

INTRODUCTORY REMARKS BY MR. IVOR RICHARD,
MEMBER OF THE COMMISSION OF THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITY
AT A PRESS CONFERENCE RELATED TO THE
10TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE UNITED KINGDOM'S MEMBERSHIP OF
THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITY
CARDIFF, NOVEMBER 25 1982

IT GIVES ME GREAT PLEASURE TO INTRODUCE THIS REGIONAL DOSSIER FOR WALES IN CONNECTION WITH THE TENTH ANNIVERSARY OF BRITAIN'S MEMBERSHIP OF THE EEC. WHAT THE DOSSIER SETS OUT TO DO IS TO ESTABLISH THE FACTS OF WHAT BELONGING TO THE EEC HAS MEANT TO WALES. THERE CAN, I THINK, BE NO DOUBT THAT IF ONE WAS TO DRAW UP A BALANCE SHEET, THEN WALES HAS BEEN A NET BENEFICIARY. IT HAS IN FACT RECEIVED WELL OVER 1,200 MILLION POUNDS IN VARIOUS FORMS OF AID DURING THE PAST TEN YEARS. THIS HAS COME MAINLY THROUGH THE REGIONAL FUND, THE SOCIAL FUND AND THE VARIOUS LOAN INSTRUMENTS. I WOULD LIKE ALSO TO REFER TO THE ASSISTANCE THAT HAS BEEN RECEIVED FROM THE EUROPEAN COAL AND STEEL COMMUNITY. WALES HAS NOW RECEIVED ALMOST 350 MILLION POUNDS OF WHICH 200 MILLION HAS BEEN IN CHEAP LOANS FOR COMPANIES SETTING UP NEW BUSINESSES IN STEEL CLOSURE AREAS. REDUNDANT STEEL WORKERS IN WALES HAVE ALSO RECEIVED SOME 40 MILLION POUNDS IN READAPTATION PAYMENTS.

WHILST MOST PUBLICITY IS GIVEN TO URBAN AND INDUSTRIAL MATTERS WE MUST NOT FORGET THAT WALES IS STILL LARGELY A RURAL FARMING COUNTRY AND I THINK THAT THE AGRICULTURAL COMMUNITY HAS RECEIVED REAL BENEFITS FROM MEMBERSHIP OF THE EEC. IT IS PERHAPS IRONIC THAT PEOPLE LIKE MYSELF, WHO ARE SEVERE CRITICS OF THE WORKINGS OF THE COMMON AGRICULTURAL POLICY, ALSO HAVE TO ADMIT THAT THE C.A.P. HAS HELPED WELSH AGRICULTURE. THIS HAS BEEN PARTICULARLY TRUE WITH THE INTRODUCTION OF THE SHEEP MEAT REGIME AND THE LESS-FAVoured AREAS DIRECTIVE. THIS IS WELL DOCUMENTED IN THE REGIONAL DOSSIER AND I HOPE IT CAN ATTRACT THE PUBLICITY IT DESERVES.

IT IS OF COURSE TRUE THAT WALES AND THE UNITED KINGDOM ARE IN A MUCH WORSE CONDITION IN 1982 THAN WE WERE WHEN WE JOINED THE EEC. NOWHERE IS THIS MORE TRUE THAN IN THE FIELD OF EMPLOYMENT. UNEMPLOYMENT IN WALES STOOD AT 4.7 PER CENT IN 1972 WHICH MEANT THAT LESS THAN 50 THOUSAND PEOPLE WERE OUT OF WORK. IT NOW STANDS AT 17 AND A HALF PER CENT OR SOME 185 THOUSAND. BLEAK AS THAT PICTURE IS, IT IS UNDOUBTEDLY GOING TO GET WORSE IN THE IMMEDIATE FUTURE. IT IS EASY TO SUGGEST THAT THERE IS

/A CAUSAL RELATIONSHIP.

A CAUSAL RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN EEC MEMBERSHIP AND
THE PRESENT ECONOMIC RECESSION. THIS I SUGGEST 3
WOULD BE TO COMPLETELY MISUNDERSTAND THE SITUATION.
THE FACTS OF THE MATTER ARE THAT EEC MEMBERSHIP
HAS PROBABLY SAVED JOBS AND CERTAINLY WITHDRAWAL
FROM THE COMMUNITY WOULD LEAD TO A VERY SEVERE
INCREASE IN UNEMPLOYMENT. I KNOW THAT MANY PEOPLE
BELIEVE THAT THINGS ARE SO BAD THAT THEY CANNOT
GET WORSE. BUT I MUST REITERATE MY FIRM CONVICTION
THAT IF THE UNITED KINGDOM WAS TO LEAVE THE EEC,
THEN WE COULD EXPECT UP TO A FURTHER ONE AND A HALF
MILLION PEOPLE BEING PUT ON THE DOLE. WHERE PEOPLE
CAN LEGITIMATELY CRITICISE THE COMMUNITY IS IN ITS
FAILURE TO PRODUCE A COMPREHENSIVE STRATEGY TO COMBAT
UNEMPLOYMENT IN EUROPE. WE MUST RECOGNISE THAT AS
OUR ECONOMIES HAVE BECOME MORE INTERDEPENDENT AND
AS WE ARE FACING AN INCREASINGLY MORE DANGEROUS
INTERNATIONAL TRADING SITUATION, THEN FEW ANSWERS
TO OUR PROBLEMS CAN BE FOUND ON A NATIONAL BASIS.
IT IS ONLY AT THE COMMUNITY LEVEL THAT WE CAN START
TO PUT TOGETHER A PLAN FOR ECONOMIC RECOVERY. AND
I REGRET THAT THE MEMBER STATES HAVE SO FAR FAILED
TO SEIZE THE OPPORTUNITIES FOR WORKING TOGETHER
AT COMMUNITY LEVEL. BUT THE PRINCIPAL REASON WHY
THEY HAVE FAILED IS BECAUSE OF THEIR INSISTENCE
TO SEEK SHORT-TERM NATIONAL ADVANTAGES OVER ONE
ANOTHER.

4 FORTUNATELY THE PICTURE IS NOT ALL BLEAK IN THIS
REGARD AS THE RECENT DISPUTE WITH THE AMERICANS
OVER STEEL IMPORTS INDICATES. I KNOW IT IS
DIFFICULT TO TALK ABOUT HAVING ANY SUCCESS
WITH THE STEEL INDUSTRY FOLLOWING THE APPALLING
JOB LOSSES OF RECENT YEARS, AND INDEED THE NEED
FOR FURTHER RESTRUCTURING MEASURES IN THE FUTURE.
BUT I FEEL THAT IT HAS GOT TO BE RECOGNISED THAT
WITHOUT THE DECISION TO RESTRUCTURE THE STEEL
INDUSTRY ON A COMMUNITY BASIS, THE HARSH FACT IS
THAT THERE WOULD PROBABLY BE NO STEEL INDUSTRY
LEFT IN BRITAIN AT ALL. THAT SAID, THERE CAN BE
NO DOUBT THAT THE AMERICANS WOULD HAVE RIDDEN ROUGH
SHOT OVER MEMBER STATES IF THEY HAD NOT DECIDED
TO PERMIT THE COMMUNITY TO NEGOTIATE ON THEIR BEHALF
AND I BELIEVE THAT THE RESULT OF THIS NEGOTIATION
WAS A BETTER DEAL THAN INDIVIDUAL COUNTRIES COULD
HAVE GOT AND CERTAINLY A FAR BETTER DEAL THAN THE
BRITISH COULD HAVE GOT FOR THEMSELVES.

SO WHAT I WANT TO SAY TODAY IS THAT, WHILST IN
1972 IT WAS POSSIBLE TO ARGUE THAT THE UNITED
KINGDOM COULD REALISTICALLY HAVE CHOSEN NOT TO
JOIN THE COMMUNITY AND COULD HAVE EXPECTED A
REASONABLE ECONOMIC FUTURE, THAT CHOICE NO LONGER
EXISTS. THE OIL PRICE RISES OF 1973 AND 1979
AND THE PERSISTENT SLUMP THAT THEY HAVE PRODUCED,
HAVE COMPLETELY CHANGED THE ECONOMIC CLIMATE.

/FACED WITH...

FACED WITH INCREASINGLY RUTHLESS COMPETITION
FROM THE UNITED STATES AND JAPAN - AND I MIGHT
SAY INCREASINGLY THE NEWLY INDUSTRIALIZED COUNTRIES
- EUROPE REQUIRES GREATER ECONOMIC INTEGRATION
AND NOT LESS. AND THEREFORE THE PROSPECTUS
THAT WOULD HAVE BRITAIN WITHDRAW FROM THE COMMUNITY
AND GO IT ALONE IS IN MY VIEW A PHONY ONE. IF
BRITAIN BECOMES ISOLATED THEN OUR ECONOMIC FUTURE
WOULD BE SO BLEAK AS NOT TO STAND CONTEMPLATION.