



## Consumers win with 2 per cent

After nearly two days of debate, the European Parliament overturned the controversial recommendation of its Agriculture Committee for a five per cent increase in farm prices. Instead it voted for a more modest two per cent, which is in line with the Commission's proposals for the coming year.

At the end of the debate on March 16, it was an alliance of Socialists, Communists and European Conservatives which saw to it that the voice of the consumer prevailed. But things could well have gone the other way; the absence of a number of French members (because of their national elections) considerably thinned out the ranks of the five-per-centers.

The crucial vote on amendment 22 (a total of more than 50 amendments were tabled) brought a spontaneous outburst of cheering from the left of the House, even causing President Emilio Colombo to peer over the top of his glasses and comment on the "grande gioia" the decision had provoked.

It was a result which represented something of a personal triumph for Mark Hughes (Soc/UK), the agricultural committee's rapporteur, who had opposed his own committee's five per cent recommendation. Vindicated by the outcome, he was to be found in the press room afterwards toasting himself with champagne. There were also tributes from a number of his colleagues for his contribution to the debate as rapporteur — though he also managed to earn a good-natured rebuke from President Colombo for being "troppo nuancé" when making one voting recommendation as rapporteur.



Mark Hughes

Hughes' response when next called upon was an emphatic: "Negative! against! reject!"

Hughes was not alone in disagreeing with his committee. The Budgets Committee rapporteur Henri Caillavet (Lib/Fr) found himself in exactly the reverse situation, of wanting a rise of more than four per cent while his committee opted for two. James Scott-Hopkins (Con/UK) suggested that the two rapporteurs needed only to swap committees to be as "happy as sandboys."

The two rapporteurs' positions, however, did reflect the deep divisions in the House, with members like Bob Mitchell (Soc/UK) and Lord Bruce (Soc/UK) saying Commission proposals to hold down prices did not go far enough and that there should be no increase in the price of products in surplus (a point made in the two per cent amendment).

At the other extreme Winnie Ewing (Ind/UK) turned out to be one of the staunchest defenders of the five per cent figure. Somewhere in the middle on the issue, John Corrie (Con/UK) summed up the basic dilemma on farm prices — that too high an increase would put up consumer prices and lead to greater surpluses, whilst too low a rise would force farmers to produce more to make up the lost income and would also lead to surpluses.

Mark Hughes' view was that the gap between farm income in different countries and on different types of farm was growing, thus undermining one of the aims of the CAP. Nevertheless, people in the Community generally (even if not in the UK) did appreciate the price stability the CAP had brought and this was worth preserving.

One of the problems which most exercised Agriculture Commissioner, Finn Gundelach, was the question of MCA's — those compensatory amounts paid out as part of the "green" currency system to enable the CAP to function in this era of floating exchange rates. The Commission wants these phased out over a seven-year period, though the House called for this to be done over two to three years. And there was criticism from the Commissioner of Britain's recent decision to devalue the "green" pound unilaterally. He said such moves made it impossible for the Community bodies to carry out a real price review.

Defending the two per cent proposal Mr Gundelach pointed out that this would effectively mean a rise to the farmer of considerably more. And this would be on top of what farmers in certain countries (i.e. Britain) would be getting through devaluation of their green currencies.

## Artificial walls are out

Industry Commissioner Viscount Davignon came in for some tough questioning on March 14 on Commission measures to deal with the crisis in the steel industry. It led to Question Time being followed by an emergency debate on the subject which turned mainly on the arguments for and against protectionism.

Tom Ellis (Soc/UK) said the situation in the industry was "desperate" and if appropriate action was not taken Nemesis would overtake us. John Prescott

(Soc/UK) pointed out that the Commission had the right under the ECSC Treaty to intervene to regulate the market in cases of manifest crisis. John Osborn (Con/UK) also wondered whether a policy of "Buy European" was necessarily wrong, though like Tom Normanton (Con/UK) he had doubts about the value of state interventionism and cited the losses of the British Steel Corporation.

But Commissioner Davignon was firm in rejecting outright protectionist policies. It would mean sheltering behind an artificial

wall, pretending the outside world did not exist. Europe needed to reach an agreement with third countries and was well on the way to doing so. This would enable those countries to continue to export, but under certain price conditions, so that Europe had a breathing space to restructure.

The Commissioner said it was too early to speak of an upturn on the Community market but arrangements made with third countries over recent months were being respected and it was now accepted that steel could not be dumped in Europe.

## Question Time

### Cruelty to animals

In response to a question from Sir Brandon Rhys Williams (Con/UK), Commissioner Gundelach outlined a number of important Community measures on the transport and slaughter of live animals. Rules controlling the conditions for slaughter were introduced in 1974; and the Commissioner told the House that successful infringement proceedings had been brought in two cases.

As far as the transport of live animals between Community countries was concerned, a new directive would be coming into force on 1 August this year. Moreover, the Commission would soon be proposing an even tougher implementing regulation — though adequate rules existed, "there is something lacking: that is, efficient control". This would have to be a Community responsibility.

### Cancer and margarine

Is there any link between eating margarine and getting cancer? A recent study in Germany has indicated that there might be; but so far, Commissioner Brunner told Michael Herbert (EPD/Irl), there was no scientific proof. But there was a suspicion that there might be a link between cancer and the colouring matter in margarine, so that the Commission would be carrying out a study. Bob Mitchell (Soc/UK) suggested that the best way to deal with the matter would be to reduce the price of butter.

### Tinned mandarins

Why is Britain obliged to put a tax of 22% on imports of tinned mandarin oranges from Spain? In brief, because the Treaty of Accession says so, Commissioner Gundelach told Michael Shaw (Con/UK). In practice, the Community had been trying

to negotiate arrangements with Spain which would have eliminated the duty, but, so far, political problems in Spain had made it impossible. However, now that Spain had "clearly declared her intention of becoming a member of the Community, we can now in a pragmatic way turn to solving such specific trade issues".

### Amnesty International

President Andersen told Bob Edwards (Soc/UK) that the Foreign Ministers of the Nine had worked on the latest report of Amnesty International and attached great importance to the organisation's work; but was not in a position to take action on the issues raised. He told Gerald L'Estrange (CD/Irl) that Russian violation of human rights had been debated at Belgrade and that he would raise the subject with his own government.

### Music Makers

President Jenkins told Hanna Walz (CD/Ger) that in 1977 £2,000 was allocated for the launching of the European Youth Orchestra which would consist of up to 147 members from all member states. He told Andrea Mascagni (Comm/It) that he had no details about the selection procedures used by individual member states.

### In camera

President Jenkins agreed with Tam Dalyell (Soc/UK) that it was not appropriate to publish details concerning legal proceedings taken against individual member states, but felt that leaks such as that which occurred concerning the UK Temporary Employment Subsidies could not always be avoided.

### South Africa

It is up to the member states themselves to ensure that the code of conduct for

European firms in South Africa is respected, President Andersen told Lord Reay (Con/UK). He went on to explain that firms should report on such matters as pay structure, use of migrant labour and the promotion prospects of black employees. He assured Lord Reay that he would report to the House on progress made.

### Where is the 5th directive?

Parliament's Legal Affairs committee will soon be asked for its opinion on a revised "fifth directive" on European company law, Commissioner Brunner told Charles Fletcher-Cooke (Con/UK). He hoped Parliament could debate the matter in the Autumn. But Mr Fletcher-Cooke noted that the Committee had already been promised the document by the end of last year.

### 100% in February

Commission and Parliament were in complete agreement on the "Bills" discussed at the February sitting, Commissioner Tugendhat reported on Monday March 13. On eleven out of the twelve Parliament had made no amendments. On the marking and display of foodstuffs the Commission had changed its proposals to take account of the report by Lady Fisher (Soc/UK).

### Tintin, we need you

Although education policy lies outside the framework of the Treaty of Rome, Commissioner Guido Brunner agreed with Carlo Meintz (Lib/Lux) on Tuesday, March 14 that action was needed to stimulate interest in the Community among its 50 million schoolchildren. Europe should constitute a subject in the curriculum in its own right, he went on, and tailored to suit the individual requirements of each member state. He recalled days when cartoon characters like Tintin were used as a vehicle for European ideas.

## European Parliament Committees 1978/9: UK Members and Chairmen

On March 14 membership of the committees for the new parliamentary year was decided. The table below shows the chairman and the British members of each committee, total membership of which is usually 35.

### POLITICAL AFFAIRS

Chairman: Alfred Bertrand (CD/Bel)  
Charles Fletcher-Cooke (Con)  
William Hamilton (Soc)  
Russell Johnston (Lib)  
Bob Mitchell (Soc)  
John Prescott (Soc)  
Lord Reay (Con)  
Geoffrey Rippon (Con)

### LEGAL AFFAIRS

Chairman: Sir Derek Walker-Smith (Con/UK)  
Lord Ardwick (Soc)  
Lord Brimelow (Soc)  
Winifred Ewing (Ind)  
Charles Fletcher-Cooke (Con)  
Sir Geoffrey de Freitas (Soc)  
Michael Shaw (Con)

### ECONOMIC AND MONETARY

Chairman: Ernest Glinne (Soc/Bel)  
Lord Ardwick (Soc)  
Tom Ellis (Soc)  
Tom Normanton (Con)  
John Prescott (Soc)  
Sir Brandon Rhys Williams (Con)

### JOINT COMMITTEE — GREECE

Lord Bethell (Con)  
George Cunningham (Soc)

### BUDGETS

Chairman: Erwin Lange (Soc/Ger)  
Lord Bessborough (Con)  
Lord Bruce of Donington (Soc)  
Tam Dalyell (Soc)  
William Hamilton (Soc)  
James Scott-Hopkins (Con)  
Michael Shaw (Con)

### SOCIAL, EMPLOYMENT, EDUCATION

Chairman: Frans van de Gun (CD/NL)  
George Cunningham (Soc)  
Gwyneth Dunwoody (Soc)  
Lady Fisher of Rednal (Soc)  
Ralph Howell (Con)  
Elaine Kellett-Bowman (Con)  
Sir Brandon Rhys Williams (Con)

### AGRICULTURE

Chairman: Niels Kofoed (Lib/Dk)  
Lord Brimelow (Soc)  
John Corrie (Con)  
Gwyneth Dunwoody (Soc)  
Ralph Howell (Con)  
Mark Hughes (Soc)  
James Scott-Hopkins (Con)

### JOINT COMMITTEE — TURKEY

Bob Edwards (Soc)  
Jim Spicer (Con)

### REGIONAL AND TRANSPORT

Chairman: Lord Bruce of Donington (Soc/UK)  
John Corrie (Con)  
Winifred Ewing (Ind)  
Alan Fitch (Soc)  
Mark Hughes (Soc)  
Russell Johnston (Lib)  
Elaine Kellett-Bowman (Con)  
John Osborn (Con)

### ENVIRONMENT, HEALTH, CONSUMERS

Chairman: Johanna Krouwel-Vlam (Soc/NL)  
Lord Bethell (Con)  
Ron Brown (Soc)  
Bob Edwards (Soc)  
Tom Ellis (Soc)  
Lord Kennet (Soc)  
Lord St Oswald (Con)  
Jim Spicer (Con)

### ENERGY AND RESEARCH

Chairman: Hanna Walz (CD/Ger)  
Lord Bessborough (Con)  
Ron Brown (Soc)  
Tam Dalyell (Soc)  
Bob Edwards (Soc)  
Alan Fitch (Soc)  
Bob Mitchell (Soc)  
Tom Normanton (Con)  
John Osborn (Con)

### EXTERNAL ECONOMIC RELATIONS

Chairman: Gabriel Kaspereit (EPD/F)  
Lord Brimelow (Soc)  
Lord Castle (Soc)  
Alan Fitch (Soc)  
Lord Kennet (Soc)  
Lord St Oswald (Con)  
James Scott-Hopkins (Con)  
Jim Spicer (Con)

### DEVELOPMENT AND COOPERATION

Chairman: Colette Flesch (Lib/Lux)  
Lord Castle (Soc)  
Lady Fisher of Rednal (Soc)  
Sir Geoffrey de Freitas (Soc)  
Lord Reay (Con)  
Lord St Oswald (Con)

### RULES OF PROCEDURE AND PETITIONS

Chairman: Silvio Leonardi (Comm/It)  
George Cunningham (Soc)  
William Hamilton (Soc)  
Lord Reay (Con)  
Sir Derek Walker-Smith (Con)

## The issues for 1978/9

Emilio Colombo (CD/It) was re-elected President of the European Parliament by acclamation on Tuesday March 14. On resuming the chair, he told the House that four main tasks faced the Community in the coming year.

**First**, a date had to be set for the first direct elections to the European Parliament.

**Secondly**, the Community had to surmount its economic problems, particularly youth unemployment that was leading to growing violence.

**Thirdly**, a reform of the Community's own decision-taking structure was needed, so that the economic and social problems could be tackled effectively.

**Fourthly**, there was the question of prospective Greek, Portuguese and Spanish membership.



## We need solidarity

The Community should do all in its power to eradicate such acts of terrorism as the kidnapping of Aldo Moro. This was the verdict of the House when it held an urgent debate on the subject on Friday March 17. Such acts were an attack on the fabric of society, said Michael Yeats (EPD/Irl). Charles Fletcher-Cooke (Con/UK) urged the Community to act as one. If the terrorists escaped into another member state they should not be 'shuffled out as an embarrassment' but should be dealt with appropriately.

## Dial-a-data-base

'Knowledge is strength.' This is how Werner Zywiets (Lib/Ger) saw the importance of EURONET which the Commission hopes to turn into a Community-wide database for scientific and technical information publicly accessible through national post and telecommunication services. Bob Edwards (Soc/UK) pointed out the need to be able to compete with IBM and ITT, two of the most powerful companies in the world. Lord Bessborough (Con/UK) urged the Community to publicise EURONET to industry as a byword for efficiency. Commissioner Antonio Giolitti felt that the idea of involving national postal authorities would bring home the reality of Europe.

## Direct elections: when?

Who has it that two dates for the first direct elections to the European Parliament are under discussion: 17-20 May 1979, and the 7-10 June 1979. Is this true, Schelto Matijn (Soc/NL) asked President in Office of the Council K.B. Andersen? But the Danish Foreign Minister would only say, as he said in February, that his guess would be the Spring of 1979.

## Council pressed on Regional Fund

**There was vigorous condemnation of the Council of Ministers on March 17 for its failure to take a decision on improving the operation of the Regional Fund and bolstering regional policy.**

The toughest talk came from Lord Bruce of Donington (Soc/UK) the Regional Committee's new chairman, who said Parliament should demand that the conciliation procedure was brought into effect if there were any further delays.

He deplored the fact that no member of the Council was present for the debate and pointed out that when agriculture was the topic you could hardly squeeze the Council into a charabanc. Sometimes they even came by helicopter. Not so, unfortunately,

when it was regional policy. It all represented "a funny sense of priorities".

Richie Ryan (CD/Irl) stressed that the money allocated for regional policy was minimal. There was a need not just to increase the size of the fund but also for a clear transfer of resources "to show we really are a Community that cares for one another".

Strong support for these views came from Commissioner Giolitti, who expressed the Commission's solidarity.

## A European Foundation for closer contact

**At the end of last year the European Council (that is, the "summit" conference of the Nine's government leaders) decided to set up a "European Foundation". Its object was to be the promotion of a "citizen's Europe" through increased contacts by people from the different countries.**

On Tuesday March 14 the European Parliament gave a general welcome to the idea and called on the Commission to produce the appropriate proposals. Rapporteur Russell Johnston (Lib/UK) emphasised that the idea was *not* to create a new bureaucracy duplicating existing work, pointing out that "there are many gaps to fill." This, however, did not convince Socialist spokesman Horst Seefeld (Ger) — what was needed to create

a "citizen's Europe" he said, was not a new organisation but better policies.

But Conservative leader Geoffrey Rippon (UK) noted that over half of the British House of Commons had signed a motion he had tabled on the subject. Even the most anti-federalist could not object to a body whose aim would be greater understanding, with the emphasis on youth activities, university exchanges, town-twinning and the like.

## We'll do it our way, thank you

**The United States was accused of trying to dictate nuclear policy to the rest of the Western world during a debate on March 16 on the reprocessing of radio-active waste.**

Lord Bessborough (Con/UK) said it ill became President Carter to pillory Britain, France and Germany for developing their own reprocessing facilities — particularly while the United States continued to invest heavily in fast-breeder reactors and allied technologies. And he strongly criticised the American President's campaign to try to stop construction of the British Nuclear Fuels' reprocessing plant at Windscale.

There was wide support in the House for this view. Ron Brown (Soc/UK) said it was no good President Carter making threats if he couldn't come up with an answer to problems caused partly by America's high consumption of natural resources.

While not ignoring the dangers of the so-called "plutonium economy", members felt that the nuclear option was much safer

than was generally supposed. It was a means to independence from third country suppliers and, as CND veteran Bob Edwards (Soc/UK) pointed out, without a cheap source of energy for the future, it would be impossible for Europeans to maintain their standard of living.

The House agreed almost unanimously to back Commission proposals to set up a committee of experts to help the Commission implement a "plan of action" on nuclear waste and on setting up an ad hoc committee for reprocessing of nuclear fuels.

As Energy Commissioner Guido Brunner said, we were no longer dealing with something in the future. The nuclear issue was with us now and decisions had to be taken.

## Go-ahead for isoglucose industry

**Cautious support was given to the nascent "isoglucose" industry by the European Parliament in a debate on March 16.**

James Scott-Hopkins (Con/UK) said he did not want to see this industry expand hugely but isoglucose (a sugar substitute based on imported maize) was a cheap product that was the result of technological progress. Production should not be halted in mid-tracks for lack of profitability. And he called on the House to support Commission proposals to introduce export rebates for isoglucose.

His report was adopted though concern was expressed by several members that isoglucose could represent a threat to

Community beet producers.

The House also supported Commission proposals to increase the quota of sugar eligible for export refunds and to reimburse the costs of storing a wider range of sugars.

In reply, Commissioner Gundelach agreed that the present sugar surplus could not be eliminated easily and pointed to the need for international commodity agreements on sugar as the only long-term solution.

*As from next month, EPR will be in a new, improved format. As Direct Elections to the European Parliament approach we are hoping to increase the circulation among those who will be involved in the elections, politically or otherwise. Copies can be obtained monthly through the post, entirely free, from EPR, 20 Kensington Palace Gardens, London W8 4QQ.*

# Unofficial Journal

A certain amount of election fever was about in Strasbourg as the European Parliament assembled for its March sitting — but not very much. You had to look very carefully indeed at the bill-boards to see any signs that political power in France hung in the balance. No car-stickers, no discarded leaflets in the streets, no loud-speaker vans. Presumably, no-one was bothering very much in Alsace which is traditionally a Gaullist stronghold.

Inside the Parliament, too, there was almost complete calm as the annual elections for President and Vice-Presidents approached. Last year political groups were huddled in caucuses for hours on end as three major candidates contested the Presidency. This year there was no contest: last year's winner Emilio Colombo was re-elected unopposed.

What interest there was, therefore, centred on the Vice-Presidencies: Independent Winnie Ewing built on the precedent she had set last year by once again forcing a ballot for the twelve places. In the end, she got 38 votes (out of a possible 123) — slightly less than last year. But bettered last year by making two ballots necessary before she was eliminated.

There continue, therefore, to be two British Vice-Presidents: Socialist Sir Geoffrey de Freitas, and Conservative James Scott-Hopkins, both of whom were re-elected.

## Poacher and Gamekeeper

The appointment of the European Parliament committees for the coming year (see Page 2) has produced one new British chairman: Lord Bruce of Donington (Soc), who takes over the Regional and Transport Committee; and has confirmed one other British Member as one of the doyens of chairmen: Sir Derek Walker-Smith (Con) who remains at the head of the Legal Affairs Committee. Like Budgets Committee chairman Erwin Lange (Soc/Ger), he first took over the job in 1975 (though Lange had previously chaired another Committee, the Economic and Monetary).

It is, indeed, unlikely that many Members of the European Parliament would now believe that Sir Derek was once a leading opponent of British Community membership. Together with those at the Court of Justice he is now, instead, a pillar of the Community's legal establishment.

## Vale

The British delegation to the European Parliament and the Civil Aviation Authority charter plane which has taken them to and from Strasbourg or Luxembourg for the last five years have had something of a love-hate relationship. Back numbers of "Unofficial Journal"

chronicle the times the delegation has been marooned at Strasbourg, driven by bus to Brussels, unexpectedly landed at Stansted or sat all day on the tarmac at Heathrow waiting for the fog to lift.

And yet the delegation's last flight in the HS 748, for the March sitting, was heavy with nostalgia. On arrival at Strasbourg photographers and television cameras recorded emotional scenes as the British Members made a presentation to the air-hostesses. On Friday the Members heard Kim say goodbye on behalf of the crew knowing that the plane was now being sold off.

Affection for the charter was considerably heightened by uncertainty as to what will happen now. The British Airports Authority and the House of Commons are apparently in dispute as to whether the delegation will now have to travel from Gatwick — is it or is it not a "government delegation"? As far as Strasbourg is concerned, the regular flight from Heathrow means stopping off half way at Lille.



## Anything to declare?

It seems that the problems of duty-free liquor, (see last month's UJ), are as nothing to the growing menace of duty-free food. If a written question by Dutch Christian Democrat Harry Notenboom is anything to go by, the Commission is struggling, unsuccessfully, to "stop immediately and completely those practices which allow the sale of board excursion vessels of processed and agricultural products which do not comply with the provisions of Article 9(2) on the Treaty of Rome . . ." The stuff, it seems, is being loaded on board as an export, therefore qualifying for an export subsidy; then, when sold, being allowed back on shore without paying any corresponding import levy.

One of the things Mr Notenboom wants to know is: if all this is legal, what about similar benefits for those who travel by road, rail and air? Perhaps we can soon look forward to the day when the scotch, gin and perfume have been swept from the off-duty shelves at Heathrow — or Victoria station, for that matter — to make room for piles of export-refund-paid butter, beef, durum wheat and tomato concentrate?

## The seat situation

After last month's unveiling of an ambitious project for a building intended by the Luxembourg Government for the Parliament — described by some commentators as a "ski-jump", a "goose" and by some even less approvingly — interest has shifted to Brussels and Strasbourg.

In the former city, where the parliamentary committees usually meet, the present building is too small for the needs of the elected Parliament. Negotiations for the renting of several floors of a building belonging to the Banque Lambert were criticised as appearing to prejudice a decision of the member governments — there is an empty space nearby which (some thought hopefully and others suspiciously) could one day see the building of a debating chamber. Determined to observe the Community proprieties, the Belgian Government then came forward with an offer to construct a new committee building nearer the (provisional) Commission and Council buildings and with no scope at all for long-term expansion.

In Strasbourg, plans are under discussion for installing more seats in the Chamber of the Council of Europe building, bringing the total up to 500. This will be enough not only to seat the elected 410 MEPs from the Nine, but those who might also be elected from Greece, Spain and Portugal.

## Swing and rock

Meanwhile, back in Luxembourg, the Government's plans are running into a spot of trouble. The Parliament itself has carefully avoided any commitment to the building. Then the architects of Luxembourg have been annoyed that a French design was chosen. Finally, the staff committee of the European Parliament has demanded to be consulted on the design — after all, they have to work there all year round.

Moreover, a chartered engineer living in Wembley has done some rough calculations from the sectional plans, which he has published in "Building Design".

His conclusions could give aspiring Members of the elected European Parliament cause to think again about their ambitions. There may be "significant structural movement in response to fluctuating wind loads", he writes, with "swing and rock of the council chamber wing . . ." But those who already work on the Kirchberg will probably be terrified out of their wits at the writer's concluding attempt at optimism: "perhaps", he says "there are simply no winds in Luxembourg?"!

## Flower power

But the burning topic in March, of course, was lupins. The flower-loving British so moved the House during the agriculture debate that special measures to help the plant were actually voted through.

(Why? you may ask. Apparently lupins are rich in protein, which can be extruded and spun into roast beef).

Not to be outdone, the Italians made an equally impassioned plea for provolone cheese. Commissioner Gundelach said he'd look at it.

K.P.G.