important thing, private trade and industry has shown an enormous interest in the development of the Common Market.

The authors of the Treaty thought that a transition period of twelve years would be necessary, which might have to be extended to fifteen years, because enterprises might find some difficulty in adapting themselves to the new situation.

In practice, the contrary has happened: throughout the Community our industrialists have immediately grasped the importance of European economic integration and the establishment of a vast market with 170 million consumers. They have got in touch across the frontiers and have begun to push ahead more actively with the rationalization of their enterprises, with the result

that now, instead of asking for more time, they wish us to shorten the transition period and to allow them to enjoy all the sooner the benefits of a single market. This is a most remarkable development which alone shows that there is inherent in the idea of the Common Market a truly creative dynamism which will ensure its success.

Things would be too good if there were no difficulties. There ARE difficulties. They concern mainly the relationship of the Common Market with the rest of the world.

This need cause us no surprise: the same is true of every large new undertaking. Had the Europeans ever been in the least doubt as to the importance of the work they are accomplishing, their doubt would have been promptly dispelled by the reactions of the outside world.

a) I would like to mention first of all our other European partners, and here I would speak in all friendliness.

We are attached to them by the multiple links of history, economy and culture. What we are doing has never been directed against them, quite the contrary. We are very firmly convinced that the economic expansion which will result from establishing the Common Market in Europe will benefit not only the 170 million Europeans living within that market, but all the European peoples around it.

We are told that we are about to divide Europe into two blocs. We find this rather difficult to believe. It could only be the case if the others were really to organize themselves against us, and we do not think they would do this. It would be especially the case if the Common Market did not manage to organize its economic relations with the other European States on a friendly basis.

To this end we have made a series of proposals which were contained, in particular, in the two Memoranda published by our Commission in March and September of last year. At its meeting in Strasbourg in November, the Council of Ministers of our Community, at our request, took a number of decisions clearly indicating the will of the Common Market to pursue a liberal policy, to allow countries outside our Community to benefit by enlarged quotas similar to those which we have decided on ourselves; at the same time they invited our partners to join us in pursuing a policy of tariff reductions on a world-wide basis.

On our side, in any case, patient and persevering efforts will be made to ensure that the relations of the Common Market

with its European partners will be relations of cooperation and joint action and not of hostility and rivalry.

Certain European States, moreover, such as Greece and Turkey, have recently shown their desire to be associated with our Community; the negotiations at present going on will, I hope, be successfully concluded during the present year.

b) Next I must mention those countries outside Europe which have felt some anxiety at the fact of overseas countries and territories, chiefly in Africa, being associated with our Community.

These anxieties were expressed in the framework of GATT. We have organized with our Asiatic and Latin American partners a series of consultations to deal with specific points and these, I think, have greatly reassured the nations concerned as to our intentions.

c) Finally, there is the United States of America, and I cannot say how much we have been struck by the understanding for our problems shown by your great country.

It is clear that the Americans see things on the grand scale, that you are a world power and responsible for the economic and political development of the free world; it is from that angle that you immediately began to judge the value of our effort.

From the beginning your Government lent its full support to the efforts of the six Governments of our Community while they were negotiating the Treaty of Rome.

Hardly was our Treaty in force when your Government placed its diplomatic relations with our Community on an official basis - it was the first to do so - by accrediting to us the very distinguished Ambassador who already represented your country with the European Coal and Steel Community, Mr. Butterworth, with whom our relations have been so cordial and confident at every stage of our development.

Finally your President, General Eisenhower, officially received the three Presidents of our Communities, Prof. Hallstein, Mr. Etienne Hirsch, and Mr. Paul Finet on the occasion of the official visit which they made to him in June last year.

You understood immediately, even before certain Europeans, how important it was for the strength and cohesion of the free world that a Europe made up of unduly small powers should tread the path of integration and unification.

You understood the potential economic might of a great body of 170 million people, with numerous universities and powerful industries, which would restore to Europe the dimensions of a world power.

You understood that only an effort of this nature would make it possible so to strengthen the European bastion that it could successfully resist the growing pressure of the Communist world.

Finally you understood that, even if the strength of the Common Market should create problems of economic competition for you yourselves, and the lower level of wages in Europe were to become a source of difficulties for you in some sectors, it was no less true that the advantages of the undertaking itself were incomparably greater than its possible drawbacks. We are convinced that in this you have shown the high ideals and farsighted vision which make great policies and great nations.

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The most recent development of your thinking in this field was the decision taken on United States initiative by the Heads of Governments of the great powers of the free world, at their meeting of 21 December in Paris, which announced the resolve of the United States and Canada from now on to share fully in the economic destinies of Europe.

This was certainly a great date for us; it provided the proof that Europe had regained its health after the hard years of war and occupation.

We cannot forget that if our countries, after the frightful destruction of 1940-45, have recovered their balance and their economic strength, they owe this to the generous and disinterested aid of the American nation. It is greatly to the honor of your Government and of your President, greatly to the honor of General Marshall, that they have laid the foundations of the bold plan which allowed our European countries rapidly to heal their wounds and to unite in the Organization for European Economic Co-operation.

Ten years later this work is completed and Europe, now able to stand on its own feet, is again becoming a full partner.

It is also, I firmly believe, a great date in your history when your country is no longer content to intervene in European affairs in wartime, but proposes to link its future destiny within the free world with that of the 18 nations represented in OEEC, among them the six Common Market countries.

I firmly believe that it is the establishment of our European Economic Community, its rapid progress and the strength it has already shown, which have led your country to take this decisive step.

Here we are now together: together in the committees which are to create a new organization which will be common to us; together in the conference which is to meet at the beginning of March in Washington with a view to improving the action of the industrialized countries for the benefit of those still in the course of development; together in the committee of 21 Governments whose task it will be, when it meets in Paris on about the 15th of March next, to seek agreed solutions for the trade problems which are today facing the free world as a whole.

My presence here today is a token of the interest and appreciation felt by our Community for all that you have done and are still doing.

I bring you an assurance of our resolve to work jointly with you and with our other European partners in framing a general economic policy for the free world which will ensure both its internal strength and the possibility of external expansion.

Probably no problem will be more important for the free world between now and the end of this century than that of giving effective aid to the numerous countries in the course of development who expect of us that we help them to ensure the stability of their economies and the improvement of their living standards.

The equilibrium of our world, the security of our children and our grandchildren, the future of democracy and of liberty itself are at present in our hands.

The particular problems of the Six and the Seven, the minor questions of tariff adjustments within Europe, which can be tackled without great trouble, are small indeed compared with the tasks which confront us all and which are those of our future.

The problem is not to look each other in the eye, it is to fix our gaze in the same direction, it is to undertake together the same tasks and to pursue together the same efforts.

I hope that this forward-looking spirit will triumph over any little acrimony, past or present; I hope that our Community will soon have become a sturdy well-grown child and that it will be possible for us, in a Europe at peace within itself, and for you, in an America more than ever conscious of its duties and its strength, to work together at the historic tasks which our generation is called upon to assume.