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information series

the sittings

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The Sittings

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Session of the European Parliament

1975-1976

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from

Monday, 22nd September to Friday 26th September 1975

Introduction

Parliament's September sittings were dominated by three big issues: Spain, unemployment and the wine dispute between France and Italy.

There was general agreement that an appeal should be made to General Franco to commute the death sentences imposed on eleven Spanish terrorists. Where agreement was much harder to come by was on the terms of the appeal itself. Mr Peter Kirk, for the European Conservatives, and Mr Christian de la Malène, for the European Progressive Democrats favoured a conciliatory approach. But Mr Ludwig Fellermaier, for the Socialists, would have none of it and the ensuing debate was one of the most turbulent Parliament has had.

On unemployment there was general dissatisfaction at the lack of any real Community response to the twin problems of unemployment and inflation. But Commission Vice-President Patrick Hillery, while explaining all the Commission had done, argued that there was a limit to what social policy could do on its own.

As for wine, Commissioner Petrus Lardinois said the roots of the problem lay in the wine regulations of 1969 and 1970. These had been a political compromise between France with its tight planting and quality controls and Italy where there were absolutely no restrictions. He told the House what the Commission was doing and said he was hopeful for the future. His optimism, however, was not



Ludwig Fellermaier: 'We know how the political police in Spain uses the anti-terrorism law to keep the opposition quiet'.

shared by Mr Roger Houdet, chairman of Parliament's Committee on Agriculture. Standing outside the dispute but equally keen to resolve it, Mr Isidor Früh said: 'I am not suggesting we should take our calories in the form of alcohol but of each of us had a glass of wine with our lunch, two hundred and sixty million glasses would make a pretty tidy quantity'.

Meanwhile, Parliament learned with some satisfaction that the Commission could, where appropriate, always add a financial memorandum to its proposals in future. President Georges Spénale told the House he had had an assurance from Mr François-Xavier Ortoli, President of the Commission, to this effect.

Political Affairs

Appeal to Spanish authorities not to carry out death sentences

There were three motions before the House on the situation in Spain, all calling on the Spanish authorities, with differing degrees of emphasis, not to carry out death sentences on eleven Spanish citizens accused of terrorism. In the event, as the world now knows, there was no response to Parliament's appeal. It remains to be seen what line Parliament will now take in future: it seems unlikely to view with much favour any desire Spain may have for closer ties with the Community, at least as long as the current wave of repression continues. This certainly was the sense of Parliament's debate. The only point in which Members disagreed was as to how much pressure one should seek to bring to bear on the Spanish authorities. The motion finally agreed to after a debate, in which feelings were clearly running high with speakers being frequently interrupted, was the one put forward by Mr Ludwig Fellermaier (Ge, S) on behalf of the Socialist Group. This read:

The European Parliament,

- deeply concerned at the death sentences and long terms of imprisonment imposed by the military tribunals on Spanish citizens following trials which took place in violation of the rights of man and of the fundamental principles of law,
 - firmly convinced that only full recognition of democratic freedoms and respect for the rights of man can create the peaceful conditions which are necessary for freedom in Spain,
1. Protests vehemently against the new restrictions on civil rights and the violations of the rights of man arising from the law recently passed in Spain as an allegedly anti-terrorist measure;
 2. Invites the Commission and the Council to freeze existing relations until such time as freedom and democracy are established in Spain;
 3. Appeals to the Spanish authorities not to carry out the recent death sentences;
 4. Associates itself with all efforts undertaken by democrats throughout the world to save the lives of those condemned and to obtain a review of the political trials; therefore requests the Council and the Commission of the European Communities to make appropriate representations to the Spanish authorities.

Strong support for economic aid to Portugal

In an emergency debate following Question Time there was general agreement between Council, Commission and Parliament that the Community should extend substantial economic aid to Portugal as soon as possible, the underlying assumption being, however, that any laps of pluralistic democracy on Portugal's part would lead to a much cooler policy on the part of the European Community.

The presence of Mr Adolfo Battaglia, President of the Council, at the debate and his contribution to it were greatly appreciated.

Social affairs

Review of situation in 1974 widens out into debate on unemployment in 1975

Parliament welcomed all that was positive in the Commission's review of the social situation in 1974: the Council's decisions on broadening the scope of the Social Fund on equal pay for men and women, on mass dismissals, on setting up a European vocational training centre and on the creation of a European foundation for the improvement of working and living conditions. And the motion tabled by Mr Luigi Marras (It, CA) for the Committee on Social Affairs and Employment recorded Parliament's appreciation of the progress these measures represented.

But the debate soon widened out into an analysis of the here and the now and the Community's failure to deal with inflation and unemployment. In this respect the speech by Mr Michael Yeats (Ir, EPD) was fairly typical. 'We cannot forget that in the past twelve months the number of unemployed has doubled, so that now it is not far short of five million. And, while there has been some tendency for the rate of price rises to slow down, we are still a very long way from a return to what in more normal times would be looked upon as a tolerable rate of inflation'. Member States had differing views about tackling inflation and unemployment but the truth was that these problems could not be separated one from another. Efforts to preserve jobs at all costs had only resulted in even more rapid falls in living standards. 'There has also often been a sort of fatalistic assumption that inflation is an incurable disease due entirely to the energy crisis and that there is therefore little or nothing that can be done about it. But where prices have risen, in some countries, by forty per cent in two years it is a useful

Luigi Marras: 'There are now 4,675,000 people out of work. This is 200,000 more than in July.'



corrective to have it pointed out in the committee's report that only some two or three per cent of the rises is due directly to the extra cost of oil'.

Mr Yeats went on: 'It would seem that both inflation and unemployment indeed could be dealt with within a reasonable period provided courageous policies were pursued and adequate action taken at Community level'. But there had been no such action. There was not even any agreement about computing employment. On the other hand, Mr Yeats welcomed what the Commission was doing and he certainly hoped that the Social Fund – 'by far the most important weapon available to the Community in the social field' – would not be cut back in 1976, 'The attitude of the Council apparently is that because times are bad, money must be saved at the expense of the Social Fund. On the contrary, simply because times are bad it becomes all the more essential that the fund should be provided with adequate resources'.

Mr Yeats's anxiety about unemployment (and about cutbacks in the Social Fund) was shared to the full by the European Conservative spokesman Mr Hugh Dykes. He thought it a disgrace that the doctrine of full employment had been discarded. But he had the gravest doubts about the fourteen point programme for solving the unemployment problem put forward (in an amendment to the motion) by the Communists, 'Nowhere in your list of ideal, typical measures is there any reference to wage restraint or wage control'. Mr Dykes added 'Unless

we get a balanced economic view of the pressing priorities facing us we will be failing all generations in this Community, not just the younger generation'. He too appreciated what the Commission had done. But the main responsibility for engineering real economic recovery fell to the governments and here, he said: 'I wish to express my disapproval at the absence of the Council of Ministers there are now nearly five million unemployed people in the EC the total is rising extremely fast and the Council is not here'.

Mr Dykes's indignation on this point was shared by the Christian Democrat chairman, Mr Alfred Bertrand (Be, CD). Speaking also in his capacity as chairman of the Committee on Social Affairs and Employment, Mr Bertrand even questioned the value of holding the debate at all. He thought it pointless to discuss social affairs in the absence of those responsible for economic policy. He referred scathingly to the recent decision of the Finance Ministers not to meet in October 'there being nothing new to discuss'. He called for a full debate on the social and economic situation to be held during Parliament's October sittings. He asked the Commission what measures were in the pipeline for dealing with the economic situation, unemployment, inflation and energy and called for a tripartite conference to hammer out an economic and social plan for the whole Community. Lastly, he asked the Commission to press for a joint meeting of Economic and Social Ministers so as to take account of social aspect in discussing the economic situation and so as to ensure that social Ministers did not have to discuss measures without knowing financial backing was to hand.

Among the other speakers: Mr Luigi Marras (It, CA) rapporteur, spoke of the trauma among the young who were unable to get their first jobs. He saw the crisis as a structural one and believed the key to dealing with it was not to go on treating it as an entirely separate issue, something on one side of the range of Community policies. In common with other speakers, Mr Marras called for a tripartite conference.

Mr Rudolf Adams (Ge, S) for the Socialists and Mr Alain Terrenoire (Fr, EPD) for the European Progressive Democrats both emphasised the importance of unity. The Liberal spokesman, Mr Aart Geurtsen (Du, L) drew attention to the predicament of the self-employed, forty per cent of whom earned less than the minimum wage equivalent.

There was also some detailed discussion on better use of the Regional Fund, how to obtain a clearer picture of the real state of the Community, how to involve the public ('If Europe wants to be a Community, people must know what is

going on' said Mr Frans van der Gun, the Christian Democrat spokesman and 'unless we win the support of the people, our institutions have little prospect' said Mr Jacques Santer, the Luxembourg Christian Democrat) how retirement age variables could help and have the effect of making the forth-hour week general practice. It was argued that this could create two million job vacancies. But while there was agreement that employment was 'the problem of problems' (Mr Kurt Härzschel) with particular concern being expressed for the unemployed younger generation by Mr Ferruccio Pisoni (It, CD) and Mr Giovanni Bersani (It, CD), it was the lack of a Community response and particularly the planned cutbacks in the Social Fund that caused the most concern. In a series of hardhitting questions, Mr Tam Dalyell (Br, S) asked the Commission to spell out exactly what effects these acts would have.

Replying to the debate, Dr Patrick Hillery, Vice-President of the Commission, began by reminding the House of the background to the Commission's approach. 'When we set out to produce the Social Action Programme in response to the request of the Paris Summit, we did it on the basis that those who drew up the Treaties of the European Communities saw economic growth as the great solver of all social problems and that by the time of the Paris Summit in October 1972 the peoples of Europe had come to realise that economic growth, while solving the major problems of unemployment had left pockets of unemployment, large pockets of poverty and had, in fact, created new problems. So the Social Action Programme was introduced to meet that new situation. I think the Social Action Programme is even more relevant today but it was never intended to take the place of economic policies. It was never intended to take the place of coherent action by the nine Member States of the European Economic Community in economic affairs. The Social Action Programme is, as I said, as badly needed today as ever, but it is doing it a great injustice to demand of it that it replace in the Community serious efforts at the economic level to overcome the recession with which we are dealing.

But as far as the Social Action Programme itself is concerned, I would like to say that over and above the proposals which have been submitted to the Council over the last 18 months there are further actions which will be presented for approval in the coming months, implementing the programme within the time period required at the beginning. These proposals include those concerned with the problem of creating better living and working conditions for migrant workers and their families, that is extension of trade union rights to Community migrants, schooling for migrant's children, establishing consultative committees for migrants and a paper regarding the coordination of immigration policies with

regard to third countries. Another important communication will deal with illegal immigration. Furthermore, the Commission will very soon be submitting the revised and up-dated first European social budget to the Council, and it will then ask for a mandate to prepare a second budget. I would like to emphasise that the social budget is considered by the Commission as an extremely useful instrument for the coordination of future social policy and in particular social protection policy throughout the Community.'

Dr Hillery added 'I am very conscious of the seriousness of the unemployment situation in the Community. In our Community now the figures which are available are not strictly comparable from one country to another, and the figures we have are not all for the same month, but we have a rough figure of 4.7 million unemployed, and I am afraid I have to accept the word of Mr Adams, that it will become worse and go over 5 million people. These are men and women and as somebody said, a large number of young people worried about their future. The vast majority of people are not unemployed. They are still in employment and have never known the psychological scars which come from a spirit of being rejected and from redundancy. But it is these scars which can, especially in the young, sew the seeds of great problems for the Community in the future. We would hope that this realisation would bring those in the Community who can play a part improving the situation to adopt an attitude of community spirit in dealing with this major problem.

The social proposals implemented within the Community framework have given many thousand of unemployed workers opportunities for training and retraining which have helped him or will help him to get into new jobs. There in the Community quite a number of vacancies, and it is possible that strong action through the Social Fund and cooperation at national level will provide an appreciable number of unemployed young people with work. We also believe it is possible to increase the numbers employed in certain services. We believe in work sharing: I think it was in Parliament in June that I made the assessment that if the 40-hour week were widely or fully implemented in the Community, about 2 million new jobs would be created, that is if supplementary hours were not worked. The Community legislation, as I said before on the Social Action Programme, helped to protect sectors of the working population which are most vulnerable when economic activity slows down: women at work, workers affected by mass dismissals, migrant workers, young people and the handicapped. In answer to a question raised here, there are already possibilities too for the self-employed. The new Social Fund is open for the retraining of self-employed people, and we are at present drafting a directive with respect to the extension of social protection to the self-employed among others.

But these social activities as I say have a very small area of effect. The real area of return to normal will be the area of economic decision-making. No one is more conscious than I am of the limits within which the Commission's initiatives in the social field have to be framed and of the practical constraints on the range and speed of Community action. There is a limit to what can be achieved by the Social Fund even if there were a massive injection of cash and a great deal of ingenuity and agility was applied in adjusting its scope.'

In reply to the suggestion made by Mr van der Gun and Mr Bertrand, Dr Hillery said the Commission would be glad to take part in the social-economic debate in October.

Finally, in reply to Mr Dalyell he said he could see no justification for cutting the budget. 'There is nothing of advantage in it in terms of the Keynesian formula, which works with deficits only. As I have said, the Social Fund does not create employment, but reducing the funds available reduces the possibility workers have of preparing themselves for potential new employment which will come when the recession is over, or for placement in vacancies that do exist and are not filled because the workers are not trained for them. There is nothing whatever to be said in favour of cutting down the budget at this stage.'

It was, however, Mr Dalyell who had the last word: 'Why is it that the Commission as a whole was not seen to fight for what it believes in?'

The motion was agreed to.

Parliament backs Commission plans to help migrants

The House then turned its attention to the problems and status of the migrant worker. In 1959 three-quarters of migrants came from other Community countries but by 1973 this percentage was down to one quarter. By that year there were six million migrant workers who, with their families, made up a community of some ten million, referred to by some as 'the tenth Member State'.

Reporting for the Committee on Social Affairs and Employment on the Commission's action programme to help migrant workers and their families, Mr Willem Albers (Du, S) added that if the migrants were the tenth member



Mr Willem Albers: 'The laws on free movement and social security must rest on the principle that all migrant workers, from inside the Community and from outside it, have the same status'.

state they were also the first to have Europe as their country. The motion put down by Mr Albers gave rise to a good deal of controversy and some thirteen amendments were tabled.

The motion finally agreed to noted with satisfaction that the Commission had submitted a comprehensive programme to help migrants but regretted both that it was late in coming out and that it was not binding. It called for proposals to give effect to the programme's basic principles because here was an opportunity for the EC to make an impact in helping a neglected social group. Migrant worker organisations should be consulted, the motion added. Other specific measures called for included special insurance, a Migrant Workers' Charter, a new deal for seasonal workers, training schemes, inter-State recognition of qualifications and reception classes for the children of migrant workers.

There was little disagreement on this part of the motion. The clashes came on additions to the programme. The text finally agreed called for a legal stipulation of equality between migrants, bilateral agreements to be turned into EC ones, alignment of the Nine's aliens laws, establishment of the strictest possible penal code on recruiting illegal immigrants and more comprehensive schemes for housing, education health care and social welfare.

In the longer term the motion looked for an EC labour policy, the transfer of economic activities to emigrant regions, an EC body to handle migrants'

transactions, social security cover for self-employed migrants and priority for extending trade union facilities for migrants, for eliminating hardship caused by social security snarl-ups, for extending civil and political rights to all migrant workers irrespective of their origin and for establishing the rights of migrant workers to remain in the host country after termination of their employment. The motion concluded by calling on the Council to interpret the points in the social action programme approved on 21 January 1974 in the broadest possible manner. The point about extending civil rights to migrants was introduced in an amendment (no. 11) put down by Mr Libero della Briotta (It, S). The final text also incorporated a number of amendments tabled by Mr Ferruccio Pisoni, Mr Luigi Girardin and Mr Luigi Rosati (It, CDs).

Replying to the debate, Dr Patrick Hillery, Vice-President of the Commission, said that the Commission would be producing a migrants' charter (which both the Christian Democrat spokesman Mr Ferruccio Pisoni and the European Progressive Democrat spokesman Mr Albert Liogier had called for) but as this would not be binding had thought it preferable to present its action programme first. He painstakingly refuted suggestions there had been any delay in the presentation of the Commission's proposal.

On the condition of migrants, Dr Hillery had this to say: 'I feel that since the condition of migrants and their situation is affected more often by peripheral authorities than by central authorities like the Community institutions, their strongest weapon is to have the vote in the community in which they live. It is the intention of the Commission to make appropriate proposals under all the headings of the action programme for migrants by the end of next year'.

Dr Hillery concluded: 'The Commission feels that migration which is forced upon people by want should not exist. But it does exist. We look forward to a future in which policies can be implemented to make it less necessary or, if possible, completely unnecessary for people living at the periphery of the Community to move in search of work or for people outside the Community to come in search of work. But in the meantime we are faced with the fact that the migrant meets particular difficulties in terms of reception, vocational training, language training, teaching for his children and so on. This programme, therefore, tries to deal with immediate problems to the migrant, but, as I say, at a later stage the work done within the Commission since March of this year should form the basis of new initiatives for dealing with migration as distinct from this programme which deals with the problem of migrants.'

The question of consultation with migrants has been raised, and as Parliament knows, the Commission has tried to extend the question of consultation widely in its development of its programmes. It has been the cause of delays which have been criticised. The staff of the services of the Commission have consulted migrants as much as possible, but the holding of a formal consultation or conference at this stage before further advancing the programme would be to hold it back. I therefore thank the rapporteur for this suggestion that such consultation should perhaps come later in the implementation of the programme, which means that it would not in any way harm the momentum which is now beginning to gather.'

Approval for change in Social Fund financing subject to reservations

Mr Micheal Shaw (Br, EC), rapporteur for the Committee on Budgets, asked the House to approve a Commission proposal that appropriations under the Social Fund to cover commitments entered into may be carried forward for the following two financial years. Mr Shaw thought the amendment to the Financial Regulation thus necessitated should be agreed to without delay. But, he warned, Parliament's approval here should not be interpreted as indicating satisfaction with the operation of the Financial Regulation. Recourse to the carry forward procedure presents the possibility of substantially modifying the budget if used too generally. Mr Shaw moved a motion to this effect and it was agreed to.

Support for plans to cut Community's accident toll

It was late when the House finally turned the attention to the Commission's guidelines for an action prevention programme. It struck Mr Carlo Meintz (Lu, LA), rapporteur, that Parliament was hardly logical in its conduct. To have people working until two in the morning was certainly no way to protect their health at their place of work and it was this that was the subject of the debate.

The Commission, he said, had indicated there was nearly twelve million people involved in accidents each year, mostly at their places of work. Some hundred thousand of these accidents were fatal. 'At this rate, he said, the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg would be eliminated in less than four years'. Action by the Community was therefore essential. So he felt somewhat frustrated the Commission was submitting guidelines and not an action programme. With this reservation he turned to what the Commission was proposing. The Commission

was urging the Community to do more by promoting consultations between the Nine on regulations and monitoring procedures; by promoting cooperation between national bodies working on research into accident prevention; improving statistics on accidents; developing training for health and safety at work; using audio-visual methods to get accident prevention measures over more clearly. Mr Meintz welcomed these guidelines but said he looked for a more practical approach.

Mr John Prescott (Br, S), Socialist spokesman and Mr Giovanni Bersani (It, CD), Christian Democrat spokesman emphasised the importance their groups attached to health and safety at work.

In reply, Dr Patrick Hillery said the guidelines were drawn up not as proposals but for information to show the lines the thinking was following and to adumbrate the proposals of a firm nature which would be coming in the form of a programme plus concrete proposals in the coming year.

Mr Meintz's motion, welcoming the Commission's guidelines, was then agreed to.

Agriculture

Commissioner Petrus Lardinois replies to questions about the wine dispute

In reply to the three oral questions, Mr Lardinois said the troubles in the wine sector were not new. They had their roots in the wine regulations of 1969 and 1970. These were a political compromise between free production, which Italy wanted, and fairly tight controls over new planting and so on which France wanted and which France had been practising for many years.

He reminded the House that in 1974 the Commission had proposed improvements to the wine market and Parliament had approved its proposals. Earlier in the year when the first signs of trouble in the wine market appeared, the Council had resolved, on 9 April, to introduce tighter planting and quality controls. The Commission had then submitted a new series of proposals taking those of the previous year a stage further. Parliament had given the Commission its full support. He paid tribute to Mr Libero della Briotta here for the speed with which his motion had been brought before the House in July, the delay in the submission of the Commission's proposals being due to the Mediterranean policy negotiations.



*Petrus Lardinois:
'The trouble in the vineyards
began with the wine regula-
tions of 1969 and 1970.....'*

But, he added, the Council did not discuss wine when it met at the end of July, partly due to pressure of time and because a compromise was reached that an extra day should be set aside for wine in September. Then there had been unrest in the South of France. On 9 September the Council tried to find a way out. By the early hours of the next morning agreement had been reached on a whole series of points in the Commission proposals. But at 5 am there was still no unanimity on two key issues: the price of what was referred to as 'preventive intervention' and how the surplus problem should be resolved over the next three months.

France then decided to protect her market in the immediate future with a 12 per cent levy on wines imported from Italy. The Commission immediately entered into consultations: the conclusion reached was that article 31 paragraph 2 of the

wine regulation was no loophole for unilateral action. (See p. 234 OJ 1970 (I) Special Edition: regulation 816/70. The relevant section reads: 'By way of derogation so as all the administrative mechanisms necessary for the management of the market in wine are not in application..... producer Member States shall be authorised in order to avoid disturbances on their markets to take measures that may limit imports from other Member States. These measures shall be communicated to the Commission, which shall decide without delay whether to maintain, amend or abolish such measures'). The Commission had addressed a letter to France to this effect.

Meanwhile the Commission had proposed that a 61/2 u.a. subsidy per hectolitre be paid on all exports. 8 out of 9 members of the management committee had agreed to this. It came into force on 22 September. Secondly it had proposed cutting out mcas in Germany for wine. The management committee voted 3 for, one against and 5 neutral on this point. The Commission had then made a further proposal to cut our mcas for typical Italian and Southern French wines. There were 8 votes for and 1 against. It will come into force on 29 September. The Commission addressed a recommendation to Italy that delay in EAGGF payments to wine growers should be dealt with. Fourthly, a letter was sent to all Member States that plans to increase excise duties (Benelux, Germany) be shelved and that those with high duties on table wines (UK, Ireland and Denmark) should reduce them. These are five to seven times greater than price received by the wine producer in Italy or South of France.

Mr Lardinois hoped that these measures would have some effect in due course. People in the North did not realise that a litre of wine in the South cost hardly more than a litre of milk in the North. He suggested that eventually other sources of tax revenue could be found. He stressed he was now concerned with table wine and not luxury wines. At the Council meeting on 29 September wine would be the main item. If there were no result, there would be a new meeting a fortnight later. He reminded the House that a majority of Parliament had agreed with the Commission proposal for a regulation designed to forestall surplus production.

Mr Lardinois expressed concern about the pressure of nationalist cross currents. He then reviewed the financial position in the main sectors. There was no butter surpluses at present but there was a surplus of milk powder. There would be fewer difficulties for meat this autumn. Some economy would be needed with cereals.

In reply to Mr Houdet, who asked about the state of the wine market, he said prospects were now better. The present grape harvest was expected to be ten per cent lower than 1974 and twenty per cent lower than 1973. It would be roughly equal to consumption at around 145-150 million hectolitres. Export and import policies would make a difference but with the quality of the 1975 vintage the market should be easier.

The real cause of the trouble, he repeated, was that the Member States tended to regard the Community as a luxury. It was such a mentality that had produced the Europe of the Thirties.

Speaking for the Socialists, Mr Cornelis Laban (Du, S) said he hoped a Council compromise would be possible. The answer, he thought, was to overhaul the CAP. Wine was a noble product but it could not be regarded as a food.

Speaking for the Christian Democrats, Mr Isidor Früh (Ge, S) said he did not think this a matter of life and death for the EC. At the same time he thought the sneers of the press could hurt the Community badly, particularly cartoons showing mountains and lakes. There had been three good grape harvest coupled now with falling wine consumption. The area under vines should be limited. But here, he said, 'we must think of the men involved and their livings'. 'I realised this in Sardinia'. Wine was not a food and health interest and motoring strictures tended to cast a shadow over alcohol. But, he added, 'I am sure experts can be found to show wine is good for the health. We should be able to increase consumption without our consciences troubling us. If we fail here it won't say much for us'.

Speaking for the European Progressive Democrats, Mr Albert Liogier (Fr, EPD) said his group had agreed with the Commission's approach geared to restricting planting and distilling surpluses in the short term. This was a European problem. He suggested the CAP tipped unfairly in favour of the Northern farmers. He spoke of the 'wild liberalism' of the wine trade in the South. How could France not raise a levy? It was 12 per cent against the 30 per cent depreciation of the lira.

Speaking for the Communists, Mr Marcel Lemoine (Fr, CA) spoke of the continuing unease among wine growers in France. The levy meant a breathing space. EC measures had aggravated the position of the small and medium-sized farms. He suggested the levy came under the application of an escape clause, given the anarchy of the farm markets. A policy of quality was needed and

certain urgent measures. A minimum frontier price and common rules for minimum prices for given qualities; Regulation 816 was too liberal. The 15 per cent fall in earnings last year had not been recouped: costs had risen. Wine growers were among the hardest hit.

Lord Walston (Br, S) said 'I consider wine to be one of the greatest contributors to human happiness'. Wine is a relatively small part of the CAP but is of enormous importance to growers: it is a human problem as well as a farming one. If we can't solve a simple problem like wine how can we solve the others. 'We must condemn those who interfere with free movement of agricultural produce'. He suggested an enquiry into alternative crops in Rousillon, for example, where animal fodder could be produced. The excise duty on wine could also be cut and he thought it was ridiculous that the tax on a bottle of Château Lafitte should be the same as that on wines from Italy. Italy too should bring the vat rate on whisky into line with that on cognac. In conclusion, he said that the sooner the surplus wine is disposed the less it will cost.

(Mr Lardinois, incidentally, said the allusion to vat rates was 'fair comment')

Lord St. Oswald (Br, EC) asked whether it was true that the French wine surplus consisted at present of very inferior wine, inferior even to what is known in England as 'plonk'.

Mr Roger Houdet (Fr, LA), chairman of the Committee on Agriculture, pointed out that both structural measures (we've been waiting three years for them) and cyclical measures were needed. The latter were absolutely urgent. 171 million hectolitres of wine had been produced in 1973 and 150 million in 1974. There would not always be surpluses but the fear would always be there. He reminded the House of King's law: that a ten per cent surplus completely undermines a market. He thought the Commission was very optimistic about the future.

Commission bid for tighter control of citrus imports rejected

In seeking to amend the fruit and vegetable market regulation, the Commission proposed to change the way in which the reference price operates for citrus imports. Its aim is to protect producers against an open abuse of a monopoly position by those exporting both citrus fruits and vegetables to the EC. On an amendment from Mr Cornelis Laban (Du, S), however, this more stringent control was rejected.

Bid to reject UK cereal subsidy approval defeated

The Commission proposes to authorise the United Kingdom to pay production subsidies on cereals until 1 August 1976. Mr Niels Kofoed (Da, LA), rapporteur for the Committee on Agriculture, argued that the proposal was no longer justified in view of the international price levels of cereals and moved that it be rejected. Mr Mark Hughes (Br, S) opposed him. There was a long-standing tradition in Britain of the belt and braces technology of agricultural support. The desire was to maintain at least the form of belt and braces even though the reality of the stomach that was holding up the trousers was such that now neither belt nor braces would be required.

Replying for the Commission, Mr Georges Thomson said: 'I think all I would like to say to my friend Mark Hughes on this, is that it is not simply here a question of wishing to have both belt and braces. The fact is that the Community belt proves to be a good deal more effective than the old British national braces. And the intervention price guarantee is in fact a better guarantee to the British farmer than the traditional production subsidy. Communication of these matters to any section of a community tends to be slow and these guarantees were given earlier this year and therefore what one faces in terms of the United Kingdom is a certain psychological situation ... But the reality is that the Community system, which Britain in any case agreed to apply fully from the end of 1977, has proved before the end of the transition period that its guarantees are working rather more effectively than the previous national guarantees.'

Mr Kofoed's motion was rejected.

Subsidy for barley substitutes in beer-making rejected

Under a German law of 1536 only hops barley and water may be used in making beer. But the same law does not apply in other Member States where maize groats and meal and broken rice are used. Now barley attracts a subsidy. But the subsidy on maize groats etc. was discontinued from 23 December 1974 to 23 June 1975 on the grounds it was superfluous because of the high market prices. This situation is now changed and the Commission proposed to reintroduce production refunds. Parliament rejected the proposal.

Fishing industry incomes question deferred

The question addressed to the Commission by Mr James Scott-Hopkins (Br, EC), Mr John Corrie (Br, EC) and Mr Erhard Jakobsen (Da, EC) as to what is doing to stop the serious deterioration of incomes in the fishing industry was withdrawn because of pressure of other business. It will be taken in October.

Low acid colza proposal approved

Mr Jan de Koning (Du, CD), rapporteur for the Committee on Agriculture, asked the House to approve Commission proposals to encourage the growth of new varieties of colza seed with an erucic acid content of less than 15 per cent. The motion was agreed to.

External trade

Wine imports subject to reference price approved

Mr Heinz Frehsee (Ge, S), rapporteur for the Committee on Agriculture, asked the House to approve a Commission proposal on wine imports from Algeria, Morocco, Tunisia and Turkey. These are to be subject to a reference price, failure to observe which will result in countervailing duties being applied. His motion was agreed to.

Early potato quota opened for Cyprus

Mr Willem Schuijt (Du, S), rapporteur for the Associations Committee, asked the House to approve the opening of a quota for new potatoes from Cyprus. A duty free tariff quota of 110,000 long tons will be opened on the United Kingdom for 1976. His motion was agreed to.

Quotas for Port, Madeira and Setubal Muscatel

Mr Egon Klepsch (Ge, CD), rapporteur for the Committee on External Economic Relations, asked the House to approve the opening of quotas for Port, Madeira and Setubal muscatel wines for 1976. There is to be a 60 per cent

reduction in the CT on 20,000 hectolitres of port in two litre or smaller containers and 50 per cent on 285,000 hectolitres of port in larger containers. There is to be a 30 per cent reduction in the CCT duty on 15,000 hectolitres of Madeira and 3,000 hectolitres of Setubal muscatel. The motion was agreed to.

Quotas for Sherry, Malaga and other Spanish wines

Mr Klepsch also asked approval for a tariff quota for Sherry, Malaga and other Spanish wines. There is to be a 60 per cent cut in the CCT duty on 40,000 hectolitres of Sherry in two litre or smaller containers and one of 50 per cent on 210,000 hl in larger containers. For Malaga wines the cut is 50 per cent on 15,000 hl and 30 per cent on 15,000 of Jumilla, Priorato, Rioja and Valdepenas wines. These are for wines supplied on the smaller containers. A motion approving the quotas was agreed to.

Quota for dried grapes from Spain

The EC will open a quota for 8,373 metric tons of dried grapes from Spain. The quota to be taken up by the UK will be 4,029 metric tons and 280 metric tons for Ireland. Mr Klepsch moved approval of a Commission proposal to this effect. It was agreed to.

Regional Fund

Concern about channels of communication

Mr John Corrie (Br, EC) asked the Commission what it was doing to ensure the views of the regional authorities on the operation of the Regional Development Fund can be brought directly to the attention of the Regional Policy Committee.

Commissioner George Thomson replied that the Regional Policy Committee had now laid down its rules of procedure. Where questions arising concern particular regions, the committee may, if the representatives of the Member States concerned consider this useful, seek opinions either orally or in writing of the representatives of institutions or interested parties from the regions in question. As regards the possibility of other institutional links, involving, for example, a conference of regional authorities, he thought it would be wise to wait and see

how the fund operates in its first year because we will then have a better idea of the role this kind of consultation could play. Mr Thomson added that defining who the regional representative authorities are is not easy. He concluded 'I must again remind the House that the Community is a Community of Member States and the Commission's legal relations are with the central governments of the Member States'.

Business, energy and industrial affairs

Commission proposals for aerospace industry nearly final

Lord Bessborough (Br, EC) asked the Commission if it would give its views on the future of European cooperation in the aerospace industry. Speaking to the question, he said: 'I would like to make two points: first of all, we know that Europe has the advanced technology to build the most up-to-date aircraft. Europe has led the way in the production of the Viscount, the Caravell, the Trident, the VC 10, the Mercure, the Harrier, vertical take-off aircraft, the different types of helicopter and the Jaguar trainer, the multirange combat aircraft, the Mirage F 1, and now the European Airbus, which is selling remarkably well, considering the depressed airline market. And then, of course, there is the Concorde, in which Members of this Parliament crossed the Atlantic in the record time of 2 hours and 18 minutes only a month ago. I would like to stress here that these aircraft are not solely produced by Aerospatiale in France or the British Aircraft Corporation or Hawker-Siddely in Britain or Messerschmidt, Bölkow and Blohm in Germany, but that other countries in Europe provide components or assemblies for some of them.

What I would like to emphasise is that in these aircraft, it can well be said that we in Europe have been technically ahead of the United States, yet this time the striking fact is that 80 per cent of the aircraft flown by European airlines are American. I recognize, Mr President, that in some cases the economics of the aircraft, and in particular the load factor, may have inhibited sales, but if we can solve the complex technological problems, surely we can solve the economic ones, too. Mr President, in my view, the time has come, maybe well nigh past, when the Community and its Member States should take drastic action to remedy this situation. We cannot allow this state of affairs to continue. I am not advocating a boycott of American aircraft, but I would support the Commission in any proposals they might put forward whereby Americans would agree to buy more European aircraft in return for European purchases of American

equipment. Time is running out. We have only a few years in which to integrate our knowledge and abilities to make use of our inventive skills and ensure continuity of forward planning, so that we may compete effectively. Decisions in principle are pointless unless the Community backs them with deeds and not mere expressions of good intent. We need bold, political initiatives, initiatives which must avoid the charge of anti-Americanism, but which must be accepted as a genuine desire on our part to preserve our own interests while working in close cooperation with our North American friends.'

Replying for the Commission, Mr George Thomson said that further to the Council resolution on the aircraft industry adopted in March, the Commissioner had been drawing up a report on the state of the industry and the measures needed. This report would be approved by the Commission and presented to the Council within the next two weeks in the form of an action programme for the industry. 'Lord Bessborough called for a bold initiative. I venture to express the belief that when he reads the report he will find it fits that definition'.

Failure to consult Parliament about aid to shipbuilding

When the Commission first put forward a proposal on state aid for shipbuilding in November 1973 the European Parliament expressed a number of reservations. It was somewhat surprised when the Commission presented the Council with a new proposal in May 1975 which departed both from the original text and from Parliament's opinion of June 1974. Parliament asked Commission and Council why it had not been consulted on the new text which the Council had adopted on 10 July 1975. Mr Harry Notenboom (Du, CD) was even intending to table a motion on this subject. After statements by Mr Adolfo Battaglia, President of the Council and Commissioner Albert Borschette, however, he agreed to write a letter expressing his views on this matter. Assurances were given that every attempt would be made to avoid misunderstandings that could lead to any repetition of such a situation.

Motion on competition policy rejected

A motion on the Commission's fourth report on competition policy tabled by Mr Tom Normanton (Br, EC) for the Committee on Economic and Monetary Affairs was rejected. The matter will now be referred back to committee.

Question on sharp practice in pharmaceuticals deferred

A question on sharp practice on pharmaceuticals arguing, inter alia, that 90 per cent of the medicaments put on the market each year are simply old products in a different guise which make absolutely no contribution to medical science, had to be withdrawn because of pressure of other business. It will be taken in October.

Replying to oil debate, Commission promises new energy proposals by year end

Replying to a debate on hydrocarbons, Commission Vice-President Henri Simonet warned the House that Europe was falling prey to illusions about energy: that prices would flatten out, that newly-discovered reserves in China and Venezuela would solve the supply problem, that there were splits in the ranks of the Oil Producing and Exporting Countries. In this state of mind, he warned, the Community could end up by doing nothing. He told the House that before the end of the year the Commission would submit a range of proposals to the Council on energy policy after which the Council could either act or he would suggest that the Commission should discontinue the ritual of making proposals.

This diagnosis of the Community's state of mind on energy was shared by most of the speakers. Mr Norbert Hougardy (Be, LA), for example, said that the 1975-1985 energy plan had already been compromised by the Council's failure to act. He pointed out that the Community was still vulnerable. He thought Mr Gerd Springorum (Ge, CD) had been right to raise the question of the 90-day stock rule and he asked whether, in fact, it had been applied.

Mr Pierre Krieg (Fr, EPD) said that the feverish atmosphere generated by the oil crisis had not been constructive and that the hopes it would lead to solidarity in the Community had proved groundless. If the energy position had improved slightly it had been because of two mild winters. If the next winter should prove hard, however, the OPEC countries would probably not fail to take advantage of it.

Mr Tom Normanton (Br, EC) thought a maximum effort should be made to exploit the oil and gas reserves on the Continental Shelf and bring them in flow as quickly as possible. He also called for a massive programme of nuclear generating capacity and uranium enrichment and for the development of a waste

disposal capacity. The EC must also make sure to obtain its uranium from friendly sources. Mr Friedrich Burgbacher (Ge, CD) drew attention to the link between the availability of energy and earnings.

Mrs Winifred Ewing (Br, Ind), whom Mr Normanton had criticised by implication, said that her concern as a Scottish nationalist about North Sea oil concerned the rate of extraction, the prices to be charged and the markets to be found. During the referendum campaign, an assurance had been given that there would be no interference in these matters. She looked for confirmation of these assurances. She spoke of the goodwill for the Community generated by the referendum campaign but warned that this could be dissipated by any hint of interference here.

Mr John Osborn (Br, EC) also referred to North SEa oil and suggested that it would be in the Community interest and in Britain's interest too for a price rate to be fixed 'it is vital, he said, that we use this asset together'. Mr William Hamilton (Br, S) referred to the Lauderdale (House of Lords) report which had been critical of all the Brussels proposals on energy arguing that they contained too many dubious statistics and omitted too many details particularly regarding nuclear generation risks. He warned that the United Kingdom would block these proposals if they clashed with UK interests.

Basis for the debate was a report by Mr Silvio Leonardi (It, CA) whose motion accepted the need for an EC oil and gas policy geared to six principles: (a) rational use of resources (b) optimal development of resources (c) search for secure external supply (d) consultations about investments, (e) a price policy for consumers and (f) an EC capacity to maintain the unity of the market. The only point in the motion to be challenged read '(the EP) stressed that if we want to have a Community energy policy, the Community must speak as one voice within the International Energy Agency.' But a Communist amendment to this paragraph was rejected. The motion was agreed to.

Guidelines for electricity approved

As rapporteur for the Committee on Energy, Research and Technology, Mr Jean-François Pintat (Fr, LA) reported on the Commission's guidelines for the electricity sector. The key principle is to reduce dependence on imports, particularly oil, from the present 63 o/o to around 40 o/o by 1985. Against this background, electricity will come into its own, especially that produced from

nuclear sources. 45 0/o of the EC's electricity will come from nuclear energy in 1985, 25 0/o from solid fuels and 24 0/o from oil, natural gas and manufactured gas and 6 0/o from hydro-electric sources (as against 32 0/o, 43 0/o, 19 0/o and 6 0/o respectively in 1973).

Mr Pintat discussed the relative costs of producing energy in other ways. Solar energy, for example, called for the use of vast heat reception surfaces and was as a result costly. Nuclear energy was, undoubtedly, the cheapest but the initial outlay was much higher. Mr Pintat said that it would be wrong to run down consumption of electricity from conventional sources. When nuclear electricity became available there must be a market there to consume it.

Mr Tom Ellis (Br, S) had misgivings about the failure of Mr Pintat's report to raise the political issue of demand cut-backs. He agreed with the report's main message that the use of petroleum in producing electricity had to be cut. Mr Ellis was surprised too that coal should be treated as something of an afterthought. Up until 1985 it would certainly be the best substitute fuel although nuclear energy would, undoubtedly, prove best in the long-term. Mr Ellis called for a much more realistic pricing policy, the aim of which would be to limit energy demand. It was, as of now, a fallacy to talk of obtaining energy supplies at low prices. Mr Ellis also drew attention to the almost vertical increase in energy consumption as between 1900 and 1975. He hoped the Commission was already assessing the problem of limiting demand.

Mr John Osborn (Br, EC) spoke of the types of nuclear reactor already being operated successfully. He also raised the question of the use of electricity in transport.

Speaking in reply, Mr Henri Simonet said he thought that European industry would certainly be able to build the nuclear power stations called for but he did not know whether they would be built as part of a collective effort. He said that the multinational cooperations did more to achieve coordination between the various industries involved than the Member Governments. Referring to the environment, he reminded the House that coal-fired power stations also caused pollution. Our trouble, he said, is that we want to enjoy the advantages of an agricultural civilisation as well as those of an industrial one without having to make a choice.

A motion approving the Commission's guidelines was agreed to.

Data processing proposals meet with some scepticism

Mr Pierre-Bernard Cousté (Fr, EPD), rapporteur for the Committee on Economic and Monetary Affairs, asked the House to approve the Commission's proposed choice of five data-processing projects to launch an EC policy in this sector. The proposals concern (1) the creation of a central file to determine organ and blood group compatibility for transplants and transfusions (2) the study of data-processing systems for information about imports and exports, agricultural market management and financial control (3) a system for legal document retrieval (4) a study of real time data-processing systems for air traffic control in the 1980's and (5) development studies in computer-aided design techniques. The ultimate objective is to establish within the EC community a European data-processing industry by the early 1980's, fully viable and competitive.

Mr Tom Normanton (Br, EC) spokesman for the European Conservatives, said his group had very deep misgivings about the Commission's fundamental thinking. 'Is it realistic, is it perhaps star-gazing, for us or the Commission and the Community to hope to establish a really viable all-embracing computer industry by 1980? And even if it were possible technically, economically and commercially, what will be the cost and who will pay?' Mr John Osborn (Br, EC) had doubts too as did Mr Tam Dalyell: 'are we not living in cloud-cuckoo land? It is preposterous to suggest that by the early 1980's with all the goodwill in the world, we in Europe have some kind of a computer industry to match not only IBM but also Honeywill.'

The point was made in Mr Cousté's motion that proposals of this kind could not be properly appraised failing adequate information about their financial implications. It will be noted, however, that the Commission has now given Parliament an assurance that financial memoranda will, where appropriate, be attached to all Commission proposals in future.

Slow down in tobacco tax alignment approved

Excise duties on tobacco are to be brought into line in stages, the second of which fell due on 1 July 1975; the point is to narrow the range of the ratios between the two factors of the excise duty: the specific component and the proportionate component. As rapporteur for the Committee on Budgets, Mr Helmut Artzinger (Ge, CD) noted the progress made here and asked the House

to approve the Commission's proposal to extend the first stage of the excise duties harmonisation process. A motion to this effect was agreed without debate.

Economic situation

Change in timing of Commission report

Mr Helmut Artzinger (Ge, CD), rapporteur for the Committee on Economic and Monetary Affairs, asked the House to approve the change in the timing of the Commission's report on the economic situation. He expressed regret, however, that consultation between Member States had not ensured the coherence of their economic policies. He asked the Council to press the Member States to keep each other better informed. The Commission's report will be submitted to Parliament on 15 October 1975 and debated in the House in Luxembourg in November. A motion this effect was agreed to.

Cultural affairs

Call for European Schools to be brought under EC control

The European Schools system now comprises six establishments: Luxembourg, founded in 1952 with 1990 pupils, Brussels (1957) with 3295, Mol (1959) with 1128, Varese (1959) with 1812, Karlsruhe (1961) with 896 and Bergen (1962) with 585. They were set up to cater for the children of Community officials resident, by reason of their work, in a Member State other than their own. One of the aims of the schools is to frame the syllabuses in such a way that children coming from, say, Ireland or England at any given stage in their school career can carry on in the European school from where they left off at home – and vice-versa. Parliament's debate on the European Schools system, on the basis of a report drawn up for the Committee on Cultural Affairs and Youth by Mr Karl-Heinz Walkhoff (Ge, S) focused mainly on six points: an appreciation of the pioneering work carried out by the schools, particularly in language teaching; criticism of what was called its élitist status; a call for more liberal rules of entry, particularly in favour of migrants' children; a demand that the school take on a more modern up-to-date character, the suggestion being made, for example, that mixed ability courses be tried out; that the Conseil supérieur in Brussels which at present has overall responsibility should be replaced by local boards in the case



European School Luxembourg: 'Yes, but who is to go there?'

of all six schools; and a call for the schools to be brought under the direct authority of the European Community. Commissioner Albert Borschette commented, in reply to the debate, that it would be wrong to regard the European Schools as the answer to educating migrants' children. There were one million of them and there were less than 10,000 places at the European Schools. A motion summing up the various points made in the debate was agreed to.

Aid for higher education criticised as insufficient

Mrs Tullia Caretoni Romagnoli (It, CA), rapporteur for the Committee on Cultural Affairs and Youth, reported to the House on a memo from the Commission on aid for higher education, a memo produced in response to pressure from Parliament. The Commission indicates that 3,250,000 Belgian francs was set aside for this purpose under the 1974 budget, including 600,000 for the College of Europe in Bruges, the balance being made available for higher education establishments meeting three conditions: (1) location in EC (2) use for EC integration studies (3) ability to fund continuing studies started with EC help. Establishments qualifying in 1974 were the ILO International Institute for Labour Studies (200,00 Bfrs), the CEDECE (400,000 Bfrs) and the International Association of Comparative Law (25,000 Bfrs). It is intended to make these grants recurrent. 450,000 Bfrs is to go to establishments running courses on customs law. This leaves a balance in hand of 1,625,000 Bfrs (N.B. the 1975 appropriation is 4,000,000 Bfrs). Mrs Carretoni Romagnoli said she felt more could be done.

Commissioner Albert Borschette agreed the amount available was a modest sum. The motion calling for proposals for larger appropriations was agreed to.

Motion stressing education an EC matter agreed to

The Committee on Cultural Affairs and Youth is concerned that education lies outside the EC's terms of reference. Its leading members tabled a motion insisting that when the Ministers of Education meet to discuss the seven areas for cooperation 1. better educational and training facilities for nationals and children of nationals of other Member States 2. closer relations between educational systems 3. up-to-date statistics 4. more cooperation between institutions of higher education 5. improved possibilities for academic recognition of diplomas and periods of study 6. encouragement of mobility of

teachers, students and research workers and 7. equal opportunity for free access to all forms of education, they should do so as the Council of the Communities. This motion was agreed to.

Defence

Parliament analyses state of play after Security Conference

Mr Ludwig Fellermaier (Ge, S) and Mr Lucien Radoux (Be, S) addressed a question to the Council on behalf of the Socialist Group. What prospects for economic cooperation had the Conference opened up? Had the presence of the Community and NATO partners proved effective and how were the Council and Commission to be involved in seeing that what was agreed at the CSCE is actually put into effect?

Mr Adolfo Battaglia, President of the Council, began by saying it would be months or years before we could see how far the general principles agreed in Helsinki go in practice. As to expanding trade, which was the aim in the CSCE's final act, there was the EC's offer to open negotiations with East Europe which was made last November and there were the recent contacts between Mr Wellenstein of the Commission and the secretary of Comecon. Mr Battaglia said it was to be hoped that Helsinki would work out to mean some progress here. Taking the second point, he said that the results of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe were to a large extent what the Nine had set out to achieve. Thirdly, the EC institutions would keep a close watch on what followed from the Conference. He reminded the House of the Italian Prime Minister's statement when the final act of the Conference was signed: 'As to the future, the point of view of the Community will be expressed in accordance with our practice wherever matters arise that are within its terms of reference.'

Among the speakers that followed, Mr Michael Stewart (Br, S) Socialist spokesman, argued that the West had lost nothing by going to Helsinki. It had even gained a little. It would now be harder for any power to be tyrannical or to deny free movement. Mr Egon Klepsch (Ge, CD), Christian Democrat spokesman, thought it too early to assess the Conference's effects. Lord Gladwyn (Br, LA) Liberal spokesman, said that if observed, the 30,000 word declaration signed by 35 states in Helsinki on July 31st should clearly result in perpetual peace. 'The only question is what likelihood there is of such observance'. Here certain doubts do legitimately arise. He thought, however, that it would be

wrong to be completely cynical. 'It may even be possible for the Community to achieve some kind of breakthrough in trade with Comecon ... but it would be a disaster if the Soviet Government, having got essentially what they want as regards frontiers and as regards industrial cooperation, then refused to respond by agreeing to any real progress in Vienna. 'But we shall, presumably, know during the coming year, whether such progress is possible or not. If it is not, then the whole huge declaration of Helsinki will not be worth more than the paper on which it was written.

The truth is that, though it may well be possible for both the blocs to reduce the burden of armaments and thus to lessen tension by mutual agreement, a genuine and lasting détente between totalitarian and free political systems, the lion lying down with the lamb, is not possible. Given its nature and its basic philosophy the Soviet Union must, if only to maintain itself in power, strive to undermine and divide what it calls the capitalist or imperialist, or bourgeois or social-fascist powers, that is to say all countries not under its influence. There is little use fondly imagining that it can ever abandon Hegel and Marx. That does not mean, however, that war is inevitable. War can only be likely if the West is so greatly and demonstrably inferior in armed strength to the Soviet Union as to tempt it, as it were, to xforce the hand of what it considers to be its manifest destiny or if SALT fails and the armaments race is completely out of hand. For these reasons, it will be apparent and I for one, and here I believe I speak for the whole Liberal Group, can only give a very qualified blessing to what, with such difficulty, was actually achieved at Helsinki.'

Speaking for the European Conservatives, Lord Bethell (Br, EC) was equally guarded: 'The Soviet Union has been careful, when obtaining these concessions, to pay the lowest possible price'. He thought we should have to keep a very careful watch on whether the concessions made on humanitarian issues were put into practice. 'I want to be optimistic but we should not be lulled into a fool's paradise and somehow led to believe that this agreement means an end to ideological conflict and military confrontation, because I do not believe that it does. And anyone who believes that détente means that is propagating a dangerous myth'.

Action taken on Parliament's resolutions

Mr Albert Borschette told the House the Commission had amended its proposal on employees retaining their rights when mergers take place (Doc. 385/74 rev.)

in line with Parliament's motion. Mr Michael Yeats reported on this subject. The Commission had accepted some of the points made in the motion on credit institutions but favoured a more gradual approach than Parliament would have wished (Doc. 66/75: report by Mr Willem Scholten). The Commission had report on ceramics intended to come into contact with food (Doc. 18/75: report by Mr Hans Edgar Jahn).

Question Time

Questions to the Council

Mr Adolfo Battaglia, Italian Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs and President of the Council replied.

Annual review of farm prices by Miss Betty Boothroyd (Br, S)

'What measures are taken by the Council during their discussions on the annual review of farm prices to protect the interests of consumers?'

Mr Battaglia replied that the Council reached its decisions on the main product prices after going through a very complex procedure. It had to reach a difficult compromise between the interests of producers and consumers. However, specific measures on behalf of the consumer were possible when world prices were higher than those in the Community when a levy was made on EC exports. Sugar had recently been a case in point when world prices were two or three times those prevailing in the Community.

Miss Betty Boothroyd (Br, S) then pointed out that something between a quarter and half of the final price paid for farm produce went on marketing, distributing and advertising. And Mr James Scott-Hopkins (Br, EC) asked the Council what kind of margin it thought reasonable between production and retail prices. Mr Battaglia said all that he could reply was that the return should be enough to provide a reasonable profit and allow for re-investment.

Mr John Corrie (Br, EC) asked whether the Council knew that 700 dairy farmers had gone out of business in July. Mr Battaglia replied that he thought that this was part of a wider problem and that apart from taking stop-gap measures here and there was really a matter for the Member States and that the Community

could do little more than work for coordination. In reply to a question by Mr Michel Cointat (Fr, EPD), Mr Battaglia pointed out that the whole series of Community prices were at present lower than those being quoted on the world market and that this represented a substantial benefit for consumers.

In reply to a question from Mr Ralph Howell (Br, EC) about the balance between supply and demand on the milk market, Mr Battaglia said that the whole question of balance was vital to the Common Agricultural Policy, Mr Heinz Frehsee (Ge, S) also raised the question of the margin between producer and consumer prices and turning to this point again Mr Battaglia said that this could only be judged product by product.

Commission proposals by Mr Jan Broeksz (Du, S)

'Has the Council taken note of the list of more than two hundred Commission proposals on which the European Parliament has delivered its opinion but on which the Council has not yet reached a decision? If so, what steps does the Council propose to take in order to remedy this state of affairs as quickly as possible?'

Mr Battaglia replied that the exact figure as of July had been 210. Since then, 20 proposals had been adopted and a further 18 had come in. 40 proposals were amendments of earlier texts and had only recently been submitted and 7 had to be reviewed by the Commission further to the delivery of Parliament's opinion. Another 75 called for detailed technical study. 31 were being approved and 27 were already out of date. Mr Battaglia added that between January and July, the Council had adopted 214 regulations, 39 directives, 70 decisions and 13 resolutions.

Mr Carlo Scarascia Mugnozza, Commissioner responsible for relations with the European Parliament, added that in response to the request made by Mr Jan Broeksz (Du, S) in April, a list had been sent to him in May. The list had been in French and Mr Broeksz had requested the list be sent to all Members in their respective languages. This had now been done.

European social policy by Mr Willem Albers (Du, S)

'What European measures, as distinct from national measures, does the Council propose to take in order to deal with unemployment in the Community?'

Mr Battaglia replied that the European Community could only coordinate the action of the Member States although it did intend to intervene in some cases.

However, the Council was awaiting proposals. In the meantime, he outlined the measures already being taken under the ECSC provisions, Social Fund, the Regional Fund and the Guidance Section of the EAGGF. He admitted it was not everything but thought it was already something.

European social policy by Mr Georges Carpentier (Fr, S)

'When will the next tripartite Conference of social partners – which the Council has approved in principle – take place?'

Mr Battaglia replied that it was not possible to give a precise date but he thought it would probably be in November.

Aid programme for Portugal by Mr Ludwig Fellermaier (Ge, S)

'When will the Council finally adopt its aid programme for Portugal?'

Mr Battaglia replied that on the 17th July the Council had stated that the European Community was ready to enter into talks on closer cooperation with Portugal, the underlying condition being that it do so only with a pluralistic democracy. A definite programme had now been put together for a substantial amount of aid to Portugal and there would be a meeting on 7th October at which final decisions would be taken. Mr Fellermaier asked whether the Council did not agree that the unusual situation in Portugal called for unusual measures and that a comprehensive plan was needed which would brook no bureaucratic delays.

Questions to the Commission

Economic aid for Portugal by Mr Ole Espersen (Da, S)

'Following the latest political developments in Portugal, what practical proposals will the Commission submit to the Council for economic aid for that country?'

Mr François-Xavier Ortoli, President of the Commission, replied that the Commission had made proposals in June on its own initiative. A crisis had then occurred which led to the talks being discontinued. But now that this was passed the Commission was making every effort to expedite matters.

Dumping of Rubbish Overboard by Mr James Spicer (Br, EC)

'What are the Commission doing to stop the continued dumping overboard of rubbish from Belgian, British and French crosschannel ferries?'

Mr Carlo Scarascia Mugnozza replied that this matter was covered by the Oslo Convention although he agreed it was also a problem of good education. Mr Spicer pointed out that with 60 sailings a day, at the height of the season, across the channel, the problem of rubbish became very acute when the containers provided for rubbish were not put to use. Mr Scarascia Mugnozza said that he realised the problem and accepted that the Oslo Convention was mainly of moral value. The Commission could submit proposals to approximate the laws of the Member States on these matters and would look for the support of the European Parliament when it did so.

Position of independent airlines within the Community by Mr John Corrie (Br, EC)

'What is the Commission doing to ensure that independent airlines which can provide services between parts of the Community not previously linked directly (for example, Scotland and the Continent) do not suffer from subsidised competition from State Airlines using less convenient routes?'

Mr Albert Borschette replied in detail but Mr Corrie was not satisfied. 'Is not the lack of any real Community policy untenable?', he asked. Mr Borschette took the point but said that the Community Member States were also Members of the IATA and this also made the issue more complex. He would ask the Commission to look into the whole question.

Steel Industries by Mr John Osborn (Br, EC)

'What action is being taken to deal with the deterioration in trading conditions and employment in the steel industries?'

Commissioner Altiero Spinelli replied that the Commission could set quotas for production under the ECSC Treaty but it had decided not to be so drastic. The Commission's intention was to stabilise the market and it had the power to require firms to make monthly returns both of their production and their payroll. If the situation became worse the Commission would consider more restrictive measures.

Mr Osborn said he had hoped for a more dynamic reply especially in view of the worries of steel workers in such places as Sheffield. Mr Spinelli said that the Commission's power to intervene was limited. Mr Pierre-Bernard Cousté (Fr, EPD) asked whether the production figures for the next three months were likely to be worse than those for June, July and August and Mr Spinelli said that this was the case. It was impossible to expand steel production without a corresponding expansion in the economy as a whole.

Butter supplies by Mr Ralph Howell (Br, EC)

'What quantity of butter expressed in terms of days' supply for the whole Community does the Commission consider should be held in store in order to ensure continuity of supply and at what level of supply would the provisions for social butter be withheld?'

Mr Petrus Lardinois replied that butter was subject to a seasonal cycle and that supplies tended to be at their lowest at the end of the winter. At that time, stocks should be equal to four weeks' supply so that if the weather were bad it would still be possible to keep prices stable. With regard to 'social butter', this would have to be withdrawn if the four weeks' supply of butter could not be guaranteed. Mr Howell asked him which Member States ran the social butter scheme. He said that Germany and France were operating it but was not sure if Ireland was. He added that at present the pre-winter stocks of butter were very low.

Mr James Scott-Hopkins (Br, EC) then asked Mr Lardinois what the exact figures of butter stocks were. Mr Lardinois said he could not give precise figures but thought that private stocks amounted to 200,000 tons and that the stocks in intervention, as on September 15, were about 70,000 tons. He noted that butter production in the United Kingdom was at a dead end after a dry summer and that 6 0/o less milk would go to the dairies especially as butter was the lowest priority in the policy of the Milk Marketing Board.

Mr William Hamilton (Br, S) referred to the editorial in the 'Times' of September 22nd complaining at the money being wasted under the CAP and asked if this waste could be avoided. Mr Lardinois replied that he could hardly discuss ten years of the Common Agricultural Policy at this juncture but would be ready to appear before the House to do so if given the chance. However, he thought that the 7 million people unemployed in the Community were a far greater absurdity than a surplus store of 1 million tons of dried skimmed milk.

Mr Heinz Frehsee (Ge, S) asked whether private stocks were any higher than last year. Mr Lardinois replied that they were some 50,000 to 80,000 tons less than in 1974.

Communication between the Commission and Local Government Authorities in the Member States by Mr Tom Ellis (Br, S)

'Does the Commission intend to take steps towards improving lines of communication between the Commission and Local Government Authorities in the Member States?'

Mr George Thomson replied that the Commission's formal legal relationships were with the Member Governments only. But, he hastened to add, that the Commission attached the highest importance to the opinions of the local authorities.

References

Subject	European Parliament Document Number	Commission Document Number	Date of Debate
European Schools system	113/75	—	22/9
Aid to higher education	148/75	—	22/9
Education in the EC	183/75/rev.	—	22/9
Data processing	199/75	21/75	23/9
Hydrocarbons	122/75	—	23/9
Electricity Guidelines	200/75	—	23/9
Tobacco taxes	197/75	168/75	23/9
Change in timing of Commission report	242/75	218/75	23/9
Shipbuilding	244/75	—	24/9
Conference on Security	246/75	—	24/9
Social situation	161/75	17/75	24/9
European Social Fund	258/75	155/75	24/9
Migrant workers	160/75/rev.	465/74	24/9
Health and safety at work	211/75	—	24/9
European aerospace industry	239/75	—	25/9
Regional Fund	240/75	—	25/9
Fourth report on competition policy	165/75	108/75	25/9
Situation in Spain	269/75	—	25/9
	271/75	—	25/9
	270/75	—	25/9
Wine market	247/75	—	25/9
	248/75	—	25/9
Importation of products in wine-growing sector	254/75	204/75	25/9

Early potatoes in Cyprus	210/75	158/75	26/9
Community citrus fruit	256/75	202/75	26/9
UK cereal subsidy	257/75	227/75	26/9
Quotas for Port, Madeira and Setubal muscatel wines	261/75	169/75	26/9
Quotas for Sherry, Malaga and other Spanish wines	262/75	170/75	26/9
Quota for dried grapes from Spain	263/75	173/75	26/9
Low acid colza proposal	259/75	185/75	26/9
Regulations on the markets in cereals and rice	260/75	192/75	26/9

Abbreviations

The following abbreviations are used in this text to denote nationality and political allegiance: CD Christian Democrat, S Socialist, LA Liberal and Allies, EC European Conservative, EPD Euroepan Progressive Democrat, CA Communist and Allies, Ind Non-attached Independent Members, Be Belgian, Br British, Da Danish, Du Dutch, Fr French, Ge German, Ir Irish, It Italian, Lu Luxembourg, EC European Community.

Notes

Congratulations

The President congratulated, on behalf of the European Parliament, Mr Alfred Bertrand on his election as chairman of the Christian Democrat Group.

Membership of committees

The President announced that, on a proposal from the Christian Democrat Group, Mr Schwörer had been appointed member of the Committee on External Economic Relations to replace Mr Jahn. At the request of the non-attached members, Parliament appointed: Mr Romualdi member of the Committee on Economic and Monetary Affairs, Mr de Sanctis member of the Committee on Social Affairs and Employment, Mr Outers member of the Committee on Regional Policy and Transport to replace Mr Romualdi, Mr Pierre Bertrand member of the Committee on Cultural Affairs and Youth. And at the request of the Socialist Group, Parliament appointed: Mr Broeks, member of the Committee on Development and Cooperation to replace Mr Schmidt, Mr Schmidt, member of the Committee on External Economic Relations to replace Mr Rizzi, and Mr Bayerl, Mr Calewaert, Sir Geoffrey De Freitas, Mr Lagorce and Mr Willi Muller members of the Committee on Rules of Procedure and Petitions.

Presentations of a petition

The President announced that he had received from Mr Feidt and three other officials of the European Parliament a petition on the Community's relations with the Spanish regime.

Summing up

At its sittings of 22, 23, 24, 25 and 26 September Members put down 7 questions for debate with the Council and 10 questions for debate with the Commission. At Question Time 5 questions were addressed to the Council and 4 to the Commission 20 reports were considered and the European Parliament delivered 20 Opinions.

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