



## Close vote on fishing plan

The nine Community foreign ministers went home on October 19th without having reached agreement on a Community fishing policy (agreement on a 200-mile Community limit by January 1st next year, which will at least enable negotiations to begin with Iceland, was reached on October 29th). But they had almost been provided with a complete solution during the previous week, when the European Parliament held one of its most closely fought debates in recent years. Only a recount after a tied vote prevented the adoption of a Socialist resolution providing for a 200-mile Community limit within which there would be a 50-mile "fishing conservation zone" controlled by the coastal states.

"This House has to make up its mind," John Prescott (Soc/UK) declared when opening the debate, "whether it wants to be a talking-shop giving opinions, or whether it wants to play a part in making decisions." He rejected vigorously the view, expressed at various points by Commissioner Lardinois, and by Christian Democrat and Liberal spokesmen, that Parliament should give the matter further study in committee first, and find a resolution everyone supported. "No Parliament arrives unanimously at decisions; it divides. Democracy is about that division."

The Socialist Group, which had devised the resolution contains Members from every Community country; and the compromise it had reached, as former Foreign Secretary Michael Stewart (Soc/UK) told the House, "contains the hallmark of a good international agreement". "Although it does not give to any state exactly what it wants, it does not impose an intolerable injury on the interests of any state." Nor was it "a bogus agreement which appears to reach agreement by dodging the awkward points".

It was, indeed, on these awkward points that the debate centred, and most specifically on the proposed 50-mile conservation zones. As John Prescott explained, this concept was a compromise between those who wanted a 50-mile zone *exclusive* to the coastal fishermen, and those who wanted free access for all Community trawlers outside the 12-mile limit proposed by the Commission; and during the debate it was attacked from both sides. Though the European Conservative Group as a whole supported the resolution, both Michael Shaw (UK) and Elaine Kellett-Bowman (UK) wanted the coastal states' rights within the 50 miles to be much greater. Precisely, warned German Socialist Manfred Schmidt (though one of the resolution's authors): the 50-mile conservation zone was just a Trojan horse, leading to a 50-mile exclusive zone.



Fleetwood trawlermen lobby in the Maison de l'Europe

The Commission, as no doubt during the following week at the Council of Ministers, tried hard to separate the issue of the 200 mile Community limit (within which trawlers from Community countries only would be allowed, in principle, to fish); and the allocation of fishing rights between Community countries within the 200 miles. "Do not forget,"

warned Commissioner Gundelach, "that if we are not solid and communitarian on the internal side, we cannot expect to be so on the external side."

Yet, as the Council discovered later, the political reality is that the internal and external aspects of fishing cannot be neatly separated; and in the European Parliament's vote, as later in the Council, the Irish position proved decisive. A Christian Democrat amendment to delete all the "awkward points" was defeated; however, on a second to replace the key points by a virtually meaningless reference to the Common Agricultural Policy (unlike on the first), John Prescott was not given a right of reply; and on a show of hands the vote was declared tied — the Fianna Fail members of the EPD abstaining. A "standing and sitting vote" was then taken, and the amendment declared finally passed. The chief irony, however, was that the Irish Members were as much in favour of the 50 mile proposal as the British — it was to another section of the same clause dealing with fishing quotas that they objected.

## 1977 Budget changes

In a moderately restrained session from October 25-27, Parliament followed the lead of its Budgets Committee and passed positive but modest amendments and modifications to the Community's 1977 draft budget. After further consideration by the Council of Ministers late in November it will return to Parliament in December.

The changes voted by Parliament generally restored some of the amounts which the Council had earlier either deleted or reduced from the Commission's initial draft. The main points: *Regional Fund*: restoration of 100 million units of account; *Agriculture*: insertion of 200m u.a. as provision for the 1977 price review increases, but withdrawal from the Guidance and Guarantee Fund headings of all expenditure relating to monetary compensation, etc.; *Energy*: provision of 50m u.a. for coal stockpiling, some 24m u.a. for hydrocarbon technology and research, and 2m u.a. for uranium prospecting; *Food Aid*: an increase of 93m u.a.; *Aid to non-associated countries*: provision with the Council's approval, of 30m u.a.; *Aeronautics*: provision of 8m u.a. for research; *Data Processing*: provision of 2.8m u.a.; *Disaster Fund*: provision of 30m u.a.

In the vote on Wednesday, all but one of the divisions went in accordance with the advice of the main rapporteur, Lord Bruce (Soc/UK) who clearly had accurately read the opinions of both his own Committee and the whole house. He had, nevertheless, forthright views on the 1977 budget. "The context of the budget we are now discussing," he said during the general debate, "is a context of continuing crisis in Europe." He referred in particular to unemployment and inflation. In addition to the crisis, he said, there was "a very considerable and growing imbalance in Europe". Since the Community's enlargement there had been "a drastic distortion of the whole pattern of trade in Europe, to the advantage of some Member States and to the disadvantage of others". The rich portions of Europe were getting richer and the poorer parts poorer. "We have to ask ourselves whether this budget has any political significance" in this situation, he went on. "The answer is no."

## Green pound problems and MCAs

The Council of Ministers failed on Tuesday, October 26 to reach a unanimous agreement on what to do about the yawning gap between the rates for the Pound and the Green Pound in particular, and the whole system of Monetary Compensatory Amounts (MCAs) in general. Britain was alone in opposing any devaluation of the Green Pound while Germany also opposed changes, proposed by the Commission, which would have set a ceiling on the amount of MCAs. The size of the problem was indicated by Commissioner Lardinois who predicted that the level of MCAs would soon reach about 45% for the United Kingdom. Commissioner Cheysson warned that overall Community spending on MCAs next year would reach 980 million units of account (about £650 million) plus another 500 million (about £350 million) for the double exchange rate.

The MCA situation had earlier been discussed in Parliament on October 13. The key difficulty was aptly expressed by Mark Hughes (Soc/UK) when he said of the

MCAs "the very size, while on the one hand creating the problem, also creates the problem of finding a solution and makes that more difficult". Michel Cointat (EPD/F), however, was adamant: the MCAs should be progressively reduced. The Community could not go on paying "a million pounds a day just for agricultural products going to the UK. In one week it has spent more than the whole budget of Euratom." James Scott-Hopkins (Con/UK) agreed. Ralph Howell (Con/UK) said that the Council should bring maximum pressure to bear on the UK government. But this only brought a loud chorus of "no" from the British Socialists. Now was not the time to burden the consumer with increased food prices. The CAP should be reformed, said Mark Hughes, "the pricing structures of the CAP, far from being the main edifice that holds Europe together, have become and are becoming increasingly the device that will tear Europe apart". Lord Bruce thought Commissioner Lardinois' figures exaggerated.

## The bookie and the fisherman

Not for the first time, the dying moments of Parliament's October sitting in Strasbourg on Friday 15 produced a sparkling vignette of a debate, this time on the unpromising subject of stamp duties. The credit largely went to two of Parliament's youngest Members, British Socialist John Prescott, and British Conservative Hugh Dykes, who was Parliament's rapporteur on a Commission proposal to harmonise the Duties throughout the Community to a common maximum rate of 0.6%. As it happens, the UK and Ireland are the odd men out, charging rates of up to 2%; and the Dykes resolution called for the eventual abolition of the Duties altogether. Lord Gordon-Walker (Soc/UK), however, (making his positively last appearance) found it odd that "the aim of harmonisation is always to reduce taxes". Why not put everyone up to 2%? He was rebuked by Helmut Artzinger (CD/Ger), who pointed out that it was not just the "wicked capitalists" but, for example, over 1/2 million German workers in share schemes who paid the tax. For John Prescott, however, "the issue we are discussing can be likened to a casino in which all the bookies, of which Mr Dykes is one, make money but do not earn it". "We see the philosophy of envy emerging from the fisherman from Hull time and time again,"

retorted Dykes. There was also some factual dispute about how much it would cost the UK to cut Stamp Duties: £70m said Dykes; £300m said Prescott. Actually, intervened Commissioner Guazzaroni, it would be about £100m, although there would be a temporary derogation for the UK and Ireland.



Hugh Dykes

## Rules changes still not through

With an eye to direct elections in particular, Parliament is making efforts to tighten up its own procedures — though not without serious hindrance from the procedures themselves. Four reports came before the House on October 12, including one from Rules Committee chairman William Hamilton (Soc/UK) that Question Time (possibly the more successful part of each plenary sitting) be doubled up to two 1 1/2 hour sessions. Since rules changes require an absolute majority of members (100 or more) the votes on this and the second report were put off until October 27, when it was hoped that a full House would be there for the Budget. So it was; but between the end of the Budget debate and the vote on the rules the numbers in the Chamber fell dramatically from some 140 to only 76. An angry William Hamilton hinted darkly of a conspiracy; and Parliament will

have to make another attempt to pass the reports in November.

During the debate of October 12, indeed, the Commission itself seemed none too keen on the idea of more Question Time. No doubt the tortuous logistics of getting Commissioners from Brussels to Luxembourg and Strasbourg in addition to their other duties partly explains this view, and Commission President Ortoli put in a plea that if Parliament did decide on two sessions, could they be on Tuesday afternoon and Wednesday morning. He was much less conciliatory with Hans Lautenschlager (Soc/Ger) for the Legal Affairs Committee, who took the view that Parliament should be consulted whenever the Commission decided to withdraw or re-submit its own proposals. Mr Ortoli disagreed. That, he insisted, affected the prerogatives of the Commission.

## Fundamental rights . . .

The European Community, Tom Ellis (Soc/UK) quoted on October 12 from a Court of Justice ruling, "constitutes a new legal order. . . the subjects of which comprise not only Member States but also their nationals." Individual legal rights — the matter for debate — are therefore very much a Community affair. In particular there is the problem, as Legal Committee chairman Sir Derek Walker-Smith (Con/UK) explained when opening, that "any insufficiency or imperfection in the protection offered by Community law to fundamental rights has, potentially at any rate, a double disadvantage. It affords inadequate protection in Community law, but also, because of the doctrine of the supremacy of Community law under the Treaties, it may prejudice the rights of the citizen under the national law of his own Member State. It may, in the language of the scriptures, "take away from him even that which he thinketh he hath." Three possibilities were examined. First, everyone had good words to say for the case law created by the Court itself, which was building up protection for the individual pragmatically. Winnie Ewing (Ind/UK) and Brian Lenihan (EPD/Irl) in particular favoured the rapid codification of fundamental rights within the Community; while others favoured a joint declaration of rights by the Community institutions. All agreed that something could be done well before any European Union. As Winnie Ewing noted, "we could all learn from each other".

## . . . taking off

"Men and women equally have five minutes," said Vice-President Cornelis Berkhouwer (Lib/NL) from the chair on Wednesday. "Five minutes to do what?" enquired Lady Fisher (Soc/UK). Mr. Berkhouwer, of course, meant equal speaking time, but of what Gwyneth Dunwoody (Soc/UK) called "statutory women" there was very little evidence. "In the hollow ranks of the Commission there is no woman," said Lord Castle (Soc/UK), speaking "for European man" as a "male non-chauvinist". "There is not a single woman on the benches of the Council," he continued; as for Parliament, "I want women to see women in this House". Few they may be as yet, but they were certainly heard. Clara Kruchow (Lib/Dk) who had raised the question thought the Community, apart from bringing equality in Europe should also work to improve the lot of women in developing countries including the ACP states. Lady Fisher suggested that "as aid the Community should supply, for example, portable grain grinders for women as well as bulldozers (for men?). Elaine Kellett-Bowman (Con/UK) wanted the Community to offer practical help such as birth control. Winifred Ewing (Ind/UK) wanted more career and advice centres, as "the talent of half of the human race was all too often wasted". Both Commissioner Hillery and Council President Laurens Brinkhorst, however, thought that developing countries had to decide their own priorities.

### Jobs in the European Parliament

**Qualifications:** degree or equivalent; under 33 years old; English plus one other Community language  
**Salaries:** 40,000 Belgian Francs plus per month  
**Procedure:** Selection by competitive examination  
For details and forms see *Official Journal* C250 (from HMSO, 35p)



## Shop window

A call for a much more visible Community presence in the future at UNCTAD and more thorough preparation was made in a motion unanimously agreed on Tuesday, October 12. UNCTAD, said Herve Laudrin (EPD/F), is "the greatest forum in the world". In that forum, said Jan Broeksz (Soc/NL), the developing countries look to Europe for a lead. Unfortunately, although UNCTAD IV in Nairobi had not been a failure, the Community had failed to give a coherent lead and had been upstaged by an alliance between the United States, Japan, Canada and to some extent Germany and the United Kingdom. Pierre Deschamps (CD/Bel) said that at the conference the developing countries had not known who they were addressing and there had been the politics of confrontation rather than the common sense of co-operation. As for future policy, he said, developed countries should not only provide more aid but should also increase their imports from developing countries. "We've never done enough and we never shall," said Lord Walston, adding "helping others means sacrifices!". As for UNCTAD, he said, it was a four yearly 'shop window' which should be put to use.

## From Blackpool

As expected, the Labour Party Conference on September 29 accepted the National Executive Committee's statement rejecting the principle of direct elections. But the vote, by 4,016,000 to 2,264,000, narrowly missed a two thirds majority which would have made the NEC's views party policy. However, the previous evening Foreign Secretary Anthony Crosland had told a "fringe" meeting in Blackpool that the Government accepted direct elections as an obligation under the Community treaties, which had implicitly been confirmed by the referendum last year, and that the Government would put the necessary legislation before Parliament at the earliest practical moment anyway.

The direct elections issue was, however, only one of several on which Conference voted against the Government's policy or point of view. It presumably will not deflect the Government from its intention, though it will probably mean that a fair number of Labour MPs will prefer to vote against the legislation. A comfortable majority in both Houses of Parliament can however be assumed.

## No alternative to détente

If detente had failed it was the West's fault, said Mario Scelba (CD/It) in a debate on Wednesday, October 13. Russia, he said, was building up its military potential while western nations were falling over each other to sell Russia goods which would make her even stronger. The answer was to demand political advantage from economic concessions. Russell Johnston (Lib/UK) agreed, and suggested that the release of Vladimir Bukhovsky might prove Russia's peaceful intentions. Other Members spoke of the build-up of Soviet arms, lack of progress over the "Helsinki Basket Three" (human rights, intellectual freedom) and misery such as that of families prevented from being reunited. Council President Brinkhorst shared this feeling of disillusion and disappointment. But, he said, there was no alternative to detente but confrontation. So the Nine should go to the Belgrade Conference (follow-up to Helsinki) on June 15, 1977, without illusions and with an open mind but determined to get a balanced result.

## No Bonnie Banks of Clyde

"A bombarded city" was how Pierre Giraud (Soc/F) described the East End of Glasgow after a morning's tour of the site of a £120 million redevelopment plan. Yet it seemed that the area was more a victim of planning blight as of inner urban decay as such. Certainly, the Dutch, Danish and German members of a delegation from the European Parliament's Regional Policy Committee had never seen anything like it — at

photo by The Vistor, Morecambe.



Parliament Regional Committee arrives

least not in 20 years. To them the visit served to underline the problems Britain faces in trying to bring a 19th century industrial infrastructure into the last quarter of the 20th century. The cleared areas, the shuttered shops, the dirt and evident despair of the inhabitants and workless, the abandoned Clydeside shipyards made, moreover, a marked contrast with the smaller-scale problems of adapting coal-mining areas of Fife to new industries and uses, seen the previous day.

From Scotland the party of 11 MPs, led by the Committee's chairman, Lancashire MP John Evans (Soc), visited development areas in north-west England, including Liverpool and Manchester. And for light relief the MEPs attended the final of "It's a Knock-Out". Regrettably the delegation failed to side a team themselves, for what better way to put the name European Parliament before Europe's 180 million electors and to ensure a good sporting turnout in 1978?

## Question Time

### No import controls

European imports from Japan outweigh exports to Japan by two to one and the situation is "moving from bad to worse", although there was a surplus for Europe on invisibles, said Commissioner Gundelach. He said that the Commission was endeavouring to persuade Japan to improve self control on its exporters and to buy more from Europe. He was, however, against the imposition of trade barriers. To Lord Castle (Soc/UK) who hinted that Britain was considering import restrictions he replied "we will not easily go down the road of undermining the international free trading system on behalf of any one Member State, a free trading system upon which the life of Europe depends".

### Uganda

In view of the "clear violation of human rights" in Uganda should the Commission continue to give trade and aid preferences? asked Jim Spicer (Con/UK). Commissioner Cheysson replied that although the news from Uganda was "worrying" it was "fragmentary and contradictory". Also, the Community's relations with that country were not bilateral but within the ACP Convention, an international treaty covering economic and social development which did not allow the Community to take a position regarding an ACP country's internal or external affairs. Mr. Spicer was not convinced. "We can go on for ever taking refuge behind statements that we are considering the situation, but ... it is up to the Community to live up to the standards it has set itself."

### Gratuitous insult

The length of time taken to offer accreditation to the Fijian Ambassador to the Community, H.E. Mr. Nandan, said Gwyneth Dunwoody (Soc/UK), was "a gratuitous insult not only to Fiji but also to the ACP countries". It was, she said, "widely held that this was due entirely to the fact that France objected to the very strongly held view of many of us and the protests at the time about the explosion of nuclear devices in the Pacific". If Britain only accepted ambassadors who had never held an opposite political view there would

only be "a very small number of diplomats accredited to the Court of St James," she added. Laurens Brinkhorst for the Council replied that accreditation had now taken place and one should now "look to the future, rather than back in anger".

### Consumers ignored?

Consumers felt that their requirements and opinions were ignored, particularly over the common agricultural policy; they should be "given the same opportunity to influence agricultural policy as the agricultural producers," said John Evans (Soc/UK) to applause from the Left. Consumer protection and information "was absolutely vital to millions of ordinary people," added William Molloy (Soc/UK). He suggested that the Commission propose that consumers be given the right to litigation before the courts and consumer organisations be brought together. Commissioner Mugnozza in his reply referred to progress in the consumers Consultative Committee; a report would be sent to Parliament before the end of the year.

### Direct elections money

Although only a modest sum, about £200,000, was originally put into next year's Community Budget for public education on direct elections, Parliament has now raised this to nearer £½ million (and even, perhaps, to £1½ m +) and controversy is already beginning on the division of the spoils. The first discussions between the Commission and the Parliament's Political Affairs Committee on a co-ordinated campaign were held on October 18, when the respective information services promised to draw up plans. But warning shots had been fired at both at Question Time on the previous week, when Brian Lenihan (EDP/Irl) wanted the bulk of the expenditure to be allocated through the political groups "to the political parties in member countries, ...rather than wasteful bureaucratic expenditure".

Meanwhile, the debate on where the elected Parliament is to sit continues. President in Office of the Council of Ministers, Professor Brinkhorst, ventured to suggest on October 13 that Strasbourg was a beautiful city; but gave perhaps a clearer indication of at least one government's preference by stating that he would prefer the elected Parliament to be nearer his own office.

# Unofficial Journal

As Parliament assembled in Luxembourg on Monday, October 25 for its special budget sitting, it was painfully obvious that various rival attractions were going on nearby. Across the car park in the Batiment Tour the Community Agriculture Ministers (later joined by the Finance Ministers) were wrestling with the problems of milk surpluses, MCAs and the Green Pound; while they, in turn, were aware that in the world outside the real Pound was dropping like a lead weight in a wine lake. The Community Press corps for the most part settled for the Council of Ministers bar rather than the Parliament's press room, rushing together in eager clumps whenever a Minister or spokesman came down to release the latest leak.

What annoyed Parliament most on Monday, however, was the absence of President-in-Office of the Council of Ministers, Professor Brinkhorst, who happened to be at a North-South dialogue in Paris — "like having a debate on the budget in Westminster without the Chancellor", as John Prescott put it. None other than Parliament's Budget rapporteur, Lord Bruce, however, generously noted (it was, after all, his major introductory speech that Professor Brinkhorst was cutting) that not all the fault was on one side: "I well recall an instance a short while ago when, owing to a rearrangement of parliamentary business the President-in-Office was not able to submit the draft budget which we are now discussing to the House until about 8.15 in the evening, by which time there was no representative on any front bench in this House . . .".



Lord Murray

Certain other procedural defects became clear later in the week, too. This year, the apparently sensible step has been taken of beginning the budgetary procedure several weeks earlier than on previous occasions, so as to give everyone a chance of fuller debate. But this has meant that the agriculture sections — 75% of the total — have been even more guesstimates than before, since crop forecasts have been that much more difficult. It is ironic that, at a time when national budgets running from April to April are increasingly outdated throwbacks to a pre-industrial age, the Com-

munity — whose Budget really is pre-industrial — is tied to the calendar year.

At all events, there was something of a struggle to get all the amendments — over 170 of them — printed in time for the votes on Wednesday; and there were wild scenes in the press room where the (now present) journalists found that no sets appeared to be available for them. Perhaps, though, there was some comfort for Parliament's prestige in the fact that the Council of Ministers ("where the real power is" as certain cynics were saying earlier) achieved practically nothing at all, while the 1977 Budget has already been subjected to the most searching scrutiny in the Community's history.

## Midgets only

*It was "The New Yorker" magazine which once wrote of Britain's delegation to the European Parliament (in those days mostly Conservative) that they nearly all seemed to be over six feet tall. True or not, the telephones at Heathrow's Terminal 2 are not designed for them. Late on Friday, October 15, first Hugh Dykes, then James Scott-Hopkins could be observed walking about wearing what appeared to be enormous plastic space helmets — the sound-proofing over the phones having come away from the wall when they tried to stand upright.*

## New faces

The general elections in Italy and Germany have had marked effects on the European Parliament delegations. From Italy, the Communists go up in number from nine to 12, bringing that group as a whole up to 17, level-pegging with both the European Progressive Democrats and the Conservatives. One EP seat each has been lost by the Socialists, Christian Democrats and the far-right independents of the MSI. But there are also many more new Italian faces, for no fewer than 23 of the 36 members of the old Italian delegation have left the European Parliament. One familiar face in the chamber, however, is that of Altiero Spinelli, until last spring European Commissioner with special responsibility for industry, who surprised everyone by standing in the Italian elections as an independent with Communist support.

The German changeover will be less dramatic. Two sitting Members — one Socialist and one Liberal — lost their Bundestag seats and another 14 of all three parties did not stand again. The new German line-up will not be known until about Christmas, but it may mean two Socialists fewer and a corresponding increase in Christian Democrat strength.

## All-change in March?

*There have been some British changes, too. Russell Johnston replaces Lord Gladwyn on the Liberal benches (reducing the number of peers from 11 to ten), and Lord Murray — formerly Labour MP Albert Murray — replaces Lord Gordon-Walker, who has decided that enough is enough of Strasbourg/Luxembourg/Brussels commuting. He apart, the Labour Lords promise greater European longevity than the Labour commoners, for the lower house's delegation, appointed in July 1975 when the Labour Party ended its boycott of the European Parliament, is due for complete renewal in March next year.*

## Belfast bid fails

Now that the Community has official offices in both Edinburgh and Cardiff, pressure has been mounting for another to be opened soon in Belfast. Northern Ireland is certainly among the most under-represented parts of the Community — since the departure of Rafton Pounder in 1974 it has not even had a Member of the European Parliament; and the need for some sign of Community presence was forcefully made by an all-party delegation of 35 Northern Ireland Councillors to Strasbourg during the October 11-15 sitting. As it happened, Scottish MP Alex Fletcher was able to slip in a supplementary on the subject during Wednesday's Question Time, and was told by Commissioner Thomson that lack of funds prevented a Belfast office being established for the time being.

*Rien de plus simple.* Parliament itself has the power to insert the necessary appropriation into the 1977 Budget, and this is what Alex Fletcher attempted to do at the next sitting, with the promised support from other UK Members. But on the evening of Tuesday 26 despite support from Lord Bruce the proposal was axed by the Budgets Committee, and failed to come up for vote on the following day. Perhaps other countries are not keen on giving the UK a fourth office, when no-one else has even three.

## O tempora!

*Several senior Conservative visitors to the Maison de l'Europe in Strasbourg during the October 11-15 sitting were amused to see on the television screen in the bar (which announces who is speaking in the Chamber) the name of "Sir Derek Walker-Schmidt". How different, they mused, from the days of the 1962 Conservative Party Conference, when Sir Derek was using his great powers of oratory to oppose Macmillan's plans for joining up with those Continentals!*



Counting the Budget votes

## Flood warning

In the evergreen debate on whether the Parliament should continue to meet in Strasbourg, the manager of the Hotel Sofitel may well have an opinion to put forward, after an incident at his hotel during the October session. A Labour peer was heard to remark, "I don't know whether they will let me come back again — I dropped off this morning and flooded my bathroom. I woke up to find I was walking on water!" Asked what the manager of the Sofitel had said about this, he replied innocently — "I don't really know — it was all in French".

K.P.G.