

# Herring's off in fishing deal

The long saga of the Community's fishing policy — to which the European Parliament has repeatedly returned in recent months — now seems closer to a happy ending. Commissioner Gundelach told Parliament on Wednesday, February 9, of a "breakthrough" at the earlier all-night session of the Council of Ministers; and with the long-awaited passage of Niels Anker Kofoed's (Lib/DK) report on the conservation and management of fishery resources, Parliament and Commission seem in agreement on the shape of fishing policy as a whole.

After the acrimony of former debates (both in Parliament and Council), the consensus on fundamentals was impressive. It has dawned on everyone that unless a concerted policy to conserve fishing stocks is soon adopted, there will be no fish for anybody: as Mark Hughes (Soc/UK) pointed out, "we require the political courage to say to our fishermen that they cannot have what they want because in the end that will deny them what they really need". To conserve herring, the Council is banning the direct fishing of herring stocks in the North and the Celtic seas from the end of the month, possibly until 1978 in both cases. In the European Parliament the Socialist Group's amendment calling for conservation zones — not just up to a 50-mile limit, but if necessary right up to the full 200 miles — was finally adopted.

There was also a new emphasis on common rather than national solutions. "fish do not fly national flags", Mr. Kofoed noted at the beginning of the debate, and later Mark Hughes emphasised even more pointedly that this included "the Union Jack and the Cross of St. Andrew".

It would clearly be wrong, however, to conclude that all from now on will be plain sailing. Though Commissioner Gundelach and President-in-Office of the Council of Ministers John Tomlinson (deputising for Tony Crosland)

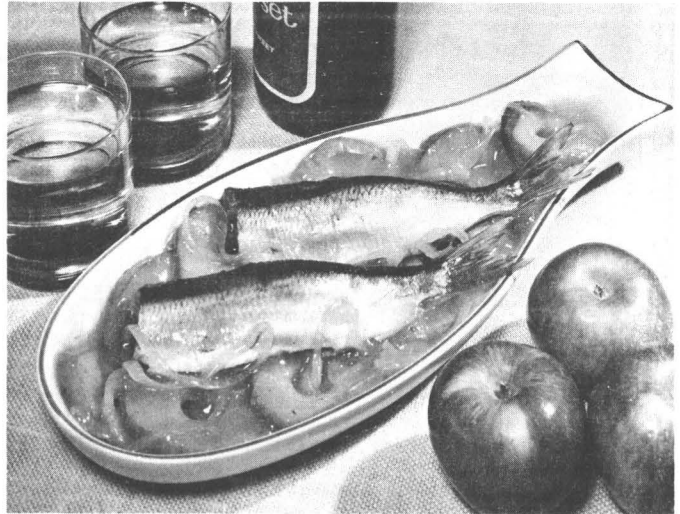


Photo by courtesy of the Herring Industry Board

*These will be getting scarcer*

both pointed out that negotiations with Soviet bloc countries have started — in itself a major diplomatic success, since until now the Soviet Union has not even recognised the existence of the Community — there are still problems with third countries. "In this otherwise positive picture", Commission Gundelach told the House, "we have a minus point, namely Iceland."

There is also, clearly, a long way to go before an adequate solution is found for the fishermen whose livelihood is threatened. The idea of the 50-mile exclusive limit received less support in Parliament this time than it has done in the past; partly because, as Mark Hughes again pointed out, it is not enough to conserve fish, partly because the same conflicts would still arise *within* the 50 miles: for example, between trawlers and small inshore boats. There could be "mass genocide for the people of Scotland . . . if they are not protected against their fellow British".

But Mark Hughes also noted that for many parts of Britain and Ireland it was "fishing or nothing". "We are dealing with the lives of men — and brave men at that", declared Winnie Ewing (Ind/UK).

Some 400 m.u.a. (about £166 m.) are being set aside for the "restructuring" of fishing; but, if there is growing agreement on how to conserve the fish, there is still a long way to go on the conservation of fishermen.



Commissioner Gundelach

## Achtung Verbraucher!

The EEC was essentially producer-oriented and slow to promote the interests of the consumer, claimed William Molloy (Soc/UK) at the opening of Parliament's February sitting on Monday the 7th. Not so, replied Commissioner Richard Burke, enumerating the areas in which the EEC is preparing legislation. These include liability for defective products, door-to-door selling, misleading advertising, correspondence courses and labelling. Some speakers, including Lord Bruce (Soc/UK), were cynical of the

Commissioner's concern with showing a 'human face', arguing that practical policies were what the consumer needed. Elaine Kellett-Bowman (Con/UK) felt that publicity, properly handled, could be constructive. But she went on to raise the question of the languages used in labelling, citing the case of people convicted in Britain of dangerous driving after having taken a German cough mixture which bore a warning, written in German only, that its alcohol content rendered driving unsafe. She also called for caution in legislating about door-to-door selling, as measures in this field could affect the textile trade.

## Long underpants are not enough

The European Parliament has frequently deplored the Council's inaction over energy policy. It did so again this week *à propos* of reports submitted by Pierre Giraud (Soc/F) and Ove Guldberg (Lib/DK). Mr Giraud was asking the House to endorse Commission proposals for a 'minimum safeguard price for imported energy' and, with reservations by some speakers, the House went along with it. The sense of these proposals is that they will afford a measure of protection to those developing alternative energy sources, although as Mr Giraud pointed out, their chances of being accepted by the Council are not good. They have, after all, been on the Council table for two years.

Replying to the debate, Commissioner Guido Brunner told the House that Europe's dependence on oil was today

greater than ever, despite all the brave words that had been uttered after the oil crisis of 1973/74.

What to do? Firstly, we had to develop our indigenous sources of energy. That meant coal and nuclear energy. By 1985 we could expect that 3 per cent of our needs would be met by solar power, and 1 per cent from geothermal sources. And it now looked as if only 9 per cent of energy, rather than the envisaged 13 per cent, would be nuclear in origin.

Secondly, we had to concentrate more on saving energy — and wearing long underpants would not be enough. Areas which should be given special attention included insulation of buildings and utilisation of buildings and utilisation of waste heat from power stations.

## Shipping and shipyards in crisis

A powerful argument for a Community policy on both the shipping and shipbuilding industries was developed by John Prescott (Soc/UK) when introducing his report on the subject on Thursday, February 10. Both industries, he demonstrated, were in a state of crisis. Shipping had suffered the collapse of the tanker market, and growing competition from "flags of convenience" employing labour at "scandalous wages", to say nothing of the growing State-subsidised COMECON fleets. Moreover, "the wages in some countries, such as Great Britain, are half of what is the average for the other European seafarers". On top of this, the Community had an obligation to increase the developing countries' share of world shipping from 7% to 10% by 1980.

The crisis in shipbuilding was if anything worse. "For example, the share enjoyed by Europe has fallen from 51% in 1960 to 22% in 1975." And on top of this the world's total demand had been cut to a third of its 1973 level. Japan, on the other hand, had increased its share to over 51% — and had even taken 70% of European orders in November. "In Britain there is talk of making up the difference between the price quoted by the Japanese and the price if you bought it in a European yard. That is almost like a £10 million subsidy on a £30 million ship . . . That is a crazy way which we cannot endorse."

The correct answer, he concluded was "a Community preference, under which our shipowners will have to order so many of their ships in our yards".

## Crooks' best buy

Where is it most profitable for the criminal to contravene Community law? That was in effect the problem pointed up by Paul de Keersmaker (CD/Bel) in a report on the relationship between Community law and criminal law. Obviously there are ways in which Community laws are being contravened in a criminal manner — notably fraud — but there is no Community machinery for enforcing criminal jurisdiction, and unlikely to be one in the foreseeable future. Enforcement depends on the national judicial processes. So the same offence may be treated substantially differently from one member state to another, lightly in some, more severely in others. There was no dissent from the Legal Committee rapporteur's view that something ought to be done about this. First of all, the Commission could use its own powers of sanction to the full, and secondly the member states could cooperate more effectively to ensure that frauds on funds were effectively dealt with.

## North-South in April?

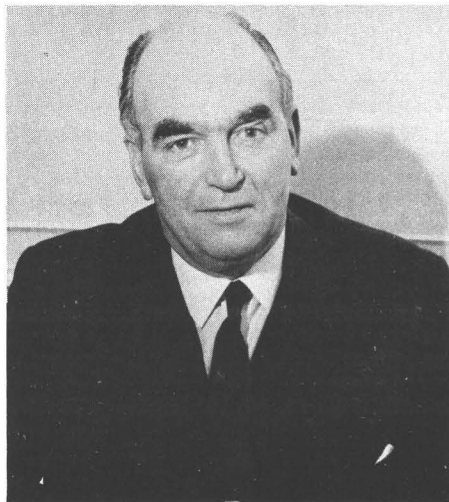
The next ministerial session of the North-South dialogue, which was broken off before Christmas, could take place in April or early May, said Mr. Tomlinson, British President-in-Office of the Council of Ministers in reply to an oral question presented by Paul-Bernard Couste (EPD/F). This delay, said Mr. Tomlinson, would allow the Community to finalise its position during a Ministerial meeting on 8 March in preparation for the European Council meeting on the 25th. It would also allow time for uncertain factors — the position of the new American administration, the views of the group of Nineteen and the development of the international situation — to become clearer.

## European Elections: West & Paisley to stand in Ulster

"For once, Italy is first!" Renato Sandri (Comm/It) proudly told the European Parliament during the "Queen's Speech" debate on Thursday, February 10. The Italian Parliament, indeed, has become the first to ratify the Community Act on direct elections which the Council of Ministers adopted in September last year. Luxembourg, which has had a Bill since January 27, is likely to be next.

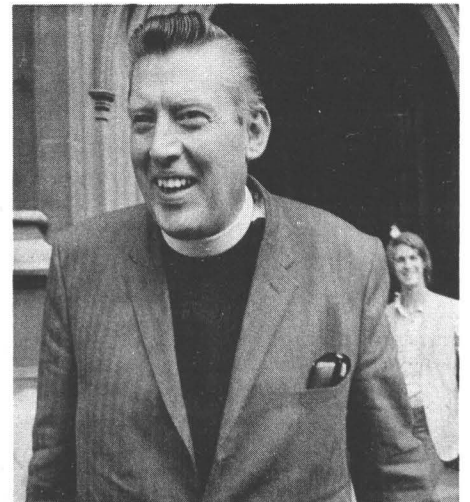
Where does this rapid progress in other Community countries leave Britain? This was clearly a subject for worry at Question Time on Wednesday, when British Minister John Tomlinson gave an exhibition of stonewalling worthy of Barnacle Bailey himself. He resolutely refused to tell either Sir Geoffrey de Freitas (Soc/UK) or Sir Peter Kirk (Con/UK) exactly how far preparations had gone in the various national parliaments; and "speaking as a United Kingdom Minister" went no further than to assure Messrs. Hamilton, Tomney (both Soc/UK) and Dykes (Con/UK) that the British Government "intend to proceed with the necessary legislation in order to meet the deadline that has been set".

One new factor came up, however: Russell Johnston (Lib/UK) drew attention to "the report widely current in this Assembly to the effect that the members of this House from Northern Ireland are to be elected by proportional representation". "No comment", replied Mr. Tomlinson. Be that as it may, Northern Ireland has been almost first off the mark in acquiring candidates: both the Rev. Ian Paisley and Ulster Unionist leader Harry West have announced that they will stand.



Harry West

On the previous Tuesday, Parliament had debated a report from Willem Schuijt (CD/NL) on the European Community's information policy in regard to preparations for European elections. Some 4 m.u.a. (between £1.7 m. and £2.6 m., depending on the kind of exchange rate used) has been in principle set aside in 1977: 1 m.u.a. for the Commission, 1 m.u.a. for the Parliament's information service and 2 m.u.a. for the political groups. Much of the debate was thus taken up with conflicting views as to how the money should be spent. Brian Lenihan (EPD/Ir) did not want it wasted on "well-meaning European groups" or "bureaucrats



Dr Paisley

preparing propaganda leaflets in Brussels or Luxembourg", but allocated to "the practising politicians of the Community, and the press and radio of the Community". Winnie Ewing (Ind/UK), by contrast, was "absolutely opposed" to giving money to political parties (though "if the others are going to get it, then I want my share") but wanted to spend it bringing local papers to see the Parliament.

On one thing, however, all were agreed: that the Commission and Parliament should coordinate their efforts; and Commissioner Natali promised that the Commission at any rate would be able to present its proposals by March 20.

## Question Time

### Driving licences

The Council has already started work on the proposal for a "European driving licence", John Tomlinson told Parliament at Question Time on Wednesday, February 9. But "very complicated decisions" were involved, which did not make it possible to say when the licences would be introduced.

### Japanese steel

Total Japanese steel exports in 1977 should not be such as to occasion damage to the Community, John Tomlinson told Parliament in reply to a question from Pierre-Bernard Couste. But Mr Couste was not satisfied: what about exports by the smaller Japanese steel firms not covered by the agreement, which together accounted for 44 per cent of the total exports? John Osborn (Con/UK) also pressed the Council on exports of special steels. Don't worry, was the reply; the Japanese assurances covered smaller producers as well.

### Vague on Greece

The negotiations for the accession of Greece to the European Community turned to questions of substance at a meeting on December 10 last year, John Tomlinson told Kai Nyborg (EPD/DK). One ministerial meeting was being held every quarter, and one at deputy level every month. But when Greece would join he could not say. "The negotiations have only just started. The situation is vague."

### Exchange rates

The Council is currently studying the ideas on exchange rates put forward by the Dutch Finance Minister, Mr Duisenberg, last year. These involve the creation of a framework for co-ordinating exchange rate policies between the Nine, and the concept of "target zones" within a multi-currency system rather than the old "snake in the tunnel".

### Tax on newspapers

Michael Yeats (EPD/Irl) asked the Commission to justify the introduction of a 10% VAT rate for newspapers. In reply Commissioner Richard Burke explained that the proposed Sixth VAT Directive agreed by the Council in December 1976 allowed member states to fix the VAT level to be charged, but did not allow either a zero or an unworkably low rating. He felt the 10% VAT rating for newspapers was acceptable despite the soaring costs facing the newspaper industry.

### Nationalisation Bill

In reply to Lord Bessborough (Con/UK) who questioned the legality under the EEC Treaty of the Act reorganising the British aerospace, shipbuilding and ship repair industries, Commissioner Etienne Davignon replied that the Treaty did not prejudice property-ownership of member states. The Commission, he said, is concerned that Community industries, whether state- or privately owned, uphold the EEC Treaty.

### Relations with China

Since the visit of Sir Christopher Soames to China in June 1975 regular contacts had been made between the Commission and the Chinese mission in Brussels, Commissioner Davignon told Tam Dalyell (Soc/UK). In reply to a suggestion from Cornelis Berkhouwer (Lib/NL) that relations with China had slowed down, the Commissioner stated they were "as good as ever".

## All we can do is nudge

The advice given to young MP Roy Jenkins thirty years ago that the second speech is more difficult than the first was borne out in Luxembourg on February 8 when he presented the Commission's programme for 1977. But how, as he himself asked, can the Commission have a programme, for however much it proposes, the Council of Ministers disposes? So the programme largely comprises the fields where it will do its best to nudge the Council forward. This brings the Commission and Community face to face with the main and now persistent problem: the self-reinforcing divergence of the member countries' economies, with the stubborn persistence of high unemployment (a growing part of which is structural), high though varying rates of inflation, and the widening gap

between economic performances.

There could, President Jenkins suggested, be various improvements in existing Community instruments — making the various funds more flexible and larger — and new forms of mutual aid, but "there is no costless way of mastering the forces of divergence . . . if economic union is to be more than a phrase, both the richer and the poorer nations of the Community must accept the reality of the Community's role".

Into this framework the new Commission is hoping to integrate the problem of outdated structures in the farming sector into wider Community economic and social policies — as Sicco Mansholt had proposed nearly 10 years ago, Mr. Jenkins reminded his audience.

## Greek membership - how soon?

If there was one persistent theme running through the debate of Thursday, February 10, on Commission President Jenkins' Tuesday speech it was the growing controversy over Greek membership.

Opinions did not entirely follow the political spectrum. Renato Sandri (It) for the Communists and Ludwig Fellermaier (Ger) for the Socialists were both for Greece; Alfred Bertrand (Bel) for the Christian Democrats, Brian Lenihan (Ir) for the EPD and Sir Peter Kirk (UK) for the Conservatives urged caution. But Cornelis Berkhouwer (NL) for the Liberals was vehemently in favour. "It's taken us a few years to get used to the British", he said, "but we've managed it!"

As Mr. Fellermaier noted at the start of the debate, Greek membership is a matter of balancing political gains with possible economic costs. Neither he nor Mr. Sandri had doubts that the cost should be paid: indeed the promise of Community membership, noted Mr. Sandri, was one of the weapons used to reintroduce democracy in both Greece, Portugal and now Spain.

"We cannot let them down."

That Greece could soon be followed by other countries, however, was one of the points made by those urging caution. Mr. Bertrand wanted the future size of the Community to be tacked as a single problem rather than in bits. More forthrightly, Brian Lenihan advocated "putting our own house in order first"; and was supported by Sir Peter: "we have only just recovered from the last enlargement". Bringing in the new Mediterranean countries, he went on, would increase the economic divergence which President Jenkins had said was the Community's main problem. "How much will the Regional Fund have to be increased?"

President Jenkins himself, in his summing up speech (which was much better, and better received, than the one on Tuesday) appeared to incline to caution. The Community was committed to Greek membership; but there should be a consistent policy in view of other applications. "Do not overlook the economic difficulties", he concluded.

## Grapes under dark glass

A clash of interest between Britain and Italy became evident during the debate following Vera Squarcialupi's (Comm/It) oral question on the disposal of titanium dioxide at sea. This practice presents a critical problem for those countries bordering closed seas such as the Mediterranean, but is a question of less urgency for Britain as effluent wastes can be more easily absorbed by the North Sea. Mrs. Squarcialupi and her Italian colleagues felt the problem called for a Community directive applicable to all Member States. Lord Bethell (Con/UK) replied that to harmonise legislation in this way would be like compelling French and Italian vine-growers to place dark glass over their grapes in order to equalise the quality of their grapes with those grown in Britain. John Tomlinson, President-in-Office of the Council, expressed his confidence that a redraft of a Commission proposal for a directive, originally rejected by the Council, would be accepted by the Environment Ministers in May.

## Sack the lot of 'em!

The "Queen's speech" debate on Thursday, February 10, was again enlivened by one of Liberal spokesman Cornelis Berkhouwer's (NL) flamboyant

interventions. He had recently crossed the Luxembourg/Belgian border, he told the House, ("in a little Volkswagen — Liberals can't afford any more") and had been asked by customs officers if he had anything to declare. And both countries were in the Community and were even supposed to have monetary union. "We've got to get rid of these people!"

"But when I go to Britain", he went on, "my God! I've got to go through immigration!" "There were separate officers for British, Community, Commonwealth and so on. "We've got to get rid of these people too." This was what the man in the street saw; he didn't want to know about such things as the "snake in the tunnel" (though a Channel tunnel he might understand).

## Roses smell sweeter

Lord Walston (Soc/UK), who leaves the European Parliament this month, seemed to have the happier aspects of retirement on his mind on Thursday, February 10.

Deploping the "annual ritual dance" of the agricultural price review, he had a novel solution to the problems of surpluses and redundant rural communities. "Let's have farmers growing roses rather than cabbages", he suggested. At least a rose mountain will smell better than one of cabbages.

# Unofficial Journal

One of the handicaps from which the European Parliament regularly suffers is the disruption of both its work and its membership by national general elections. In the last year we have had the Italians, then the Germans, and now (for the third time in as many years) the Danes. On Wednesday, February 9, when Parliament was due to hold the all-important fishing debate (see p.1) the point was brought home sharply: Commissioner Gundelach couldn't come down in the morning — he had been up until 5 a.m. at the Council of Ministers; while Parliament's rapporteur Niels Anker Kofoed (Lib/DK) had to get back in the afternoon to his election campaign.

The House adjourned for about a quarter of an hour to sort it out. The Danish Government had refused to put a plane at Mr. Kofoed's disposal — could the Parliament provide one? But nothing seemed to be available. In the end he stayed for the afternoon, and even into the evening to introduce a second report on sardines. And, for his pains, the poor chap has possibly lost his EP seat!

Apart from all this, the Conservatives were looking at the Danish elections with particular anxiety. All that has prevented the Group from being a purely national one (a position hitherto occupied only by the Gaullists in the Parliament's history) has been the presence of the ebullient Dane Erhard Jakobsen — and even he is a Centre Democrat rather than a Conservative, and joined as a rebel from the Socialists. Would he be wiped out, as the polls predicted? In the event, the Group has been more than saved: Jakobsen's party has tripled its vote, and the Danish Conservatives themselves might even be back in the European Parliament, putting the Conservatives Group one Member up on the Communists and the EPD, for at present they hold 17 seats apiece.

## Never heard of it

There used to be a host of stories about recruits into the British Army being asked to state their religion. If you were anything out of the ordinary — agnostic, for example — you were put down C. of E. and had to attend Church Parade regardless.

It was much the same getting into the European Parliament's Political Affairs Committee at Lancaster House on February 14 and 15. If you were not already on a fairly arbitrary list, you had to prove identity and status; and the choices available were fairly limited. For example, as far as those on the door were concerned, the European Parliament as such did not appear to exist: you could be Council, Commission, or attached to one of the national delegations. A member of the Information Department was thus obliged to forswear his contract of service and go on the list as "UK"; while Richard Moore of the Liberal Group Secretariat, having tried vainly to explain that the Parliament is organised in

political groups, not nationalities, eventually maintained supranationality and picked the Commission. European Integration Department of the F.O., where are you?

## Vintage Albion

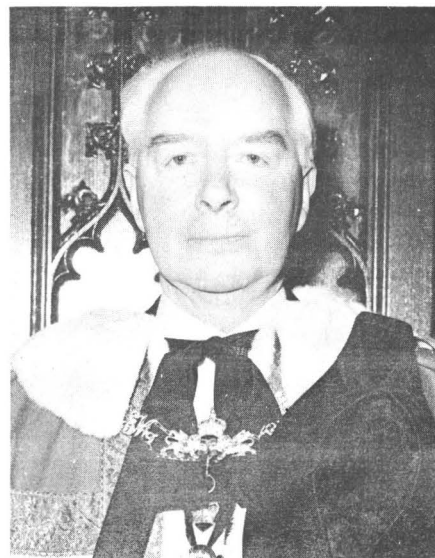
But the F.O. is capable of the most fiendish cunning when it matters. Sharp on the heels of last month's news that the British Government is to be taken to court by the Commission for taxing imported wine more heavily than "similar domestic products" (see EPR 32), came the claims from US Vice-President Mondale's entourage that Callaghan had given them a dinner of such sumptuousness that the British public would have risen up in red revolution had they known.

The complete answer to both embarrassments seems to have been found at the January meeting of the Community Foreign Affairs Ministers in London. Sources close to the Italians and French are reported as saying that they didn't mind the British no-nonsense approach of finishing the business a day early — indeed they liked it. But they hoped that next time it wouldn't be felt necessary to serve English wine at dinner.

## Rabies — Britain hits back?

Terror stalked the corridors of the European Parliament on Wednesday, February 9, with rumours of a hitherto unknown disease sweeping London. The British papers in the press room all had headlines running something like: "Ennals Vaccination Shock". What on earth, one worried French correspondent asked an English colleague, was ennals? We assure he found the answer reassuring.

## Labour's choice



Lord Brimelow

The Parliamentary Labour Party's choice of its European Parliament delegation seems to prove that free elections change very little from nomination by the party's powers that be. Of the eleven Members of the House of Commons who wanted to remain on the delegation, two — Tom Ellis from Wales and Bob Mitchell from the South — were unopposed and seven of the other nine were re-elected. In the West Midlands, where Betty Boothroyd stood down, Bob Edwards led a field of

three candidates. Only in London were there disappointments for sitting members, for Ron Brown and Christopher Price beat both Bill Molloy and Frank Tomney as well as two other candidates.

The electoral system was that each region was allotted one or two places, according to the relative number of Labour Members of the Commons, but the whole of the PLP could vote for one or two candidates in each region. With rumours that the Government is contemplating a list system for European elections next year, could the PLP system provide a suitable precedent?

The Lords, appropriately, did not proceed to an election to replace the retiring Lord Walston. Lord Brimelow, formerly head of the Foreign Office, was the only volunteer.

## Three Freudian slips

"47. Throughout the year the Commission maintained contacts with the organisations repressing workers and employers at European level."

(from the Commission's 10th General Report on the Activities of the European Communities, p. 36)

"From this standpoint, for example, the differences in population per Member produced by the Assembly's draft convention should be acceptable . . . ."

(from Minutes of Evidence taken before the House of Commons Select Committee on Direct Elections, p. 148)

". . . .With your support and that of British . . . er . . . European public opinion, we can persuade the governments to accept them (Commission proposals)".

(Commission President Jenkins, European Parliament, Thursday February 10)

## With friends like that

No fewer than four separate BBC television programmes — *Newsday*, *Newsday (Westminster)*, *Nationwide* and *Tonight* — to say nothing of the *News*, were out in Luxembourg during Parliament's February sitting, queuing up to interview the notables and, to mutual surprise, meeting in the Members' Bar. Two ex-Panorama girls, Angela Pope and Jenny Monahan, who had left the Beeb the week before to make a documentary for the Commission, said they felt almost too much at home; while Parliament's audio-visual man Steve Wright says introducing BBC programmes to each other is one of his favourite games (but then he came from Independent Television, who weren't there at all).

*Nationwide* was doing a profile of Conservative Member Hugh Dykes, who thus acquired, like John Prescott before him with *World in Action*, a personal entourage of telemen; but this sort of thing does not seem to make for popularity with colleagues. As Dykes emerged from his official car to be filmed arriving at the Schuman building, spontaneous booing broke out. Back in the car he got for take two, with the same results. The producer only got what he wanted after Dykes had used his powers of invective on the hecklers — not Socialists, of course, but fellow Members in the Conservative Group.

K.P.G.