

Jan. 63

Speech by the President in reply to the
Address by Sir Arthur Tandy, Doyen of the
Diplomatic Corps on the occasion of the
New Year Reception

M. le Doyen, Your Excellencies,

I should like to join the President of the Commission of the European Atomic Energy Community in thanking you for the New Year wishes and kind words which you have addressed to my colleagues and myself on behalf of the Diplomatic Corps. In the name of the Commission of the European Economic Community, it gives me great pleasure to reciprocate most cordially these good wishes - both to you yourselves and to your Heads of State and the peoples whom you so ably represent and to whom our Commission's sincere interest and genuine sympathy goes out.

I expect you will have been somewhat surprised to see that to-day our reception is not being held in the usual place. Though we have abandoned the Chateau of Val-Duchesse, this does not in any way mean that we wish to disown the spirit that presided over the elaboration of the Treaty of Rome in that historic place. We are meeting here for a reason to which you, M. le Doyen, have just referred. In the course of the past year the number of States accredited to the European Communities has increased by twenty, so that the space available at Val-Duchesse has become inadequate for a reception of this kind. We are highly gratified at this expansion of the Diplomatic Corps accredited to us, which we take as evidence that the world is increasingly recognizing the reality of our Community.

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A backward glance over the past year will show that it has not been possible to organize the Community's external relations at the same rapid pace as we managed to keep up in our internal arrangements. Nevertheless our Association Agreement with Greece, leading on to ultimate full membership of the Community in years to come, came into force in 1962.

It is most satisfactory that we were able to conclude the negotiations with the associated African States and Madagascar before the expiry of the first implementing convention. We have thereby laid the foundation for a lasting relationship between Europe and Africa, which is built upon a freely negotiated agreement and which permits of the co-ordination of our mutual economic interests through joint institutions based on the principle of equality. While we have thus given expression to the Community's special responsibility towards the African States, we are aware that we also have obligations vis-à-vis the States of Latin America and Asia which we cannot and do not wish to deny. We hope in the very near future to enter into fruitful negotiations for co-ordinating our mutual interests. Our policy of co-operation and progress is intended to help all developing countries to strengthen their economic and political independence.

At the same time we are to-day facing problems of special gravity so far as the extension of the Community in Europe is concerned. Though at the present stage it has not been possible to attain the goal we had set ourselves, we should

not forget that life does not stand still. The claims which the world has on us and in particular the interests of our European neighbours and Atlantic friends, and indeed of all other countries with whom we maintain friendly relations, have not been diminished: they are as significant to-day as they were yesterday and to meet and respond to them will be no less important in time to come - on the contrary, it will become ever more important. Nor is European integration, that fine venture which has already successfully weathered so many critical stages, a process to be measured in weeks, months or years; it is a long-term political project. And it is in this light that we may say to ourselves and to all our friends that it would be presumptuous to regard any event through which we are living as other than something whose value is determined by the historical conditions obtaining at the time when it occurred.

Let me thank you, M. le Doyen and all the ambassadors here assembled, in my own name and in that of my colleagues for your excellent co-operation. I am sure we will continue to work together with unabated ardour in this New Year.

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