

TALSMANDENS GRUPPE
SPRECHERGRUPPE
SPOKESMAN'S GROUP
GROUPE DU PORTE-PAROLE
GRUPPO DEL PORTAVOCE
BUREAU VAN DE WOORDVOERDER

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EXTRACTS FROM THE PROGRAMME SPEECH BY PRESIDENT JENKINS TO THE
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The Economy

Our priority is the economic and political development of the Community itself. The greatest problem which now faces the Community is the state of its economy. The aims of the Commission are two-fold. In the shorter term we are concerned with emergency action to sustain industries which are no longer fully competitive or no longer fulfil their original purposes. In the longer term we are concerned to promote the economic growth which will provide employment and prosperity for our citizens, and give us the opportunity to become once more the exemplars rather than the laggards of world economic progress.

This means that the Community must launch sectors of growth which will strengthen its industrial capability through greater technological advance. The time has come, and the chance is there, to make a real advance in Community ventures in the fields of aerospace, data processing, electronics components and telecommunications. At the same time we must recognise that the attempt to restore competitiveness to declining industries will not, in itself, or in the short-term, tackle the problem of unemployment. No national government offers, in my view, a long-term solution and this in itself is a hindrance to any general economic revival. Our need is for a new economic impulse on an historic scale, and we believe this can be given in the Community by a re-defined and faster move towards economic and monetary union. We should not allow ourselves to be deluded by temporary economic improvements in some Member States into believing that a fundamental economic turn-round is, for the Community as a whole, simply a matter of time. In the medium term a lot of European citizens will, while they wait, be without work.

Energy Policy

I believe that in 1978 we have two obligations. First, to make the Community picture a more comprehensive one; and second, to take some useful decisions at a Community level. To do both we need political impetus more than rhetoric. In the field of new sources of energy - such as solar, geothermal and wind and wave power - and in the development of existing sources, especially indigenous sources, there is, in my view, good scope for a Community lead and a more ambitious programme. For example, Community-backed demonstration projects would be of both real and symbolic value.

Agriculture

We have still not succeeded in mastering the problem of surpluses. For several important products the long-term supply trends are still tending to move ahead of demand. It is not because the mechanisms of the CAP are at fault: it is rather because the price levels at which we operate the mechanisms have been imprudent. Last year, therefore, we proposed only modest increases in the common prices. For the next season we have followed the same course; and we shall follow it for as long as is necessary to check the surpluses. In our view it is the only policy which can avoid the introduction of even harsher measures to bring excess production under control, or ultimately the disintegration of the common policy itself. In the fisheries sector we must limit our catches and adopt strict conservation rules. The Commission has put before you, and before the Council, all the necessary elements for an equitable share-out of the catch, and for effective conservation of the resources. A solution will require political courage. But we have the right to demand that courage.

Enlargement

We must aim at least to break the back of the Greek negotiations by the end of this year. The Opinion on Portugal's application should be ready by the end of March. The formal Opinion on the Spanish application may be expected at the beginning of 1979. It is clear from this timetable that the phases of the negotiations with the three applicant countries will not be concurrent. Indeed, it is accepted that the negotiations cannot be lumped together. But inevitably similar problems affecting all three will arise. Insofar as these questions are interlinked, the Commission will be bringing forward ideas at the time of the presentation of the Opinion on Portugal, that is by the end of March.

Direct Elections to the European Parliament

We had all hoped that this would be the year of direct elections. The delay is unnecessary and regrettable, for the Community badly needs the impulse which a directly-elected Parliament can give. I have picked out the central themes on which, I believe, such a European election should be fought. Recent events have well demonstrated what the Community is for. It is for dealing with problems which can best be dealt with by all of us together. The institutions are there.

The relationship between the Council of Ministers and the Commission is sometimes one of constructive tension, but also and more often one of mutual reliance, mutual need and mutual respect for each other's independence and competence. Recognition of that reliance, that need and that respect should, I think, become a kind of mental reflex when problems of more than national scope arise and assume a European perspective. This is equally true of the Commission's relationship with this House. Recognition of mutual reliance, mutual need and mutual respect should again cause a European reflex. We want the European reflex to extend not only to governments and administrations and parliaments, but to the citizens of our Community.