

Speech by M. Edgar FAURE,
President of the Council of the European Communities.

I am very pleased, Mr. Chairman, to be here today and I should like to begin by telling you how very touched I am by the kind words you have addressed to me personally. A great American humorist once said: "I can live a whole month with a single compliment". So I think that I can survive at least until the end of my term as president. If, then, this occasion is flattering to my ego, it is also a source of emotional satisfaction in that I am now meeting friends of long standing and that to see them again recalls our former struggles and achievements. Without wishing to make any distinction between them and more recent friends, what an occasion this is which brings me together once more with men I have known for a long time, President Rey, President Poher, President Lecour, my friend Genton; turning to my colleagues from the French Parliament to whom I have just referred, I should still like to tell them that, despite so many trials and upheavals, this Europe to which we have always been attached does exist and is going forward.

You have asked me, Mr. Chairman, to join with you in celebrating a tenth anniversary which the Latins amongst us might call the end of your second lustrum. For like other bodies and authorities established under the Treaty of Rome, you have been in existence for ten years, and it is thus an opportunity for you and your guests to think about your institution. I shall no doubt do this with less authority and less precisely than you, but it is a pleasure for me, as President of the Council of Ministers, to find myself on the ground that you have so judiciously chosen.

With regard to your institution, I should like to say a word about its powers, its recruiting and its mission. As regards its powers, it is mainly consultative. To give advice is no negligible task. There cannot be a multiplicity of decision-taking or executive bodies; there is, in the various authorities, division of work. An Opinion is no negligible matter; it is not just a recommendation, and the number of Opinions that you have issued shows the scale of the work entrusted to you. These Opinions are of various kinds and deal with both general issues and economic problems, and in particular social matters, as you have pointed out. Another of their characteristics, which may be assessed in varying ways, is often the extremely short time you are given. Advisory bodies must, however, adjust to giving Opinions very quickly, because life is fast, as we can see today. If we wish these Opinions to be of value, we must sometimes overcome the temptation to indulge in lengthier reflection. In this respect, I would like particularly to thank President Poher for the initiative he took recently in calling the European Parliament at very short notice in order to give the Council of Ministers an important, reasoned Opinion. In the same way that a national parliament must face the demands of urgency

so, too, your Parliament was ready to act within a very short space of time, and I might perhaps say that the speed of the Council itself has not compared so very favourably with the speed it asked of you; but in this way we manage to avoid an accumulation of delays. You have set a good example that I should like to cite before my colleagues here — and which I see they are very willing to accept.

In conclusion, these Opinions must be useful and, from this point of view, I am very much in favour of the suggestions you have made, as they will enable you to follow with greater ease and speed the use to which your Opinions are put. These are all points on which we do need to make progress, and which will improve our organization.

Apart from the question of the competence of your institution, I attach great importance to its methods of recruitment. As you have said, Mr. Chairman, the Committee is not meant to consist of groups of experts; these are also very useful, and we already have them. The Committee should consist of people who carry on with their normal activities, who continue to play their part in our economic and social life but who are willing to give up a good deal of their time — assessed, I am told, at one third — to devote themselves to this great task. It is very important that they should play their part here without ceasing to play their part elsewhere, for this is how they instil in the Committee the state of mind of a European institution; and that observation leads me to speak of your mission.

The Treaty of Rome requires that the various categories of economic and social activity should be represented. What importance may we attach to this term today? Much more, I think, than is suggested by the definition produced by far-sighted minds in 1958. Your activity, based as it is on occupational, economic and social circles in the various countries, centres on three ideas: representation, conciliation, participation. First of all representation; this is the role entrusted to you. You are representative. Yet you also have a conciliatory role because you represent a variety of interests. Some of you represent agriculture (I say this as Minister of Agriculture) but you do not represent farming alone, and you therefore have the opportunity of establishing an overall picture which includes the views of various other economic classes, trade unionists, wage-earners, those who impart drive to the economy, farmers and so on. I have always felt that the present time should not be one of antagonisms. I have adopted the saying of my friend Pierre Masse: "This age must be one of complementary relationships rather than of antagonisms". I quite see that certain events today might lead us to look at this question again. And it is here that we realize that the same Greek stem gave us both "dialogue" and "dialectic", with their connotations of reform and of revolution. Yet I continue to believe that a dialogue is essential and that conciliation is the normal thing today. But even this conciliation, no doubt, presupposes something else, whose importance we may not all have appreciated so far, and that is "participa-

tion". This is indeed a fashionable word, at least in my country, and since we are talking about dialogue, it might also be said that we are witnessing a "dialogue of the deaf". There are a number of people rushing about and saying, "We want to participate", while the authorities against whom they are fulminating reply: "What *we* want is your participation".

Between all these new elements wishing to participate and all the old elements declaring that they want nothing better than to enable the new elements to participate, it would not seem that conciliation is quite impossible. I may perhaps be thought a little bold to have referred too directly to events which as a French minister I have felt so profoundly, but I am sure that there is no one in Europe who is not affected by them.

Since what you have said, Mr. Chairman, authorizes my being a little subjective, may I recall that at the time when I was not a minister and when, therefore, I had time to reflect, I thought I would be able to define the theory of a new social contract which, it seems to me, might have served myself and others well had we let ourselves be guided more by it during the events of the last few months. But it must not be forgotten that we see this function of yours — representation, conciliation and participation, a triple function which enables me to stress the importance of the task entrusted to you, not only in point of fact but as a symbol and not only in the present but in the future — we see it, I say, from a European point of view and as something that we can promote.

Mr. Chairman, with all the authority which stems from your experience and is enhanced by your proposal of a bridge between the activities of trade unions and parliaments, you have pronounced the key term of economic democracy. And I think that no one will contradict when, as President of the Council of Ministers of Europe, I say in reply: We must think in terms of economic democracy and thus of social democracy, and it is important that the Europe we are building, the farmers' Europe and, indeed, the whole of Europe, should be a democratic Europe, not only politically but economically and socially. More particularly, from the point of view of agriculture whose fate my colleagues and I are at present trying to settle, it is quite clear that we could not suggest a European agriculture based on the design known as the mercantilist liberalism of the seventeenth century or on that which, even today, more or less overtly stems from it.

It is also quite clear that if it is in any event impossible for us to disregard the laws of progress and economic rationalism, we cannot, by the same token, disregard the whole social and human aspect of the farming problem of which we were reminded yesterday by qualified delegates, some of whom are here today, and we must not let it be said or thought — and there is, indeed, no reason to entertain such an idea — that Europe is a sort of monster of technocratic capitalism. For I do not think that those here representing so many authorities whose function it is to make and to lead this Europe

can be regarded as the robots of capitalism, as pure technicians of the abstract. Many of us, at least many of the Ministers, come from parliamentary circles and in the case of others from business or trade union circles. I believe that our readiness to make a Europe of economic and social democracy cannot be in doubt. We must be fully conscious of it and, in this connection, the existence of your institution seems very important. We should use it in this light. You referred, Mr. Chairman, to what I said elsewhere and, indeed, I believe that those words have a message for each one of us. If the destruction of Europe were envisaged, none of us would be here today. I do not believe that Europe will be destroyed; it will not be destroyed deliberately and I even believe it will not be destroyed unintentionally; but we must understand the dangers that may beset it. How, then, is it to develop in the future? You have, Mr. Chairman, cited three aspects, all of them indispensable. Basically, the only point at issue is which shall be taken first, even though all three need to be developed, that is an economic Europe, a Europe in the minds of men and a political Europe.

At the outset there were some who felt that the political Europe had to come first; we have tried to make the economic Europe first; it is certain that there cannot be a Europe which is not an economic one and that is why people say that until an attempt has been made to create economic authorities, the lofty dreams remain mere dreams. But I agree with you that there can never be a Europe which is purely economic. And, furthermore, the moment we integrate the economic Europe within the design of an economic and social democracy, it is obvious that we cannot have a purely economic Europe. I used to think that the natural order of things would be the establishment of common economic interests and then a sort of intermediate ideological layer stemming from this economic infrastructure and, above this intermediate layer, the institutional superstructure. Perhaps we shall have to act in a different way and proceed more quickly with the political order. All this can raise various questions, but it is certain that we must adopt a comprehensive approach in promoting this European idea. You said, too, something very true in your speech, which I should like to underline and endorse; perhaps we should lay even greater stress on the possibility that a more wholehearted and rapid realization of Europe would provide the younger generation with an ideal to pursue.

These are the thoughts I was glad to be able to put before this distinguished audience today, speaking both as President in Office of the Council and as one who has for long, I think, worked and striven for Europe and, lastly, as a representative of France.