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- \*\* The Commission of the European Communities is at present preparing a set of Community Regulations on the MARKETING OF IRRADIATED FOODSTUFFS. It has just given information on this subject in a reply to a written question from Mr Vredeling, a Dutch Member of the European Parliament. The gist of its reply is given in the ANNEX.
- \*\* The Committee on Energy, Research and Atomic Problems of the European Parliament met at Brussels on 11 May and examined a proposed directive from the Commission of the European Communities on the HARMONIZATION OF TAXES ON HYDROCARBONS in the Community countries. According to this proposal, the maximum taxation rate on 1 January 1976 would be two units of account/tonne for heavy fuels and five units of account/tonne for light fuels (see "Research and Technology" No. 83). On the basis of a report presented by Mr de Broglie, the Parliamentary Committee on Energy, Research and Atomic Problems estimates that heavy and light fuels must have the same rate of taxation, which will be situated within the 2-5 u.a./tonne bracket. In order to make the loss in revenue supportable, a proportionate and

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*The information and articles published in this Bulletin concern European scientific cooperation and industrial development in Europe. Hence they are not simply confined to reports on the decisions or views of the Commission of the European Communities, but cover the whole field of questions discussed in the different circles concerned.*

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and time-graduated reduction must be allowed on all taxes above five u.s./tonne.

In addition, the Parliamentary Committee considers that a major reduction in the tax on hydrocarbons would encourage the consumption of heavy fuel, thus inflicting another severe blow on coal, the main energy form of which the Community possesses large reserves. A balanced proposal must therefore seek to harmonize taxation on all energy sources as a function of their calorific power and in the light of the latest developments in the energy sector. Lastly, society's new-found preoccupation with environmental questions should be taken into account by varying taxation according to the sulphur content of the fuel.

\*\* The Commission of the European Communities has just reported to the Council on the result of the exploratory conversations which, following a Council decision dated 13 October 1970 (see "Research and Technology" No. 71), it recently held with the US authorities on improving the conditions governing the SUPPLY OF ENRICHED URANIUM TO THE COMMUNITY FROM THE UNITED STATES. The Commission of the European Communities requests the Council to give it a directive to open negotiations on this subject with the US authorities.

\*\* Two studies on "Versatility in Professional Training in the Community Countries" and "The Situation with Regard to Programmed Instruction in the Community" were forwarded last April to the Council by the Commission of the European Communities. They form part of the Commission's plans for the implementation of a COMMON PROFESSIONAL TRAINING POLICY and will be disseminated to all the circles concerned.

\*\* THE CLOTHING INDUSTRY in the Community countries will be the subject of a series of consultative meetings organized by the Commission of the European Communities following the publication

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of a relevant study conducted by Caplin Associated on behalf of the Commission of the European Communities. During the various meetings between experts of the Commission of the European Communities, delegates from the Member States and representatives of employers' and employees' organizations, they will examine the findings of the Caplin report and also discuss the authors' conclusions concerning industrial and commercial policy.

At the end of these consultations the experts concerned will submit for the Commission's approval a document setting out possible lines of policy for the clothing industry.

\*\* THE GENERAL CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE OF THE JOINT RESEARCH CENTRE met for the first time on 11 May at the Ispra establishment of the Joint Research Centre (see "Industry, Research and Technology" No. 97). Mr de Block, former Minister in the Netherlands Government, who has for many years actively followed the development of the European Atomic Energy Community, was unanimously elected Chairman of the Committee. After hearing a statement by the Director-General of the Joint Research Centre on the Centre's situation and future prospects, the Committee began to consider a series of major topics which it will examine in more detail at its next meeting, scheduled to be held in Paris on 16 June. A third meeting is planned for 30 June at Ispra.

\*\* The Commission of the European Communities recently published a report on THE FREE MOVEMENT OF LABOUR AND LABOUR MARKETS IN THE EEC (1970). This report analyses Community labour markets from the angle of the supply of foreign workers from both Community and non-Community countries. The study concludes with a comparison of the estimated foreign labour needs of the national economies for 1970, together with an estimate of the

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Italian manpower resources which would be available for employment in another Community country. This report can be obtained from the Office of Official Publications of the European Communities (37 rue Glesener, Luxembourg).

- \*\* Experts from the Community countries will meet in the Consultative Committee on 17 June at the Ispra Establishment of the Joint Research Centre to study a draft multiannual programme for the ESSOR TEST REACTOR AT ISPRA. Various documents have been prepared for this meeting by the Joint Research Centre - a study, various physical, technical and safety aspects, of the possibility of installing high-power and high-pressure experimental circuits in Essor, conducted from a detailed study of two typical circuits (a light-water loop and a light boiling-water loop), a draft irradiation programme for the development of light-water reactors within the Community, and policy papers by the Community industry.
  
- \*\* A new research programme on the COMBATING OF AIR POLLUTION IN THE STEEL INDUSTRY is at present under study by the Commission of the European Communities. The project combines the Venturi process of dust extraction, with its low pressure drops, and the electrostatic technique, which has a high transit velocity passage. This process has attracted the attention of the experts because of the prospects which it offers by virtue of its high efficiency and relatively small bulk, particularly for the extraction of dust from oxygen steelworks.
  
- \*\* Nuclear power plant operators from the Community countries and representatives of the Commission of the European Communities met at the Ispra Establishment of the Joint Research Centre on 5 and 6 May under the scheme for the EXCHANGE OF EXPERIENCE in order to examine methods for analysing and monitoring impurities in the primary circuit water of POWER REACTORS.

\*\* SCIENTIFIC AND TECHNICAL REPORTS recently published by the Commission of the European Communities include the following:

- The acute hepatic toxicity of organic reactor coolants.  
(No. EUR 4548 e - 14 pages - 40 BF - available in English);
- Strahlenhämatologie - Jahresbericht 1969 (Radiation hematology - Annual report 1969).  
(No. EUR 4535 d - 20 pages - 40 BF - available in German);
- The effects of various impurities on the electrical conductivity of organic coolant liquids.  
(No. EUR 4597 e - 24 pages - 40 BF - available in English);
- System of declaration and authorization to be applied in accordance with the Euratom Basic Standards to the Member States of the Community with respect to activities and operations relating to nuclear materials and other radioactive substances.  
(No. EUR 4515 d, f, i, n - 86 pages - 125 BF - available in German, French, Italian and Dutch).

These reports can be obtained from the Sales Office for Official Publications of the European Communities, 37 rue Glesener, Luxembourg.

\*\* A working party briefed to study THE DETECTION OF DEFECTS IN CONCRETE BY GAMMAGRAPHY met at the Laboratoire Régional des Ponts et Chaussées, Blois, France, on 19 April under the Commission's scheme for promoting the application of gamma-graphy to the inspection of reinforced and prestressed concrete structures. The party chose plates illustrating common defects in prestressed concrete for inclusion in a catalogue which is to be published by the Commission of the European Communities during 1971 and is due to be circulated to technical circles concerned with the problems of the non-destructive inspection of concrete.

The Irradiation of Foodstuffs for Preservation Purposes

(Details supplied by the Commission of the European Communities in a reply to a written question by Mr Vredeling, a Dutch Member of the European Parliament)

The marketing of irradiated foodstuffs has been authorized in certain countries during the last ten years. It has been found that the shelf-life of these foodstuffs is prolonged, that their natural qualities are preserved better and that consequently the market tends to expand and supply prospects are enhanced. However, the influence of these factors depends upon the type of product and the marketing conditions.

Among the Member States of the Community, only the Netherlands have as yet authorized the sale of limited quantities of irradiated foodstuffs. Insofar as the short period of marketing enables any conclusions to be drawn, the marketing of these products (mushrooms, potatoes, asparagus, strawberries, herbs and recently shrimps) appears to have proved a satisfactory venture.

The Commission of the European Communities is at present preparing a set of Community regulations on the marketing of irradiated foodstuffs. In addition, it is coordinating the following programmes on the irradiation of foodstuffs:

1. Under the Euratom/ITAL Association, technical research is being carried out with the financial backing from three Member States with a view to solving the scientific and technical problems raised by the irradiation of agricultural products.

ANNEX p.2

2. A number of contracts have been concluded by the Commission of the European Communities with national institutes and laboratories for the execution of a joint research programme on the development of methods of identifying irradiated foodstuffs.
3. Two series of pilot tests with the aim of inhibiting the germination of potatoes by chemical powdering and by irradiation have been carried out - one in the laboratory and one on an industrial scale - by research institutes in the Member States with the collaboration of industrial companies, with the Commission of the European Communities acting mainly as the initiator and coordinator.

There is also some coordination between Community research institutes and similar institutions in non-Community countries via international organizations. For example, agreements have recently been concluded on the international project for the irradiation of foodstuffs; they cover research into the harmlessness and edibility of certain irradiated foods under the joint patronage of the European Nuclear Energy Agency (ENEA), the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) and the Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO). The Commission of the European Communities takes these projects into account when planning its own programmes.