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** The decision taken recently by the French Government to undertake "from 1970, and in the course of the Sixth Economic Plan, a diversification programme relating to several high-powered generating stations fuelled by ENRICHED URANIUM" is interpreted by the World's press as calculated to enable the Community's Member States, starting at their summit meeting in the Hague on 1 and 2 December, to escape from their present impasse as regards definition of the activities which should henceforth devolve on Euratom. In any case this re-orientation of French nuclear policy makes it even more necessary to set up uranium enrichment facilities in the Community, as recommended by the Commission (see Newsletter No. 18).

The six countries' Science Ministers are to subject the situation to a searching review immediately after the European summit, during a meeting of the Council scheduled for 6 December.

** The number of TELEPHONES installed in the Community countries will almost treble between now and 1985. But even then the network density will only be equivalent to that which countries such as Switzerland and New Zealand had already attained in 1967 and which the United States had already far exceeded at that date. This emerges from a study carried out at the request of the Commission of the European Communities by the

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Federation of Telecommunications Engineers in the European Community (FITCE). A short analysis of this study, which describes the probable evolution of existing telecommunications media, such as the telephone, or future ones, such as the videophone, is given in an ANNEX.

- ** The memorandum forwarded by the Commission to the Council of Ministers with the aim of defining the guidelines for a common energy policy has been approved by the Council. The purpose behind the Commission's proposals is to provide the Community with a supply of energy sources that is reliable, regular and cheap. The Ministers have asked the Commission to submit the most urgent concrete proposals without delay and have undertaken to discuss them as soon as possible.

- ** The six Communities' electricity utilities recently made known their standpoint on the subject of the Community's long-term supply of enriched uranium. In a letter to the Commission of the European Communities, the European Committee of the International Union of Producers and Distributors of Electrical Energy (UNIPED) came out in favour of the establishment of a major European isotope separation capacity, thus falling in with the Commission's proposals (see Newsletter No. 18). UNIPED drew attention to the fact that the gaseous diffusion technique is well tried and already forms the basis of large-scale production plants, and that investigations in the ultracentrifugation field had recently led to efforts to reach agreements regarding the first experimental plants. The choice of the most economic solution is of central importance to Europe, which must aim at meeting its own requirements and even be in a position to export enriched uranium. The electricity utilities therefore stress, as does the Commission, the need for the pooling of technical and economic information and for the various possessors of know-how in this area to work together.

- ** The prospect of marketing high-temperature reactors is now very close at hand and it should be possible to proceed quickly from the experimental stage to the power reactor plant stage. These are the conclusions reached by the 260 persons (representing 35 organizations and the 12 signatory countries to the Dragon Agreement) attending the symposium on high-temperature reactors held recently at Bournemouth (United Kingdom) in the context of the Dragon Project.
- ** How to adapt the law and psychology to the use of modern techniques and, in particular those of gamma radiography - this is the subject of a series of research contracts to be placed by the Commission of the European Communities with five specialist Institutes, each belonging to a Community country, with a view to defining the criteria for improving the conditions in which gamma radiography is used in industry. The same five Institutes have already carried out a study in the field of radiometry, a technique in which radioisotopes are used to check the thickness or density of materials and by which any defects can be detected very quickly. This technique poses comparatively minor safety problems because the facilities are of the fixed type and the radiation is of low intensity. With gamma radiography, on the other hand, the problems are tougher because the apparatus is, by its very nature, mobile (its purpose being to detect flaws in certain structures, e.g., bridges) and the radiation originates from a - more dangerous - gamma source and not, as in radiometry, a beta source. The statutes in force, however, disregard these technical features and the regulations regarding use, transport, third-party liability or worker safety are the same whatever the risks involved. They differ, moreover, from country to country.

** The Chooz nuclear power plant went critical on 27 October. It had been shut down since the end of January 1968. On completion of various repairs and modifications, vibration measurements were carried out with the plant both hot and cold, followed, when normal temperature and pressure conditions had been attained, by a 21-day period of functioning tests. A series of checks has still to be conducted before the definitive plant start-up.

** The Council of Ministers of the Community has given final approval to the conclusion by the Commission of a fourth extension of the DRAGON AGREEMENT, an agreement relating to a high-temperature gas-cooled reactor in the development of which Euratom has been participating since 1959 (see "Research and Technology" No. 28). This extension period of three years will be signed on 25 November 1969 at Copenhagen, during a meeting of the Dragon Project Board of Management, at which the chair will be taken by the representative of the Commission.

At the end of March 1973, when the further extension of the Agreement is due to expire, the total contributions of the 12 countries participating in the Project will have attained about £38 million, £6,935,000 of which will relate to the three years 1970-1973 (40.37% being borne by Euratom).

** The problems raised by the MEDICAL DECONTAMINATION OF NUCLEAR WORKERS were discussed at a meeting of experts organized by the Commission of the European Communities held on 3 November 1969 at Munich-Neuherberg, Germany, at the headquarters of the Gesellschaft für Strahlenforschung. Internal and external medical decontamination experts from the six Community countries exchanged views and information. They were unanimous in their desire that the Commission should take further steps towards

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securing harmonization of medical practice concerning the
: surveillance of workers exposed to the hazards arising
from ionizing radiations.

** The Council of Ministers of the Community has recently
signified its agreement to the conclusion by the Commission
of the European Communities of a contract with the International
Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), which is to ASSIGN TO EURATOM
part of the preparatory technical work on the establishment
of an INTERNATIONAL NUCLEAR INFORMATION SYSTEM (INIS
project).

** The Scientific and Technological Information Service of the
Commission of the European Communities has just published
a small brochure entitled "RESEARCH AND TECHNOLOGY AND THE
EUROPEAN COMMUNITY". This brochure can be obtained by
writing to the Scientific and Technological Information
Service (200 rue de la Loi, Brussels 4, Belgium). Plans
state the language desired (German, French, Italian, Dutch
or English) and your occupation.