

United Kingdom, Ireland, Denmark Apply for Community Membership

BRITAIN'S SECOND ATTEMPT to join the European Community and first formal application for "membership" has aroused widespread interest. Even those doubtful about Britain's desirability as a member noted the development of her "European" stance since 1961 (see *European Community* No. 101).

On May 10, after three days of debate, the House of Commons approved the Government's bid for Community membership by a strong majority on both sides of the aisle. The next morning, Sir James Marjoribanks, British Ambassador to the Communities, presented the membership applications of Great Britain and Northern Ireland to the Presidents of the Councils of Ministers of the European Economic Community, the European Atomic Energy Community, and the European Coal and Steel Community.

The Irish Ambassador to the Communities, Sean Morrissey, immediately presented a request for negotiations on the Irish application of July 31, 1961. That evening Kaj Barlebo Larsen, Embassy Counselor and *chargé d'affaires ad interim* of the Danish Mission to the Communities, presented his Government's applications. Renaat van Elslande, President of the EEC Council of Ministers, said that it was an appropriate time to recall the preamble to the Rome Treaty in which the Six invited "the other peoples of Europe who share their ideal to join in their efforts."

The Euratom and EEC Councils of Ministers, meeting on June 5-6, reached agreement on the text of the replies to be presented to the British, Danish, and Irish Ambassadors. The Committee of Permanent Representatives was instructed to seek the earliest possible date for a meeting of the Councils and the Commission to begin a thorough discussion of the problems raised by the requests.

Britain's First Application for Membership?

In 1961, the British Government had requested "negotiations to see if satisfactory arrangements can be made to meet the special interests of the United Kingdom . . ." before deciding to accede to the treaties.

This time, as Prime Minister Wilson told the House of Commons on May 2, "Her Majesty's Government have today decided to make an application under Article 237 of the Treaty of Rome [see box] for Membership. . . ." The Prime Minister reported to the Parliament on the "five conditions" of 1961 (Britain's desire to protect its domestic agriculture and its special relations with the Commonwealth and the European Free Trade Association countries and to retain independence of foreign policy decisions and domestic economic planning). He invited the House to debate all aspects of the question before his Government applied for membership.

Opening the debate on May 8, Prime Minister Wilson stressed first of all the economic aspects of British membership both favorable and unfavorable. "I am not," he said, "and never have been, one of those who see in British entry an automatic solution to our economic problems. . . ." Mr. Wilson totally rejected the view that membership would provide an opportunity for deflating labor costs and gave assurance to the House that pensioners and other people on small fixed incomes would be sheltered from the effects of any food price increase resulting from British membership. The answer to this problem, he said, lay in social policies.

Need to Accept Agricultural Policy Stressed

The Prime Minister made it clear that the Government accepted the common agricultural policy as an essential part of the Community and that Britain must adapt her economy to it. As the financial arrangements for the common agricultural policy now stand, and excluding reverse payments from the Community's Agricultural Fund to British farmers, Mr. Wilson said that Britain would be contributing about 35 per cent of the Fund's total resources. Because this assessment would be twice as high as any other country's, the Prime Minister said he doubted that Britain's prospective partners would consider it equitable.

On the subject of the Commonwealth, Mr. Wilson singled out the problems of New Zealand, which sells 75 per cent of its agricultural output on the British market, and of the West Indies' sugar producers. Since 1963, he said, there had been a growing recognition by the Six that these special cases must be dealt with on a "realistic and imaginative basis," but refused to speculate in advance of negotiations what this basis could be.

On questions of capital movements and regional policy, the Prime Minister was confident that British interests would not be prejudiced. He estimated the overall adverse effect of entry on the balance of payments at roughly \$280 million a year, or \$1.4 billion over a five-year transitional period. However, he added, the anticipated 3 per cent economic growth which should be a consequence of membership would raise Britain's gross national product by some \$2.8 billion a year.

Opposition Asks About Defense and Currency

Sir Alec Douglas-Home, "shadow" Foreign Secretary, opening for the Opposition, congratulated the Prime Minister on his change of attitude towards the Community. He said he was glad to see that the rigid principles of the "five conditions" had been abandoned in favor of certain special problems which could arise from British membership.

"How best can Europe, in a nuclear age, assume greater responsibility for its own defense," Sir Alec queried, "bearing in mind the need on the one hand to retain the backing of the power of America and, on the other, to regain the friendship of the Soviet Union?" The only major clash during the debate occurred the next day when opposition leader Edward Heath suggested that the French and British nuclear forces should "be held in trust for Europe." But he said that this did not mean handing over the British deterrent independently to the other members of the Six, and suggested that the British and French governments should agree to a committee in which members of the enlarged Community could deal with such matters. "If this can be done in NATO—the MacNamara Committee—I see no objection to its being done in the Community," he said. Later in the debate, Foreign Secretary George Brown described these proposals as "dangerous and unwise."

Mr. Heath also urged the Government to seek "Community" policies in other fields, especially economic. He hoped that the Government would not underestimate the importance in the forthcoming negotiations of the role of the pound sterling and Britain's economic position. The solutions to these and other problems had to be sought in the Community context, he said. "There can be no doubt," he added, "that the logical conclusion is to move either *de facto* or *de jure* towards having a

common currency."

James Callaghan, Chancellor of the Exchequer who followed Mr. Heath, said he would not seek such a solution for the sterling question, that it would be better to settle the matter on a world-wide scale. He denied that Community membership must imply a complete reversal for the British Government's position in the past for reforming the world monetary system.

Clear Majority Support from Both Major Parties

"In the application there will be no "ifs" and "buts," no conditions or stipulations. We shall apply to join," George Brown told the House in winding up for the Government. The Rome Treaty, he emphasized, made provision for applications for membership in the Community, but the conditions of entry and any adjustments the entry of a new member may necessitate in the Treaty are subject to agreement between the existing member states and the new applicant. The agreement itself must be ratified by all the contracting states, in accordance with their own constitutional practices. "In the last analysis, our decision to negotiate our entry into the European Communities is basically a political one." In conclusion the Foreign Secretary said: "We aim to join the European Economic Community without delay."

The debate aroused country-wide interest. In contrast to the position five years earlier when Hugh Gaitskell had led the majority of the Labour Opposition against British membership in the Community, except on the famous "five conditions" for joining the Community, the majority of the present Government and Opposition Members of Parliament agree on the overall objective of getting Britain into the Community. They differed mainly on questions of European unity beyond the scope of the Rome Treaties (especially in the area of nuclear defense) and on some economic questions such as a common Community currency. The leading Conservative speakers were bolder than the Government which tended towards a cautious, "wait-and-see" attitude.

When the vote was taken, of the 358 Labour MP's in commons, 36 voted against the Government's bid to enter the European Community with 51 absent or abstaining. On the Opposition benches, 26 out of 259 Conservatives voted against the Government, while 29 abstained or were absent. One of the 12 Liberal MP's, also voted against the motion. (The figures for absence or abstention include the four tellers.)

ARTICLE 237 OF THE EEC TREATY

Any European state may apply to become a member of the Community. It shall address its application to the Council (of Ministers) which, after obtaining the opinion of the Commission, shall take its decision unanimously.

The conditions of admission and the adaptations of this Treaty to which it gives rise shall be the subject of an agreement between the member states and the applicant state. This agreement requires ratification by all the contracting states in accordance with their respective constitutional rules.



Prime Minister Harold Wilson opened the Parliamentary debate on British membership in the European Community. Big Ben stands at the end of the Commons office wing of the Houses of Parliament.
Photo: Courtesy of the British Travel Association, New York

The Taoiseach Delineates Ireland's Goals

The *Taoiseach*, or Prime Minister, of Ireland, Jack Lynch explained to the *Dail* why the Republic of Ireland must accede to the Rome Treaty at the same time Britain joins. His statement stressed the political objectives of the Community and delineated the goals of his Government's negotiations. "The achievement of economic union will carry Europe an appreciable distance along the road to political unity." Mr. Lynch said, reaffirming the belief stated by the previous government that Ireland which "belongs to Europe by history, tradition, and sentiment no less than geography," should participate in this "momentous process."

Although the breakdown in the British negotiations in January 1963 had put Ireland's request in suspense, Mr. Lynch said that the Government had worked towards eventual membership in the Community. "With full regard to the requirements of membership," it had made unilateral tariff cuts which averaged 20 per cent. In December 1965, it had concluded a free-trade agreement with Britain which "provides for the gradual elimination of protection on substantially all our imports from Britain by 1975."

Ireland would need transitional arrangements for its industry to adjust to heightened competition, Mr. Lynch said, but for agriculture, the considerations would be of an "altogether different order." The Community's agricultural policy would assure Irish farmers of "export outlets at stable and, in general, remunerative prices," with the exceptions of wheat and sugar beets, for which Community prices are lower. Because transitional arrangements for British agriculture would affect Ireland, the *Taoiseach* said Ireland would try to "ensure that our views are taken into account before any decisions are taken on British transitional arrangements." Mr. Lynch did not anticipate any "intractable problems."

Liam Cosgrave, leader of the *Fine Gael* opposition party, supported the application, but said that there was insufficient appreciation of the delicate balance which the six members had worked so hard to achieve. Brendan Corish, leader of the Labour Party said "We should fight to get the best conditions for agriculture and to ensure that our people were employed

here and should not have to go to the Continent for employment."

Denmark Accepts Commitment to European Unity

In Copenhagen on May 10, Tyge Dahlggaard, Danish Minister of Trade and of European Integration, explained his country's reasons for renewing its application for membership in the European Community. Although in the past, he reminded the Parliament, the "down-to-earth" Danish people had focused on the commercial advantages of membership, "by entering an extended Common Market we shall become parties to a general striving towards European unity. . . . Two giant powers have grown up around us. We should evidently have good relations with them but great European strength in the development of these good relations will be of the utmost importance to a great civilization like ours."

The government officials have concluded that "there will be no need for Denmark to make any special reservations on our entry into the Communities except for the particular consideration to be given to the Faroe Islands and Greenland. Nor do the government officials think that there will be any need in Denmark's case to apply for special transitional arrangements."

Denmark had helped form the European Free Trade Association, Mr. Dahlggaard recalled, "to exert persistent pressure on the Six to help bring about a wider European solution and to demonstrate the viability of the idea of a free trade area." While the EFTA had benefited the Danish economy, and while Denmark would hope to preserve the good relationships that had developed between the member countries, Danish exports to the EEC have recently shown a tendency to stagnate. Mr. Dahlggaard said this was "probably due both to a certain deceleration of economic activity and to growing discrimination as a result of the implementation of the EEC's customs union."

Membership in the EFTA had stimulated the growth of Danish industrial export industries, but, Mr. Dahlggaard emphasized, as the world's largest exporter of processed agricultural products Denmark continued to depend heavily on agriculture. Thus, "the common agricultural policy must be made applicable to Denmark immediately upon our entry into the Common Market." Because Denmark's agricultural situation "is closely connected with British negotiations," it was "essential" for Denmark to be able to "participate in the negotiations with the Six on this question as soon as possible."

He foresaw no major difficulties in the negotiations for membership, although economic integration would require industry to sustain its "energetic efforts" to modernize. Denmark, Mr. Dahlggaard added, had already enacted a system of taxation based on the value added at each stage of manufacture. Upon joining the Community, Denmark would have to expand social security coverage to apply to migrant workers from Europe and enact supplementary laws on the acquisition of real property. Legislation would also be required to protect "Danish natural amenities against undesirable commercial exploitation by Danish as well as foreign nationals."

The division of Europe into the EEC Six and the EFTA Seven, Mr. Dahlggaard concluded, "has become an economic absurdity. Moreover, this division stands in the way of a political cooperation that can lend real weight to our words in the debate on the survival of our globe."

Reactions in Brussels and in the Capitals

Reactions to the three country's applications for Community membership focused on Britain because, as both Denmark and Ireland acknowledged, the success or failure of Britain's bid would color their own chances now as it did in 1963.

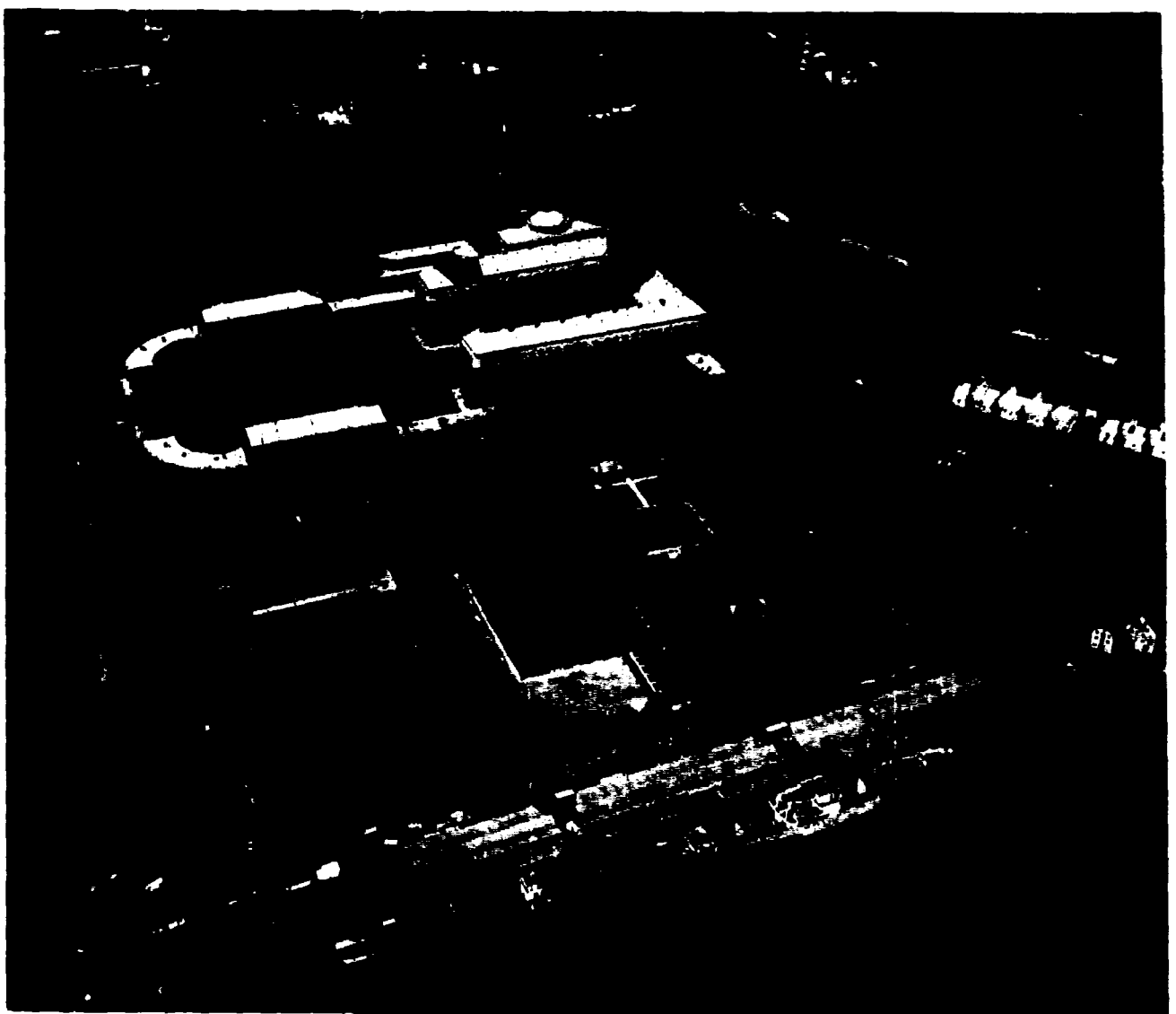
EEC Commission Vice-President Lionello Levi Sandri welcomed Mr. Wilson's move. He noted particularly that Britain accepted the Rome Treaty without reservations, found the Prime Minister's views on Europe "encouraging," and hoped for a satisfactory outcome to the negotiations. EEC Commissioner Sicco L. Mansholt stated in an interview published May 15 in *De Nederlandse Industrie*, "England and the Scandinavian countries, in my opinion, must join if we want to settle a number of problems the Six of us are too small to solve." As examples, he mentioned energy, scientific research, and monetary policy.

The European Parliament, a consistent advocate of British membership in the Community, unanimously adopted, at the May 8-12 session (see page 23), a resolution expressing the hope that the negotiations with Britain "would take place in an atmosphere of frankness and mutual understanding." British membership, "within the terms of the Treaties," would strengthen the Community's march towards political unity, the resolution stated.

Two other unswerving proponents of British and Scandinavian membership in the Community, the Brussels offices of the Free and Christian Trade Union movements also applauded the news, and decided to bring Britain into their counsels immediately. On May 19 in Brussels, the Executive Committee of the European Trade Union Secretariat, International Confederation of Free Trade Unions decided to establish close contacts with the British Trade Unions Council. In the last week of May, Harm Buijer, head of the European Trade Union Sec-



Leinster House, Dublin, is the seat of the Irish Parliament, the Dail. Photo: By permission of the Irish Tourist Board, copyright Dublin. Courtesy of the Embassy of the Republic of Ireland, Washington, D.C.



The Danish Parliament meets in Christiansborg Castle, on an island in Copenhagen harbor.
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retariat, Paolo Vittorelli, vice-president of the Socialist Group in the Italian Senate and Walter Seuffert, member of the German *Bundestag* and of the European Parliament toured Britain for a week, explaining the Community to Labour Party audiences. The Labour Committee for Europe organized their visit.

In Bonn, German Foreign Minister Willy Brandt said that Britain's application offered Europe "a great opportunity," and that the German Government supported the British move. In the Netherlands, a spokesman for the foreign Ministry said that Mr. Wilson's statement marked a great step towards European unity. The Prime Minister of Luxembourg Pierre Werner also expressed his satisfaction, Pierre Harmel, Belgian Foreign Minister commented that "the attitude of the Belgian Government in favor of this application for membership is well known."

Difficulties Not Under-Estimated

Neither Britain nor the present members of the Community under-estimated the difficulties involved in joining a ten-year-old organization like the Common Market with its countless rules and regulations.

In Brussels, Belgian Agricultural Minister Paul Heger observed that the negotiations would prove difficult because of the differences between the British and the Community farm-support systems. In Paris, French President Charles de Gaulle also spoke of the difficulties Britain expected to face under the common agricultural policy and the other regulations of the past decade.

However, he said at his press conference on May 16: "The movement that currently seems to be bringing Britain to link

herself with Europe . . . could only please France." The question of British membership in the Community would not and never has involved a French veto, he emphasized, but rather "knowing if a successful outcome is possible within the framework and the conditions of the present Common Market, without bringing destructive disorder into it" and without upsetting the "painstaking balance that had been established between the individual interests of the various member states . . ."

The influential French evening daily, *Le Monde* commented: "The people of the Continent owe too much to England to balance her interests against their own, and to reject her candidature on the grounds that it would bring no immediately obvious advantage. In any case, if we do not give her a place she will end by being absorbed into the American system. Who could really wish for such a result? Who would gain from that?"

Three days later Dutch Prime Minister P. J. S. de Jong, explaining his Government's policy on Europe, also spoke of Britain's application. "I believe that if the six partners had the political will for it," he said "it would definitely be possible to find technical solutions . . . within the context of the Rome Treaty" for the problems. "A dynamic Executive branch, co-operating with a Council of Ministers more and more disposed to make decisions by majority vote," could prevent the entry of a new member from slowing down the Community's progress towards unification. "Great Britain's adhesion could only strengthen the Community and give new impetus to the European cause," he said. In concluding, the Dutch Prime Minister stressed the "important similarities in the way the Netherlands, the United Kingdom, and the Scandinavian countries approach political and administrative problems."