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SECOND ILLUSTRATIVE NUCLEAR PROGRAMME

The Commission of the European Communities has just published its Second Illustrative Nuclear Programme for the Community (First Programme : 1966). This second Programme begins by defining the role of nuclear energy in the light of the Community's energy prospects, and goes on to emphasize the directions in which a special effort must be made in order for nuclear energy to maintain its positions satisfactorily.

Being largely indigenous, nuclear energy can limit the Community's energy dependence; being economical, it can bring down the prices of rival forms of energy; being non-pollutant, it can help to reconcile economic growth with environmental considerations. As their efficiency and power steadily increase, nuclear power plants should produce electricity at stable and even possibly decreasing prices. In the medium term the task of these power plants is to ensure the covering of energy needs which require a high utilization factor; from this standpoint a nuclear capacity of more than 150,000 MWe might be envisaged for the Community of Six in 1985.

The Commission, however, has struck a balance between the desirable and the feasible and has preferred to set a minimum objective for the Community of installed nuclear capacity of 100,000 MWe in 1985. In order to achieve this target, electricity producers will have to invest about 115,000 million u.a. in power plants and 7,000 million u.a. in fuel (in constant money).

While the Commission is concerned to exceed the minimum target, it attaches equal or even greater importance to reducing the various difficulties which may put a brake on the industrial-scale introduction of nuclear energy. It considers that efforts must be made in several directions, with the following main objectives :

1. The creation of a genuine common market for electromechanical and nuclear equipment.
2. The harmonization of standards and criteria, particularly in regard to safety measures.
3. The organization of the electromechanical and nuclear industry in a few powerful transnational groupings.
4. Stimulation of the market by aid to investment and the organization of demand at Community level, particularly by the intensive interlinking of electricity networks and a policy of site reservation.
5. The creation of a secure and stable nuclear fuel supply system.
6. The provision of a detailed and scrupulous public information service.