

European  
Parliament

Information series

the sittings

1  
january 1976

## CONTENTS

	Page
Introduction . . . . .	3
Political Affairs	
Mr Gaston Thorn looks ahead . . . . .	5
Agriculture	
Little for the comfort of British and Irish fishermen . . . . .	9
Commission's sheep market proposals rejected . . . . .	10
Social Affairs	
Social Fund is like a raindrop in the desert . . . . .	12
Energy	
Where will all the nuclear power stations go? . . . . .	14
Keeping track of crude prices . . . . .	16
Business	
Who's afraid of IBM? . . . . .	17
New unit of account . . . . .	19
Council indecision on mergers criticised . . . . .	19
Are the multinationals veering away from Europe? . . . . .	19
Some hope for the textile industry . . . . .	20
Commission's 4th medium-term programme . . . . .	22
Environment	
No more red mud slinging . . . . .	22
Pure water is bad for you . . . . .	22

## Public Health

Screening people for lead . . . . .	24
Classifying, packing and labelling paints . . . . .	24
Laminated windscreens should be compulsory . . . . .	25

## Budgets

Transfers from one budget chapter to another . . . . .	25
Reference period for calculating levies to be cut to six months . . . . .	25

## Research

Jet plasma machine site . . . . .	26
-----------------------------------	----

Question Time . . . . .	26
-------------------------	----

Notes . . . . .	31
-----------------	----

References . . . . .	33
----------------------	----

Postscript . . . . .	35
----------------------	----

**Session of the European Parliament**

**1975 – 1976**

**Sittings held in Luxembourg**

**from**

**Monday, 12th January to Friday 16th January 1976**

**INTRODUCTION**

The European Parliament had a quiet week here in Luxembourg. The really big debates, such as farm prices and Mr Ortoli's state of the Community message, will be coming up in Strasbourg in February.

The one major event of the week was Mr Gaston Thorn's speech on the prospects for the Community during the six months ahead. Mr Thorn picked out three focal points for the Council for the time Luxembourg will be in the chair: a final decision on direct elections to the European Parliament, the North-South Conference and the Tindemans Report. Mr Thorn expressed the hope that the elections will be held on the same day in all nine Member States in May or June 1978. It is vital, he said, that there should be a good turn out for the polls. As to where Parliament will meet after its election, Mr Thorn chose his words carefully: 'As Prime Minister of Luxembourg, I could always tell you, should this become a matter of anxiety to you, not where Parliament should but where it could meet.' The point of his reply was lost on no-one.

Turning to wider issues, Mr Thorn had this to say: 'I would even concede that twenty-five years ago, certain people felt a genuine concern to safeguard national identities against the upsurge of what was then called 'supra-nationalism'. Today, it seems to me, it is rather the opposite extreme which we have good reason to

fear, namely an excessive inclination to magnify national interests, often to the detriment of the common interest of all the peoples of Europe. It is precisely this common European interest which should be strengthened by direct elections to the European Parliament, and without the slightest harm to national identity.'

### *Other points*

The other main points were an oral question on the fishing industry, a report by Mr James Gibbons on the Commission's sheep market proposals, a debate on where nuclear power stations should be sited and, finally, one on the controversial issue of how the Community can gain a hold on its own computer market.

### *Fishing and farming*

Mr Gibbons asked the House to reject the sheep market proposals as totally inadequate. It found Mr Lardinois's reply, that it would be more expedient to begin in the sheep market with modest proposals, quite unacceptable. Parliament was equally disappointed by Mr Lardinois's reply on fishing (see Postscript). His reference to 'average' fish prices now being higher seems to have impressed no-one.

### *Where will all the nuclear power stations go?*

If Europe is ultimately to get half its energy from the atom, quite a few more nuclear power stations are going to have to be built. But where? Mrs Hanna Walz (Ge, CD), reassuring Parliament that power stations were not simply gift-wrapped nuclear bombs, went into the whole question of where all the nuclear power stations are to go. Oddly enough, acceptance varies. In the UK, they seem to be preferred (perhaps because conventional power stations give off radioactivity and cause most of the air pollution) but not elsewhere. Denmark is even hesitating about having any at all. What worries people is the cooling towers more than anything else. However, offshore siting may be one answer. Meanwhile, the Community will have to keep an eye on its plutonium waste. For about a quarter of a million years.

## *Who's afraid of IBM?*

The European Parliament approved a 23m u.a. (1 u.a. is equivalent to 0.57 pounds) plan to make a dent or several dents in IBM. Tam Dalyell (Br, S) and newcomer Alexander Fletcher (Br, EC) wondered if it was worth it. Lord Bessborough (Br, EC) thought it was, even though IBM, third only to Exxon and General Motors in making money, spent \$890m in research in 1974, including some \$100m on pure research. In any case, IBM now looks likely to split up. What matters is that the EC money should be well spent and that the nine governments, who find IBM's dominance unacceptable, especially now that General Electric and RCA and Xerox have dropped out of data processing, should take a decision on the Commission's proposals. There are two sets of these, but Commissioner Altiero Spinelli did not sound optimistic about their fate. What Tom Normanton (Br, EC) called industrial chauvinism, especially in public purchasing, still seems to be the rule. As the Economist said on 29 March: 'The weakness of IBM's European competitors springs less from the might of IBM than from their own and their governments' inability to think European'.

## **POLITICAL AFFAIRS**

### **Mr Gaston Thorn looks ahead**

Following the practice begun by Dr Garret Fitzgerald and Mr Mariano Rumor of beginning their term of office at the Council with an address to the European Parliament, Mr Gaston Thorn reviewed the Community's prospects for the next six months. He began by underlining the importance of two decisions taken at the European Council in Rome: the fixing of a date for direct elections to the European Parliament and the decision that the European Community should take part in the Conference on International Economic Cooperation. Mr Thorn said: 'I hope very sincerely that these elections will take place at the same time in all of the Member States of the Community, and not just in seven or eight of them. The Parliament has made a very substantial contribution to the discussions currently being carried out by the Council. Without the draft which you prepared and voted on, it would not have been possible to make such considerable progress in so short a time. I gladly pay tribute for this to the Parliament as a whole, and in particular to your rapporteur, Mr Patijn. It goes without saying that Parliament will continue to be involved in this important undertaking.'

Referring to those who might oppose direct elections, he suggested their main concern was the elimination of anything that might further the development of Europe, but he said it was illogical to allow the existence of the communities and to refuse to make them more democratic.

'I would even concede that 25 years ago certain people felt a genuine concern to safeguard national identities against the upsurge of what was then called "supra-nationalism". Today, it seems to me, it is rather the opposite extreme which we have good reason to fear, namely an excessive inclination to magnify national interests, often to the detriment of the common interest of all the peoples of Europe. It is precisely this common European interest which should be strengthened by direct elections to the European Parliament, and without the slightest harm to national identity.'

Mr Thorn added that he hopes the electorate will turn out in strength when the first elections are held.

Turning to the Conference on International Economic Cooperation, Mr Thorn said: 'It seems to me premature to deal with this in detail today. From next week, the Council will endeavour to develop and define our common position on all topics which will be discussed at this Conference. This will not be an easy task.'

Referring for a moment to the Tindemans Report, he said: 'We are a long way from averting the risk of encountering that impasse in which we might find ourselves by insisting principally on affirming distant objectives while satisfying ourselves in the immediate future with a few changes superficial enough to meet with rapid unanimous agreement. Mr Tindemans' effort thus calls for an effort on the part of all the political authorities in our countries and the Community Institutions, including Parliament.'

Looking ahead, he said that Council would soon be discussing Greece's application for accession. At the same time, one had to ensure that the association between the Community and Turkey is given its full value.

'I am also delighted with the happy outcome of the negotiations which the Community conducted with Tunisia and Morocco. Negotiations with Algeria are still in progress, but we hope that they will soon be concluded. For our part, we shall do our utmost to ensure that this is the case.'



*Council President Gaston Thorn:  
'Today we have good reason to fear ...  
an excessive inclination to magnify  
national interests, often to the detri-  
ment of the common interest of all the  
peoples of Europe.'*

The approval of directives – for the moment only partial ones – for negotiations with the Machrek countries will, in the coming weeks, enable the Commission finally to begin discussions with Egypt, Syria, Lebanon and Jordan, with a view to concluding agreements which offer a practical demonstration of the European Community's will to intensify its relations with the Arab peoples of the East bank of the Mediterranean, in parallel with the agreement concluded with Israel some months ago; it will also be a concrete demonstration of Europe's intention to contribute, as well, to re-establishing peace and stability in this part of the world.'

Turning to the Lomé Convention, Mr Thorn said he hoped that it would very soon be ratified by the nine national parliaments.

Alluding for a moment to the question of the seat, Mr Thorn said: 'Problems of locating and siting Community activities are in all cases problems of a political nature which outweigh by far the operational aspects as such. Parliament too should be fully aware of this.'

In conclusion, Mr Thorn said that the Community's efforts to present concerted positions with a single voice have had a considerable effect, notably at the 7th



Special Session of the United Nations. 'But I have also noted that too often the absence or inadequacy of common policies is a serious handicap for Europe ... Viewed from a certain distance, the disunion of European States or the absence of common policies appears as a self-destructive phenomenon, our quarrels and our differences appear anachronistic and, conversely, each time we succeed in our efforts to appear an entity, we gain in influence and consideration, and this can even benefit our countries individually. Only a realisation of this state of affairs will enable Europe to play a useful part, and with chances of success, in the great North-South dialogue which recently opened.'

Mr Thorn's speech, frequently interrupted by applause, was very well received.

In the ensuing debate, there were several references to Mr Tindemann's suggestion that the President of the Council should hold office for twelve months and not six, and it was hard not to see an element of personal preference in the enthusiasm some Members expressed in support of this idea. Mr Thorn agreed one ought perhaps to think of a longer term of office.

Looking ahead, Mr Thorn said he had suggested March 8th (it was later learned that the date will probably be April 1st and 2nd) as the date for the next European Council. The Convention on Parliament's election would be the main subject, then the Conference on International Economic Cooperation and lastly the Tindemans Report. Here Mr Thorn paid tribute to Mr Bertrand's eminent contribution to the discussion of European Union.

In reply to the various other speakers, he agreed with Mr de la Malène on the need for progress in practical matters but he had scant sympathy for the idea of separating ultimate goals and piecemeal progress. One did not build the roof before the house, but one did start building with a plan.

He shared the views of Mr Bertrand and Mrs Iotti about the importance of involving the social partners, and shared Mr Durieux's concern for the Nine to come to a common position on the North-South dialogue. He agreed with Mr Scott-Hopkins that direct elections should not distract attention from the real function of Parliament in a truly democratic Community.

In reply to Mr Fellermaier who said he would judge Mr Thorn on his first hundred days, he simply asked for his understanding.

As to where the European Parliament should meet after its election in 1978, he said that as the Prime Minister of Luxembourg, he could always tell the House not where it should but where it could meet.

Mr Thorn then told Miss Flesch, who had asked about the ratification of the Lomé Convention, that the news from Ireland and Italy was now good.

Mr Thorn then told Sir Brandon Rhys-Williams that he very much appreciated the proposal to unify social security systems in the Community. This would have to come.

Referring next to the suggestion of a two-speed Community, originally floated by Chancellor Brandt and alluded to in the Tindeman's report, he said one has to be quite clear what one wants. It was one thing for the Nine to agree that temporary arrangements could be made for one, but it was quite another for five countries to do one thing and for the four others to do another. In that way, there was liable to be no Community at all. He agreed with Mr Michael Stewart, his old friend and colleague, that direct elections were not a panacea, but please, he said, do not let us give the general public the impression that we do not know what this Parliament will become. 'This is not the way to mobilise public opinion.'

Finally, replying to Mr Bordu's warning that Europe should not be another bloc, he said he was not sure which way to turn. Europe had to be independent, but what was meant by saying that Europe should not be another bloc? One could not ask a Europe of 250,000,000 to speak with a single voice and assume its responsibilities and then opt out. It should not impose its policy, but on the contrary, be a political, moral and economic force both for its own citizens and for those in the world at large who wish to escape the polarisation of the two super powers.

Mr Thorn's speech was greeted with loud applause.

## **AGRICULTURE**

### **Little for the comfort of British and Irish fishermen**

In a somewhat guarded reply (see Postscript) to an oral question from Mr James Scott-Hopkins, Commissioner Petrus Lardinois told Parliament that the crisis in the fishing industry was over. This naturally provoked a good many protests,

whereupon he added that he did not mean the effects, but only the crisis itself. He then went on to compare January and July prices in Aberdeen, Grimsby, Hull and Killybegs, adding that in most cases the present levels were well above those of six months ago.

His future strategy is likely to be that the 200 mile limit must be negotiated very rapidly, and it had been pointed out that thirty countries had already laid down such limits and then – this was the rub – there would be national quotas within this limit which would take account of the losses sustained in third country fishing waters and so on. He spoke of sharing the burden fairly, readapting structural policy and aiming at what the Community could get in negotiations so that it could exploit new areas.

He concluded by asking for the patience of the House and suggesting that 1976 would be the most important year for the fisheries since the Community began.

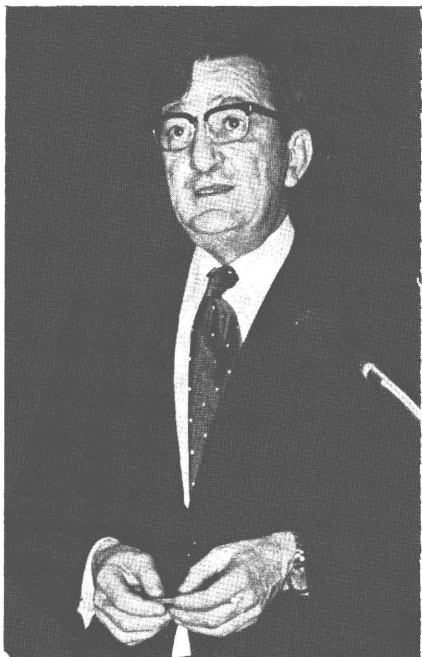
Replying to the various speakers, he had some sympathy with Mr Prescott's suggestion that the North Sea countries should be brought to the conference table. Mr Lardinois had, on the other hand, no sympathy with Mrs Ewing's suggestion that the Member States should have 50 mile limits, even though this has, she said, the backing of the White Fish Authority.

In reply to Mr Gibbons, he said he agreed with the need for a self-supporting fishing industry and that it was important to invest in the fishing industry in the West of Ireland. He thought more emphasis should be placed on marketing there because the prices there are the lowest in the Community. Sound schemes for this area deserved emphasis in both structural and regional policy.

But the final impression left by Mr Lardinois was that he is reluctant to enter into any firm political commitment. Mrs Ewing said everyone knew the Law of the Sea Conference would reach no decision between 15 March and 5 May because another date had already been booked for it to be continued. Mr Lardinois, too, seems to be playing for time.

### **Commission's sheep market proposals rejected**

The Community's production of sheepmeat falls a long way short of consumption. In 1974, 470,000 metric tons were produced and 270,000 metric tons had to be imported, mainly from New Zealand (80 per cent). Australia,



*Mr James Gibbons: 'I wish to stress the need for a lasting common sheep policy which can guarantee our sheep farmers a secure income. This can only be achieved through the effective control of prices of imports into the Community from third countries.'*

Hungary, Argentina and Bulgaria also exported small amounts to the EC. Only 3,000 metric tons a year is exported from the Community.

There is a brisk trade within the EC, most of it being exports from the UK, the Netherlands and Ireland to France. But while Dutch exports rose by 50 per cent in 1974, those from the UK and Ireland actually fell. The Commission's proposals deal with the rather anomalous situation on the French market.

Mr James Gibbons had some criticism of the market organisation proposed; there are no guarantee prices or intervention measures envisaged; the proposals do not offer any guarantee of reasonable incomes to the producers who mainly live in upland areas and in the poorer regions of the Community. Mr Gibbons did not believe the proposals will solve the problems of imports from third countries or be very much to the benefit of consumers.

On the other hand, he argued that the intervention system was not necessarily the answer, and suggested a form of deficiency payments might be appropriate. He asked the Commission to reconsider its proposals.

In reply, Commissioner Petrus Lardinois appealed to the House not to press the case any further. Experience went to show that where there were fundamental discrepancies between the Member States, the only possibility was to make transitional arrangements first. This pattern had been followed many times before. The alternative was to end up with an alcohol regulation such as the one which has been on the Council table for the last four years. 'We must learn from experience.' But Mr Gibbons was unimpressed by this impassioned case for a transitional period. He could hardly accept that the difficulties were so enormous.

Among the other points made was concern expressed by Mr Scott-Hopkins about New Zealand exports of lamb, although he too thought the Commission should withdraw its proposals. In contrast, there was the real concern about the inadequacies of the proposals expressed by Mr Nolan and Mr Kavanagh. Mr Kavanagh reminded the House that he had asked the Commission for sheep market proposals in October 1973 and that these had been promised for 1974 as early as December 1973. The proposals now before the House were too little and too late. The whole market organisation would only be a small drain on the agricultural funds and without it, the real casualties would be the poorest farmers in Wicklow, Carlow and the West of Ireland. There would be an increase in unemployment because there was really no alternative to sheepfarming in those areas.

The motion was then put to the vote, but came up against a considerable number of amendments and eventually it was only agreed to in a rather abridged form. Nonetheless, the gist of it remained, that Parliament wishes the Commission to reconsider its proposals.

## **SOCIAL AFFAIRS**

### **Social Fund is like a raindrop in the desert**

There was general agreement to Mr Liam Kavanagh's motion broadly approving the record of the Social Fund's activities in 1974 but regretting that so little money is available for the Fund to be able to do more. He welcomed the Council's decision of 27 June 1975 to help migrant workers and handicapped persons and its decision of 22 July 1975 in favour of young people, but he deplored the fact that no Social Fund aid had been forthcoming to help in job retraining, a point to which Parliament attaches a great deal of importance. He

repeated Parliament's well-known views about the cuts in the Social Fund appropriations in the 1976 budget – to which, of course, Parliament reacted by restoring some 40m u.a. of the 100m u.a. cut out by the Council. This is particularly to the point at a time when an allout effort needs to be made to reduce unemployment.

There are five million people still out of work, Mr Kavanagh concluded, but the Community has still to react.

Mr Frans van der Gun agreed with Mr Kavanagh. The member governments accepted the idea of an employment policy but when they meet at a Council they cut back on expenditure. Mr Michael Yeats took a similar view. The amount of money made available under the Social Fund might seem impressive but it fell far short of what was needed. The number of unemployed had gone up by 60 per cent and the Fund's resources by only 20 per cent. Mr Yeats laid particular stress on the value of training schemes. At the same time, he did not wish to criticise the Commission (it had, incidentally, cleared up some of the points Mr Yeats criticised last year) but with the Council. It was, he said, not easy to be optimistic.

Sir Brandon Rhys-Williams described the Social Fund as a raindrop in the desert. It amounted to only 5 per cent of the budget which was in turn only a tiny proportion of the expenditure of the Member States.

In reply, Dr Patrick Hillery said that the Social Fund's growth had been dramatic and real. Since its inception in May 1972, it had attracted 42.8m u.a. in that year. The figures for the following years were: 1973 222.9m; 1974 267.8m; 1975, 355.9m and 1976, 440m. He agreed with the House that the Council's response to requests for more funds had been disappointing. Parsimony, he said, was the enemy of true economy. Requests for help in 1976 were coming in at a rate of seven times available resources, so a more strictly selective approach would be needed in 1976.

Referring finally to a point he had touched on at Question Time, Dr Hillery told Mrs Elaine Kellett-Bowman that arrangements for sheltered workshops would come under the second part of the Commission's programme for the handicapped.

He added that capital grants would not normally be available, but this was not to be taken as his final comment on the subject.

The motion tabled by Mr Kavanagh was agreed to.

## ENERGY

### Where will the nuclear power stations go?

If the Community is to get half of its electricity from nuclear sources by 1980, it is going to need a lot more nuclear power stations. And Mrs Hanna Walz has analysed the whole question of where they should go. In the end, her 25 point motion was agreed to despite a last-minute bid by the Socialists to get it referred back to committee.

The Socialist view, put by Willie Hamilton, is that Europe has no choice but to go ahead. But this does not mean that the general public should not be much better informed, particularly regarding the fact that plutonium waste has an active life of quarter of a million years and it has to be guarded – if it is not to endanger life – all that time.

Mrs Hanna Walz (German, Christian Democrat), for the Committee on Energy, Research and Technology, reviewed the planning, licensing procedures and criteria governing the siting of nuclear power stations in Germany, the United Kingdom, France, Italy, Netherlands and Switzerland. Mrs Walz also went into licensing procedure in the USA.

Mrs Walz then discussed the acceptability to the local population of nuclear power stations. The greatest danger lies in the quantities of actinides particularly plutonium and fission products. This is why fast breeders and water reactors with plutonium recycling are four to five times more dangerous than water reactors without plutonium recycling. Reactors with a thorium circuit, such as the THTK high temperature reactor are a lot less dangerous.

‘This latent danger,’ argued Mrs Walz, ‘becomes specially acute in the event of external interference such as sabotage and military action.’ Underground siting could vastly reduce this risk.

But Mrs Walz concluded: ‘In normal operation, nuclear power stations have been found to present the population with no greater risks than many other industrial plants.’

Spokesmen for all groups excepted the Socialists and Communists supported Mrs Walz. Mr Vandewiele had doubts about siting nuclear power stations in small countries that were really conurbations: cooling towers would be far less



*Mrs Hanna Walz: 'North Sea oil will hardly last twenty years or Community coal more than eighty.'*

acceptable in densely-populated areas. Mr Augusto Premoli for the Committee on Public Health said Europe had no choice, especially as the USA and USSR planned to get half their energy from nuclear sources by the year 2000. He stressed the need to work in with third countries on the EC borders. Mr Krieg pointed out the oil companies too are now into nuclear energy. He thought there were still dangers from air crashes and sabotage, but argued that underground siting would be undesirable. Lord Bessborough told the House that safety measures differed according to reactor. He pointed out that mining and oil drilling, alas, had resulted in far more disasters than nuclear power.

Sir Derek Walker-Smith said that experience led to less remote siting both of power stations and cooling towers. Acceptability has progressed in Britain but not in Germany. In Italy, where there were less stringent rules, planning applications took two years. In the USA, they took four. He disagreed with the Tindemans Report argument that the Nine should have their equivalent of the United States Atomic Commission. Their cases were not similar. He concluded that a balance had to be struck between economic gain and environmental loss with the assent of the public at large.

Mr Jean-Francois Pintat too disagreed with underground siting. Replying to the debate, Mr Henri Simonet said it was far easier to defend the objectors. Political courage was needed to win the public over to the nuclear option. But, he stressed, he had never called for undue haste. The Commission was looking into the possibility of siting nuclear power stations offshore.



*Commission Vice-President Henri Simonet: 'I am truly grateful to Mrs Walz for having the political courage to raise this whole range of emotive and controversial issues.'*



## **Keeping track of crude prices**

### *Introduction*

The Commission proposed that Member States be required to file crude oil and petroleum product prices every quarter. They would add a number of other details such as to give the Commission a complete picture of the EC oil market. Mr Thomas Ellis (Br, S) for the Committee on Energy, Research and Technology, hopes this will work. In his report, he went into some of the snags. He argued the Commission and the governments of the Member States must accept the principle of collective responsibility now and not just when there is a crisis. Mr Ellis believes success here calls for three-way cooperation: between not just the Member States and the Commission, but bringing in the oil companies too. Subject to which, and with a request that Parliament receive annual reports on how the scheme works out over the next three years, Mr Ellis asked the House to approve the Commission proposal.

### *The debate*

There was general support for Mr Ellis's motion although a lot of Members aired difficulties they thought could arise. Mr Norbert Hougardy (Be, L) for the



*Mr Tom Ellis: 'I have taken great heart from the European Council meeting in Rome: I hope it will prove a major step forward to a common energy policy.'*

Liberals, spoke of the difficulty of assessing finished product prices without an agreed formula. He was a bit worreid about duplication of information. Mr Kai Nyborg (Da, EPD) was similarly uncertain. But Commissioner Henri Simonet's reassurances in reply were accepted. All information received could be treated as confidential.

## **BUSINESSSSS**

### **Who's afraid of IBM?**

In July 1974, the Council decided IBM's grip on the Community market was unacceptable and resolved to build up a European-based rival to IBM by 1980. Not that it did anything, and Commissioner Altiero Spinelli was today not very optimistic that it would. His first series of proposals are still pending. The second series now before the House – and approved by everyone except Tam Dalyell and Alexander Fletcher – call for expenditure of some 23m u.a. over five years in five key sectors, sectors where the Community still has a chance to make an impression.

Mr Dalyell, who at Question Time in November had asked the Commission if it really hoped to make any impact with such a small sum today rephrased his question: how much did Altiero Spinelli think the EC needed to spend? Mr Spinelli answered it was not the amount; it was the way it was spent.

Lord Bessborough, who is one of Parliament's leading spokesmen on energy matters, seemed inclined to agree. He conceded that IBM spent \$890m u.a. on research in 1974, including \$100m for pure research, but indicated that IBM might soon be split up anyway (it has been in and out of trust-busting suits since 1932 and looks like losing out to the US authorities at last.) Indeed, one point Mr Spinelli made was that the Community and the US authorities are fighting the same battle here.

But who, asked Alexander Fletcher (Br, EC) in a maiden speech, is afraid of IBM? He joined his fellow Scot Tam Dalyell in pointing to the jobs provided by IBM. What of them? Mr Dalyell told Parliament 77,000 EC nationals were involved in twelve plants and four major research laboratories. Mr Dalyell thought the money would be better spent in research, alluding rather bitterly to the Dragon project now about to be run down for lack of funds.

But Lord Bruce of Donington pointed out that that was not the law. For one firm to have too big a hold on the market was against the rules. If the Community could not deal with monopolies, it would be failing as a Community.

Looking ahead, Tom Normanton hoped for a truly liberal public purchasing policy and stipulations in any argument with US firms that research be carried out in Europe. It was the failure to do this that had landed the Community where it was today. Once again, Europeans had led in fundamental research only to lose their lead when they went on the market.

At the personal level, Hanna Walz was worried about privacy. Mr Spinelli said he was waiting for government replies on which to base a directive.

He told Mr Fletcher it would not be cheaper to buy the programmes outright from IBM instead of spending 23m u.a. to get the same result. IBM were not engaged in all these fields and were considerably behind in some. He agreed with Mr Cousté that aid could be given to IBM's non-European competitors. The French firm CII has just merged with the US Honeywell. Mr Kaspereit stressed the need for a computer language to be universal and not just European.

Turning finally to money, because Erwin Lange and Lord Bessborough were very critical of the way the Council had cut credits for computer policy in the 1976 budget, Mr Spinelli said the Commission would present a supplementary budget the day (or the day after, he added hastily) the Council adopted his proposals. He shared Parliament's view that supplementary budgets are a bad thing.

A motion approving the Commission proposals were agreed to.

### **New unit of account**

Mr Herman Schwörer asked the House to approve a Commission proposal to change the regulation on non-life assurance activities to incorporate the new European unit of account. The u.a., now worth 0.57 pounds, used to be equal to 0.88867088 grammes of fine gold. It is now made up from a basket of currencies. All regulations have to be changed accordingly. The motion was agreed to.

### **Council indecision on mergers criticised**

Mr Francis Leenhardt asked the Council why it had not adopted the Commission proposal on mergers by 1 January 1975 as promised. In reply, Mr Jean Hamilius said that the whole question was still under consideration and that the opinions of the European Parliament were being taken into account. Every effort would be made to enable the Council to take a decision as soon as possible.

### **Are the multinationals veering away from Europe?**

Replying to Mr Christian de la Malène, Mr Wilhelm Haferkamp suggested that the multinational companies tended to invest where they thought they could make a profit and there was no ready-made answer to the problems that they brought with them. Mr Haferkamp, on the other hand, had nothing to say in reply to Mr John Prescott who was concerned about the investment potential of multinational companies and the need to counterbalance their potential effect on the economy, particularly at a time of serious unemployment as at present.

*Mr Alain Terrenoire: 'We want Commission and Council to maintain textile production, sanction irregular imports, ease textile tax burdens, keep up investment and make sure the industry does not just disappear.'*



### **Some hope for the textile industry**

Analysing the problems of the textile industry in response to a question from Mr Alain Terrenoire, Mr Finn Gundelach said that this was the classic case of a labour-intensive industry becoming less competitive as living standards rose. The difficulties now being faced had their origins in the international division of labour. At the same time, he warned Parliament of the dangers of going too far in seeking to protect the industry from the consequences of its own development. It had, after all, had fifteen years in which to adjust and was, even now, getting help from the Community to make it more viable. He accepted that the numbers employed in the textile industry had fallen from 2,209,000 in 1970 to 1,887,000 in 1974 and that the numbers employed in the clothing industry had fallen from 1,292,000 in 1970 to 1,167,000 in 1974, but the Community was still a net exporter and the Community was making an effort to specialise and to produce higher quality products. And it had already used every possible legal resource to protect the industry. His last words were that the Community depends on free trade if it is to continue to sell its exports and to enjoy a high standard of living.



*Mr Augusto Premoli: 'For years now the pollution of the sea by what is familiarly known as red mud has been a disturbing problem ... only Community discipline can solve it.'*

Speaking for the Council, Mr Jean Hamilius said that the Community is bound by the Geneva multilateral agreement to which it acceded in March 1974 and under which it must phase out quantitative restrictions. It may invoke the protection clause or negotiate voluntary restriction agreements if there is a risk of the market being disrupted. It had resorted to this clause several times but its general policy is to negotiate voluntary restriction agreements. Such negotiations were in progress or had been completed with India, Pakistan, Hong Kong, Malaysia, Singapore, Macao, South Korea, Brazil, Mexico, Colombia and Japan.

As regards Yugoslavia and some Eastern European countries which signed the Geneva agreement, negotiating directives are currently being drawn up in the Council.

Mr Hamilius concluded: 'As regards social policy, I should like to point out that in December 1972 the Council took a decision, pursuant to Article 4 of the Decision reforming the Social Fund, to grant Social Fund assistance to measures to promote the employment and geographical and occupational mobility of persons employed in the textile sector or in the processing of chemical fibres, where activities were directly affected or likely to be affected by structural adaptation measures.'

**Commission's 4th medium term programme will be submitted by the middle of the year**

This was the reply given by Mr Wilhelm Haferkamp for the Commission to Mr Francis Leenhardt. The Commissioner took advantage of this opportunity to repeat the importance of the Nine getting together to solve their problems. A Community policy is the only answer.

## **ENVIRONMENT**

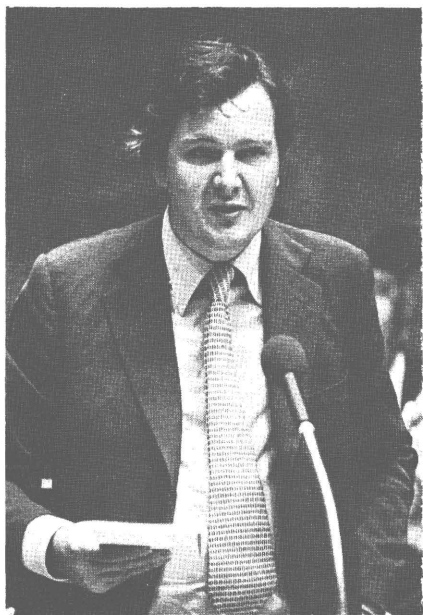
### **No more red mud slinging**

By 1985, the Commission hopes to reduce the dumping of titanium dioxide waste, 'red mud', at sea or in estuaries by 96 per cent as a result of a four-stage programme. Waste from the T<sub>1</sub> O<sub>2</sub> industry is potentially or actually harmful. Its adverse effects on the marine environment are due to acidity, the presence of ferrous sulphate and probably other metals. Mr Augusto Premoli, an Italian Liberal who comes from Venice and who has frequently reported on environmental issues, reported for the Committee on Public Health and the Environment.

Mr Premoli, moving approval of the Commission proposal on the grounds of the accepted principle that polluters should pay, urged that the excellent example of Montedison should be followed. However, he urged the Commission to try to achieve the objective in eight not ten years and to make one or two other changes. Mr Luigi Noè for the Christian Democrats, Mr Libero della Briotta for the Socialists and Mr James Spicer for the European Conservatives, agreed with the motion. Mr Spicer pointed out that the British approach was to assess pollution on the receiving end. He hoped the principle of choice would be generally accepted.

### **Pure water is bad for you**

Further to the Programme of Action on the Environment which Council adopted on 22 November 1973, the Commission wants to set standards for drinking water. Lord Bethell told the House he thought the directive proposed was a useful and necessary step to better health protection. But he called for a number of amendments to the Commission proposal.



*Lord Bethell: 'I have been advised that pure water is bad water. It is unpleasant to drink and it is, in certain circumstances, dangerous.'*

Lord Bethell argued that provision should be made for exceptional minimum required concentrations as well as for exceptional maximum admissible concentrations. This particularly applies to the canned goods industry, where pure water (not safe water) had to be used, and to the manufacture of Scotch whisky, where the use of water in its natural state would not qualify under the directive: the water would be too soft and the wrong colour. 'I hope the House will approve that an exception be made in the case of whisky.'

Mr Luigi Noè stressed the importance of including mineral water within the scope of the proposed directive and said that mineral water bottles should give a detailed analysis of their contents on the label. Mr Kai Nyborg pointed out that water consumption was now between 150 and 500 litres per day and spoke of the importance of having the right chemical balance in water.

In reply, Dr Hillery told Parliament that there was an inverse statistical association between hard water and mortality (i.e. hard water is good for you.) This, coupled with the increase in demand, the need to use surface water, and water softening systems had led to a rethinking about water quality to meet the needs of production and to satisfy the demands of public health. This was the background to the directive. He shared the views of the House on Scotch whisky.



Sir Brandon Rhys Williams then asked whether the inclusion of fluorine could be made optional. He disliked the idea of compulsory medication.

In reply, Dr Hillery said that a colloquium was being held at the end of the year and he would be delighted if Sir Brandon would attend.

## **PUBLIC HEALTH**

### **Screening people for lead and limiting lead pollution**

The Commission proposes under a first directive to screen people for lead (by the ALAD method) and set at 35 micrograms per 100 ml the maximum permissible level of lead in the blood. Lead in the atmosphere, according to the second directive, must not contribute more than one quarter of the body's total lead burden.

Mr Luigi Noè for the Committee on Public Health and the Environment, welcomed the Commission's proposals subject to one amendment.

A motion to this effect was agreed to.

### **Classifying, packaging and labelling paints, varnishes and adhesives**

The Commission proposed to bring the Nine's rules into line here, and Mr Francois Duval for the Committee on Public Health and the Environment, agreed. But he had amendments designed to tighten up rules for labelling. One is that first aid instructions should be printed on packages of toxic or harmful products.

Mr Spicer disagreed and moved that this paragraph be deleted from the motion before the House. Lady Fisher of Rednal strongly disagreed with Mr Spicer. The housewife who was confronted with the distress of her child would be glad of this help. Mr Spicer's amendment was accordingly defeated, and the motion was agreed to.

## **Laminated windscreens should be compulsory**

A proposal to make laminated windscreens compulsory has been on the Council table for over two years now, and Mr Horst Seefeld, who is one of Parliament's leading spokesmen on transport questions, moved that the Council be given a further prod. In his report to the House, he pointed out that studies show that tempered glass is inferior. Injuries examined by Mackay, Siegel and Hight show that laminated glass caused only 18 % of moderate injuries, whereas tempered glass caused 55 % of the moderate, severe and fatal injuries.

Some European Conservative members had reservations, notably Mrs Elaine Kellett-Bowman, who referred to tests showing that, in certain conditions, laminated windscreens could be more dangerous. Mr Thomas Ellis, on the other hand, was prepared to go along with Mr Seefeld, even though he felt he had overstated his case. Mr Ellis referred to the television programme, Nationwide, which may have given the impression that the British were the villains of the piece in preventing the passage of the directive in question, and he was at pains to point out that this was not true.

In reply, Mr Hillery said the Commission was convinced that laminated windscreens should be made compulsory and hoped that Parliament's initiative would now lead to a Council decision.

## **BUDGETS**

### **Transfers from one budget chapter to another**

Lord Bruce of Donington, for the Committee on Budgets, asked Parliament to approve a regulation allowing the Commission to make transfers between the 'Food Aid' and EAGGF (Guarantee Section) chapters of the budget. This was subject to an assurance given to Parliament that the budgetary arrangements be thoroughly overhauled to give Parliament greater control over the way money is spent. The motion was agreed to.

### **Reference period for calculating levies to be cut to six months**

The Commission proposed to change the reference period for calculating levies and sluice-gate prices for pig carcasses, eggs and poultry meat from nine months to six months. Mr Xavier Hunault asked Parliament to approve this proposal.

A motion approving this proposal was agreed to, but not before Mrs Kellett-Bowman had urged consideration for egg producers whose predicament is giving rise to considerable concern.

## **RESEARCH**

### **Jet plasma machine site**

A staff of 3,000 are ready to begin research in nuclear fusion and plasma physics and, thanks to Parliament, the funds for their work are to hand. But, Commissioner Guido Brunner told the House today, the whole programme is being held up by the Council's failure to reach a decision on where the Jet plasma machine should go. He hoped the Council would resolve this issue on February 24th. There was general support for a motion tabled by Mr Gerd Springorum expressing concern at the Council's inaction and urging a decision as soon as possible.

### **Question Time**

#### *Questions to the Council*

Mr Gaston Thorn replied for the Council.

#### *Sir Geoffrey de Freitas asks about committee to study Tindemans Report*

Mr Thorn replied that the procedure to be followed in considering the Tindemans Report — Sir Geoffrey suggested that the Council ask the Commission and Parliament to join in setting up a small ad hoc committee — would be one of the questions dealt with by the European Council at its next meeting in Luxembourg in March.

#### *Lord Reay asks about the EC's large stocks of surplus skimmed milk powder*

Mr Thorn replied that the Council was aware of the problem and was already examining various measures to speed up the disposal of the stocks. These included making the use of milk powder compulsory in all compound animal

feeding stuffs, and the increasing of milk powder allocations in the food aid programme for 1976 to 200,000 tons. Various Members expressed their concern that so much food should be lying in storage at a time of world hunger. Mr Thorn shared these feelings and said that the Council would very likely be able to deal with this at its meeting in mid-February.

*Mr Hugh Dykes asks about direct elections*

Mr Thorn replied that he hoped the direct elections to the European Parliament would take place on a single date in May or June 1978. Any state unable to do this would be able to continue with its present arrangements, but he hoped this eventuality would not arise.

Mr Schelto Patijn asked whether there were any other problems apart from the number of seats. Mr Thorn replied that personally he did not think so.

*Questions to the Commission*

*Lord Bethell asks why comparable EC air fares are higher than US ones.*

Mr Carlo Scarascia Mugnozza replied that most Community flights were international. Again, only one language was used in the United States and they had six times as many passengers. These three factors, he thought, to some extent justified the difference.

Lord Bethell wondered if Mr Scarascia Mugnozza realised how big the difference between comparative fares is. A flight from Copenhagen to Rome costs \$206, whereas a flight from New York to Memphis, which is the same distance, only costs \$82. The Brussels-London trip is the same as the New York-Hyannis journey, but the latter costs \$37, or about half the European one. He suggested that the fault lies with the protectionist fares of IATA. If the flights were internal ones, the cost could be cut. Mr Scarascia Mugnozza appreciated the difficulties and, in reply to Mr Tom Normanton, he said that the Commission had submitted a document on policy for the aeronautical industry.

Mr Luigi Noé suggested that if the Member States pooled their air services, then they could cut the cost. Mr Scarascia Mugnozza replied that the fact of the matter was that air transport is in the hands of the Member States.

*Mr Willie Hamilton asks about discrimination against women*

Mr Albert Borschette replied that there was no discrimination in the European Commission as between staff in grades B, C, D, and LA. The discrepancy in the A grades was not a matter of policy but because there were fewer women applicants. Success levels in competitive tests were the same for both sexes.

Mr Borschette added that, in a recent poll, 21 0/o of the women interviewed in the Commission said they were very satisfied with their work and 54 0/o said they were fairly satisfied. 48 0/o had spoken positively about the human aspect. there was no question of 'Herrenmensch' in the Commission.

Mr Hougardy asked whether any posts had been set aside for handicapped workers and Mr Borschette said that a working party had been set up to look into this.

*Mr Barnett asks about the rent for the new buildings in Strasbourg*

President Francois-Xavier Ortoli said that the question of the rent for the Palais du Conseil de l'Europe which it is intended that Parliament shall use during sittings in Strasbourg is a matter for Parliament.

Mr Ortoli then went on to give the same reply to the question of the seat of the Communities as he gave in the European Parliament some time ago: that this was not a matter for the Commission or even the Council, but rather for the Member States. He added, however, that he was not averse to the idea of a certain decentralisation.

*Dr Thornley asks if there was an age limit for the retraining of workers*

Dr Patrick Hillery replied that there was no age limit for retraining. Dr Thornley regarded this as utter nonsense. It was ludicrous to retrain a fifty-year old farmer as a long-distance lorry driver, for example. Dr Hillery observed that this was a matter for the Member States, and added that only a small proportion of the resources of the Social Fund were used for retraining.

*Mr Dondelinger and Mr Herbert ask if regional policy information is censored*

Mr Michael Herbert asked if the Commission was aware that the Irish government had consistently refused to give details about investment and infrastructure projects. Mr George Thomson replied that it had given these details and that the details for the Regional Fund in France were given out in a regional basis. Ireland, on the other hand, was considered as a single region for Regional Fund purposes. But he noted Mr Herberts comments and would look into it further.

*Mr Laban asks about EC policy on vocational training*

Dr Patrick Hillery replied that the retraining centre in West Berlin had been established on the basis of the decision of 10 February 1975.

*Sir Brandon Rhys Williams asks if the Commission intends to set up a new banking department*

Dr Wilhelm Haferkamp said no.

*Miss Betty Boothroyd asks about help for the mentally handicapped*

Dr Patrick Hillery replied that the Commission was first trying to help those able to work in the open economy and would later put forward a programme for those in sheltered workshops, for example.

*Mr Luigi Noè asks about greater powers for the Business Cooperation Centre*

Mr Noè said his worry was that only sound firms received help in the organisation of mergers and cooperation. The Commission replied that a report on the subject would be made to Parliament in the near future.

*Mr Gibbons asks about farm modernisation schemes*

Mr George Thomson replied that it was a bit early to judge the EC directive on farm modernisation and disadvantaged areas, but he said he would draw

attention to Mr Gibbons' comments that they might be working more to the benefit of the prosperous areas than those which were less well placed.

*Mrs Winifred Ewing asks about the representation of the Commission in Scotland and Wales*

Mr Carlo Scarascia Mugnozza replied that there were three members of staff in Cardiff and two in Edinburgh. He hoped that it would be possible to increase them later. This reply gave both Mr Alexander Fletcher and Mr Willie Hamilton the chance to say what they thought, or rather what they did not think, about Scottish nationalism.

*Mr Horst Seefeld asks about transport policy*

Mr Carlo Scarascia Mugnozza said he would be having talks with Mr Marcel Mart, President of the Council of Transport Ministers, with a view to directives on a common policy. Mr Seefeld hoped the Commission would continue to bend its efforts to this end.

*Mr James Spicer asks about investment in developing countries*

Sir Christopher Soames, now happily recovered from his recent illness, said that private investment in developing countries had risen from \$965m in 1965 to \$1,692 in 1974. This latter figure was, however, 30 o/o down on 1973 and this undoubtedly brought home to the developing countries just how interdependent the countries of the world's economy are.

*Mr Tom Normanton asks about trade with Rumania*

Sir Christopher Soames told the House of his recent visit to Rumania and emphasised that trade between Rumania and the Community would remain independent of any trade relations between the EC and Comecon countries.

## NOTES

### **Alexander Fletcher replaces John Corrie**

Mr Alexander Fletscher now replaces John Corrie.

### **New Belgian Member, Mr G. Clerfayt**

### **Two parliamentary committees axed**

On a motion bearing the signatures of all the political groups, Parliament reduced from fourteen to twelve the number of its specialised committees. The ones axed are the Associations Committee and the Committee on Cultural Affairs and Youth. Education will be added to the purview of the Committee on Social Affairs and Employment.

### **Turkish Delegation**

On behalf of Parliament, President Georges Spénale welcomed a delegation from the Grand National Assembly of Turkey, led by Senator Inan.



*Meeting with members of the Grand National Assembly of Turkey*



## **Summing up**

At its sitting of 12, 13, 14 and 15 January, Members put down 2 questions for debate with the Council and 3 questions for debate with the Commission. At Question Time, 6 questions were addressed to the Council and 15 to the Commission. 13 reports were considered and the European Parliament considered 15 opinions. The House sat for 2 hours 30 minutes on Monday, 6 hours 15 minutes on Tuesday, 8 hours 55 minutes on Wednesday and 7 hours 35 minutes on Thursday.

## References

Subject	Eur. Parl. Doc. No.	Comm. Doc. No.	Date of Debate
Data processing . . . . .	462/75	294/75	12/1
Regulation on information procedure for oil prices . . . . .	419/75	226/75	13/1
Siting of nuclear power stations . . . . .	392/75	—	13/1
Number and composition of EP committees . . . . .	484/75	—	13/1
Meeting of the Council of Research Ministers . . . . .	463/75	—	13/1
Activities in direct insurance . . . . .	394/75	293/75	13/1
Titanium dioxide industry . . . . .	457/75	213/75	13/1
Control of concentrations . . . . .	459/75	—	14/1
Multinational companies . . . . .	460/75	—	14/1
Difficulties facing the textile industry . . . . .	405/75 404/75	—	14/1
Medium-term economic policy . . . . .	461/75	—	14/1
New European Social Fund . . . . .	446/75	—	15/1
Quality of water for human consumption . . . . .	418/75	225/75	15/1
Standards for lead . . . . .	399/75	93/75	15/1
Classification, packaging and labelling of paints . . . . .	420/75	196/75	15/1
Safety glass in motor vehicles . . . . .	397/75	—	15/1
Transfers from one budget chapter to another . . . . .	445/75	329/75	15/1
Fishing industry . . . . .	424/75	—	15/1
Market in sheepmeat . . . . .	432/75	274/75	15/1
Reference period for calculating levies . . . . .	475/75	401/75	15/1

### **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~~ European 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.

Commissioner Petrus Lardinois's replies to an oral question put down by Mr James Scott-Hopkins and to points raised by various Members, notably Mr James Gibbons, in the ensuing debate.

*Reply to Mr James Scott-Hopkins*

Mr President, I should like to start by answering Mr Scott-Hopkins' well-considered exposition. I shall begin with that because my reaction may well be of importance to the next speakers.

I should mention that I am grateful to Mr Scott-Hopkins for having been prepared to put this discussion off a couple of times. I feel, however, that he has described the present situation in the Community rather too harshly. I agree that 1975 has been a very bad year for fishing in the Community, one of the worst years we have known in fishing in Europe since the war. Fortunately, however, in the last six weeks to two months there has been a clearly perceptible restoration of prices to a level that can be considered fairly satisfactory over the Community as a whole. All the same, the differences are still very great. It is, moreover, peculiar to fishing that the markets in the Community are still so unintegrated. For instance, I cannot understand how it is possible for the same kind of fish to be costing in Ireland a third of the price being paid at the same time on the continent, in Holland, Germany or France. But things like that are happening in fishing. They do not happen, at least not that way, with any other product in agriculture or horticulture. In fishing we therefore never have a single price in the Community to deal with.

What we can do is compare the prices. We can compare the price one month before the crisis with last year's prices in the middle of the crisis and with the prices for December last year.

It then turns out that, generally speaking, the fishing crisis started in February last year and lasted until approximately October 1975. There was a slight recovery in October, with more improvement in November. We can say broadly that the prices of the most important types of fish in the Community have now on average again reached the level they had before February 1975.

The prices in January 1975 were very satisfactory. They can still be satisfactory even a year later, certainly in a sector like fishing, which in some Community

countries, notably Ireland and Britain, was particularly hit by inflation. Now that we have, despite the cost rises, returned to the prices we had before the crisis, which were very satisfactory, it cannot now be maintained, I think, that the crisis on the market is still going on.

There are a few other problems that affect fishing, among others the fact that at the moment we are no longer giving a subsidy on fuel oil.

We stopped that at the end of December. Then there are problems occurring in some countries in connection with the international agreements restricting catches. And there are, as Mr Scott-Hopkins has pointed out still other problems, such as the very important fishing in Icelandic waters, and the enormous wage cost increases in Ireland and Britain. But comparing prices throughout last year, from January 1975 when they were very satisfactory in the whole Community to July last year when we were in the middle of the crisis, and then to the end of November, December and January, as they are now, I still consider that it looks as though we have got over the crisis in the Community, especially since we no longer have stocks.

As you know, we had accumulated large stocks in consequence of the overfishing and the collapse of prices in the spring. These stocks have now all been liquidated, and the directorate for fishing expects, as far as it is humanly possible to predict, that 1976 will not offer us a repetition of the crisis of 1975.

I think that in the crisis we took a number of measures that the industry also welcomed. I shall summarize them.

Firstly, storage of a considerable part of the surpluses we had in the spring, supported by the Community fund.

Secondly, import restrictions.

Thirdly, export incentives, also supported from the Community fund, so as to solve a part of the problem.

Does that now mean that I am satisfied now that we have got over this crisis, but nothing more need be done? No, of course not.

As far as that goes I am in complete agreement with Mr Scott-Hopkins. One of the things he urged was an import system that would work much better, with

the reference prices we have now taking on much more the character of minimum import prices. I fully support that idea. I would also promise Parliament, and Mr Scott-Hopkins in particular, that I shall very shortly bring forward proposals to adjust and improve the import system at a number of points.

In horticulture also we always used to hear complaints about the import system, the reference price system, etc. There has been very little of that for a year now. In horticulture we now have a system that works, that is applied as a sort of minimum import system, with very satisfactory results. You need only ask the producers of, say, cash crops how the reference price system works for tomatoes, cucumbers, etc. and they will tell you the same thing. I think that in fishing, where to some extent we are dealing with comparable products as far as perishability and so on are concerned, we shall have to go the same way, and I should like to assure Parliament that I shall take measures on this.

Mr Scott-Hopkins also stressed the problems arising with the results to be expected from the Conference on the Law of the Sea. I can tell Mr Scott-Hopkins and Parliament that the Commission has only just completed a very important piece of work here. You know that a good year ago now we worked out a general philosophy on it, which we explained to Parliament and the Council. Following various discussions, etc., a more detailed analysis has now been made, which was adopted by the Commission before Christmas, on a proposal from Sir Christopher Soames and myself. This more detailed analysis of the problems of the Conference on the Law of the Sea, the national quotas, and a small purely national coastal zone, is at the moment being intensively discussed with the countries taking part in the Conference on the Law of the Sea and the Member States of the Community. The Commission will therefore very soon certainly have sufficient material available to be able to make formal proposals for regulations.

The time is certainly ripe for that. We are also coming increasingly to understand that the Member States can no longer find solutions if the Community does not speak as such.

Otherwise, problems with fishing will get out of hand, and we shall no longer be able to adopt a firm position towards third countries now that we are being confronted with the 200 mile zone. We must be able to come forward in turn with our own 200 mile zone, with our own rules, as a Community.

I have been working on these problems for months now. The Commission asked for studies on them to be brought to an end just before Christmas. Intensive consultations are now taking place with the Member States and in the Council. We hope that we shall now shortly be able to put forward clear proposals for regulations, so as to be able to settle these problems at Community level.

One more thing I really must say. The whole matter of fishing is becoming much more important to the Community, both politically and economically, than it ever was before. Over the last year it has faced us with such an increased work load that at the moment it is getting very difficult for me to keep the people concerned sufficiently able to hold the matter together. We have far too little staff available. It speaks volumes that it was a heart attack that shortly before Christmas robbed us of our very able head of division for fishing. I think that fishing, as far as policy implementation, planning and conceptualization is concerned, will not get off the ground at Community level until we have a full directorate for fishing, with responsibility not only for market and price policy but also for structural policy and I hope that it could also take the international aspects of fishing under its wing soon. It is my intention to bring forward the necessary proposals for this step. I am having consultations on it at the moment with my colleagues, and I hope that, if it proves necessary, Parliament will be able to help me later if the Council causes us any extra difficulties here

### *Reply to points raised*

Mr President, I would like to answer the observations made by several speakers whom I failed to convince with my first speech.

In order to show that I am not speaking without background documentation I would like to give you some figures. If we claim that the worst of the crisis experienced by the fishing industry in 1975 is now past and that prices are now beginning to improve to a reasonable level, we base this claim on a general picture and not on the low points in various parts of the Community. I believe that the main criticism came from the area of the United Kingdom and Ireland; here, therefore, are some figures to illustrate the position with regard to certain important varieties of fish.

In July the price of cod in Aberdeen had dropped 25 – 30 per cent. At present prices have again found last year's level, 25 – 30 per cent higher than last summer. In Grimsby and Hull this important variety of fish was selling at 25-30

per cent less in the summer, but prices are now once again above the level of this time last year, which was before they began to collapse. For coalfish, another important variety in the United Kingdom, prices in summer had fallen to 50 per cent of the January price. This price has been re-attained in Aberdeen, but not in Grimsby and Hull where the improvement has only been 50 per cent. Prices for this variety of fish have therefore not been fully maintained at last year's level: in Aberdeen they have reached last year's level but not in Grimsby and Hull.

The price of haddock, another important variety, fell by 35 per cent in Aberdeen in the summer. Half of this drop has been made good now. In Grimsby and Hull the prices dropped by 10 per cent and prices now are up to 10 to 15 per cent above those of a year ago.

I refer here to areas where the prices have lagged behind with respect to other parts of the Community, and particularly the continent where the improvements in market prices has been more marked. I have only one set of figures for Ireland – for Killybegs in the West of Ireland where the haddock price has failed to climb back to last year's level, and in fact has dropped even further. This is however the only set of prices I have for the West of Ireland or indeed for Ireland in general.

One thing these prices show is that the market for fishery products is not sufficiently integrated. I have already told you that for some months at a time prices can be found in certain parts of the Community which are only one third of the prices obtaining in large areas of the Community. This means in fact that the normal market machinery operates unsatisfactorily, if at all, in the Community. I therefore believe that above all in those areas where for structural reasons fish prices are and remain the lowest, there is a major need for investment in commercial plant, such as refrigerating equipment, etc., to enable fish to be kept and facilitate marketing, export and so on.

In connection with what has been said by Mr Gibbons I do not believe that now is the time to concentrate mainly on new fishery vessels and so on, since this might increase even more what is already an over-capacity. But we are at the moment intensively engaged in the preparation of our structural policy.

The greatest need at the present time, before this structural policy has been determined, is for commercial equipment, facilities and organisations, especially in the areas where prices of fishery products are very low.



All in all, I would like to thank Mr Hughes for his favourable reception of what I had to say, despite the fact that he is still not quite able to believe my claim that the crisis is largely over. Please understand that when I claim that the crisis is largely past for prices on the market, this does not mean that the effects of the crisis will no longer be felt by fishermen. It may be a long time before the consequences of the very serious crisis of 1975 have been fully absorbed. A number of good years are needed to remedy the damage wreaked in this one very difficult year. But I did say that the crisis is mainly over for the market and that the market prospects for 1976 are fortunately much better than in 1975 — at the same time this does not mean that fishery problems are now once and for all over.

I entirely agree with what Mr Gibbons said about the need for a viable sea-fishing industry, particularly in the West of Ireland. I agree that it would also be a good thing from the point of view of regional policy if we could develop a more viable and resistant fishing industry in the West of Ireland in particular.

The first condition for doing this is in my opinion to attract more investment and give greater weight to commercial organisation in order to boost the very low fish prices we find on average in this area — presumably by far the lowest in the whole of Europe — by a much more energetic marketing policy — marketing not only in Ireland but throughout the Community. Much remains to be done before this stage is reached and if people are willing to invest in this area and good projects are forthcoming, I can say without further ado that we shall give high priority to this matter not only in the framework of our structural policy but also under our regional policy.

Mrs Ewing made a sharp attack not only on what I had to say, but also on the Community fishing policy as such. Fortunately no Danes have made their presence felt, since I feared at one particular moment that we had slipped back to a thousand years ago, with the Scots vilifying the invading Normans. Fortunately things have not gone so far. I have heard serious criticism of some Danish organisations and realise that we are faced here with a serious problem. However, I believe I must say that Mrs Ewing's attack, particularly on our Danish friends and colleagues, was a little harsh. I do not wish to go into this matter further.

But I do wish to go into what she said about renegotiations on fishery policy. I have never believed in renegotiations of fishery policy. I did not believe in renegotiations before the referendum in the United Kingdom, but people are

free to choose what terms they will. But it would be unacceptable to have to repeat for the fishery policy what went on just before April of last year. Another thing which is unacceptable – at least for me – is the renationalisation of the fishery industry. When I hear Mrs Ewing talking about a national fishing area of 50 miles, etc., I am vividly reminded of renationalisation of the fishery policy, and I must tell her, and I am convinced that I can say this on behalf of the whole Commission, that renationalisation ‘through the back door’ – which is what this could turn out to be – is certainly not a step forwards but rather a step backwards and therefore unacceptable to us.

I am grateful to Mr Fletcher not only for calling this matter an important one but also because he adopted in my opinion a balanced approach.

At one point he asked whether I agreed that fishermen were as important as French farmers. I would even go further and say that fishermen are just as important as Dutch farmers. In other words, I believe that fishermen are among the most important citizens of the Community, and are in every respect as important – and in many ways even more attractive than our farmers and market gardeners. So it is not for the first time in this House that I support the view that fishery policy must be given considerably more weight in our Community, it must be given the chance to develop, especially with regard to international opportunities and not only the question of the 200-mile limit.

The Community should also adopt as soon as possible the fishery agreements, the North-East Atlantic and North-West Atlantic agreements.

One of the problems facing us in the fishing industry, in contrast to farming and market gardening, is that in the latter sectors the Community is not only responsible for its own market policy but also for relations with non-member countries. In the fishery sector, and that is one of the causes of all the problems, we only have responsibility for our own market policy and not for relations with non-member countries.

I am convinced that more and more countries are going to realise that this is an untenable position. I have long been of the opinion that this position is untenable but, particularly with regard to foreign policy, many Member States are very cautious about giving the Community as such the responsibility for this policy. But I have become more optimistic, especially in the last month, about the prospects of our being able to incorporate, in the coming months, more of the foreign aspects of fishery in our whole market and prices policy. National governments are becoming ready to do this. It has taken some time and on the way we have had this year's crisis and big problems with some non-member

countries. But the Community already possesses the major element, which is its own market – a major import market – and I therefore believe that it can make great progress in this field if it not only outlines an effective structural policy but also includes relations with non-member countries in fishery, as is already the case in agriculture and market gardening.

Mr Prescott was critical. He also put some frank questions to the Commission. But I see his remarks as constructive and I shall certainly take account of the points he has made here today.

Mr Spicer repeated what he said in October about the need for Community research on fishing, financed by Community funds. I believe that here we should collect together everything which is already being done at national level and that a certain amount of Community funds should be made available for the execution of Community research programmes by the existing institutions. I am grateful to Mr Spicer for his comments on the matter.

Mrs Kellett-Bowman again stressed that the 200-mile limit is an urgent matter for the Community and that we can no longer wait. I entirely agree with her that this matter must be cleared up. To repeat, Mr President, I believe that application of the 200 mile limit by the Community should in principle refer to Community waters, accessible to everyone in the Community, but with special provisions for coastal waters, thus rounding off the problems we had on accession three years ago. But we shall have to set national quotas within these Community waters to allow for losses incurred by the fishing industry of the country or countries concerned in the coastal waters of third countries, and to ensure fair distribution of the burden caused by reduced fishing opportunities. The structural policy must be adjusted to this, and use must be made of all the Community's resources in the way of negotiations with non-member countries in order, naturally, to retain fishing rights in as much as possible of the coastal waters of non-member countries and to help where possible in developing new fishing grounds for the benefit of Community fishermen.

These are the main lines, Mr President, of the policy which I consider to be necessary. I am convinced that we have a major task before us. Unfortunately I cannot say that everything or anything will be achieved next month. But I do hope that the European Parliament will realise that we cannot do everything at once. I am convinced that if no great progress is made, this will not be the fault of the Commission: I personally believe that 1976 could probably turn out to be the most important year for the common fishery policy since the Community came into being.

## **The Sittings**

'The Sittings' is intended to give the gist of proceedings in the European Parliament.

A complete record of the proceedings of the House is given in the 'Debates of the European Parliament' which is published as an Annex to the Official Journal of the European Communities.

The 'Debates' and other documents may be obtained either from the Secretariat of the European Parliament (P.O. Box 1601, Luxembourg) or from the Office for Official Publications of the European Communities (P.O. Box 1003, Luxembourg).

## **Information Offices**

The Information Offices of the European Parliament in Dublin and London distribute regular press releases on parliamentary business, and deal with specific requests for information. Lectures to various groups, organisations and schools about the structure and functions of the European Parliament are available on request.

Dublin Office: 29 Merrion Square, Dublin 2

London Office: 20 Kensington Palace Gardens, London W 8 4QQ

If you find 'The Sittings' interesting and would like to receive it regularly, will you please fill in the form below. 'The Sittings' will then be sent to you each month free of charge.

**Directorate-General  
for Information and Public Relations  
European Parliament, P.O. Box 1601  
Luxembourg**

Please send The Sittings to (\*):

Name: . . . . .

Christian Name: . . . . .

Street . . . . . No. . . . .

Postal Code: . . . . . Town: . . . . .

Country: . . . . .

---

(\*) Please use block letters

