

European Parliament Information

The Sittings

May 1978



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THE SITTINGS

STRASBOURG, 8th – 12th MAY 1978

THE WEEK

The European Parliament's session in Strasbourg this week was overshadowed by the tragic news, communicated to the House on Tuesday afternoon, of the murder of Mr Aldo Moro, the Italian Christian Democrat leader. EMPs were unanimous in condemning this outrage against democracy and in their praise of all Mr Moro had done during his lifetime of service to his country and to Europe, to preserve it.

On Thursday, at 8.30 on a chill morning, representatives of all shades of opinion in the European Parliament attended a mass at Strasbourg Cathedral and, later, set aside time from debates to pay their tributes in the House.

With the date finally set (June 7-10, 1979) for the first European elections, Parliament has now entered on a kind of interregnum in which its main aim is to do everything it can for its directly-elected successor. So in a week which took in such controversial issues as the future of the UK's milk marketing boards and the disappearance of Community nationals in world-cup Argentina, the dominant theme was budgetary powers and making sure that these be no whit reduced. On this point, this week, the House has had cause for concern.

More positively, it was clear from Viscount Davignon's answer to a question from Mr Brosnan that the EC's strategy for steel is beginning to have a healthy impact, giving the industry a much needed breathing space.

MONDAY, 8th May 1978

Action taken on Parliament's advice

Mr Guido Brunner reminded the House that Parliament had considered 17 Commission proposals at its April session in Luxembourg.

Parliament had approved 13 of these and called for amendments to the other four. The Commission was ready to accept Parliament's amendments in respect of three of the four proposals in question. Mr Brunner added, however, that the Commission could not accept the amendments called for by Mr Ligios in his report (Mediterranean proposals).

The three proposals which Parliament had sought to amend and which the Commission was now reconsidering had been reported on to Parliament by Mr Lamberts (chocolate products), Mr Hughes (farm prices) and Mr Spinelli (the new EC loan raising facility).

The Commission's legal service was looking into how Mr Lamberts's amendments could be incorporated into its chocolate products proposal.

Mr Brunner asked for the understanding of the House as regards farm prices: he trusted Mr Gundelach would be reporting to Parliament on the outcome of the Farm Ministers' discussions later in the week.

While broadly agreeing with Mr Spinelli's report on the new one billion EUA loan facility, the Commission was unwilling to accept the amendment proposed to Article 5. This was the most controversial point between Parliament and the Commission during the April debate. And what the Commission is now saying is that the European Investment Bank should be responsible for the allocation of loans. Parliament had sought to entrust this power to the Commission.

Two points arose out of Mr Brunner's statement. The first was an indication from Budgets Committee chairman, Erwin Lange, that Parliament would seek to open the conciliation procedure over its disagreement with the Commission on the management of the 1bn EUA loan facility and the second was the fairly generally expressed wish of EMPs that the Commission should make its 'action-taken' statement available in writing much more quickly.

EC policy on oil stocks held and on oil refining capacity

The Commission met with opposition from Parliament this evening over its proposal for a cutback in stocks of crude oil and/or petroleum products held in storage by the Member States. The present agreed minimum level is 90 days' consumption. Mr Brunner suggested 54 days' consumption would suffice. Mrs Walz's motion called on the Commission to withdraw this proposal.

On a related subject, the EC's oil refining capacity, there were mixed feelings. The Commission believes the EC has an excess capacity of 140 million tonnes per year (about 16.5 per cent of total capacity) and that this would be phased out. (Conversion capacity, on the other hand, needs to be increased by between 8 to 12 million tonnes of gasoline per year).

Mr Normanton, for the Energy Committee, argued in his report for a policy aimed at enabling the industry itself to effect the necessary changes. But Mr Brosnan (Ir, EPD) for example thought it would be unrealistic to expect a country like Ireland to phase out its one and only refinery.

Prospecting for oil and gas

There was general support this evening for a Commission proposal whereby some 50m EUA (32.55 million pounds) will be given to back three oil and gas exploration projects. But Mrs Walz, for Parliament's Energy Committee, had reservations:

- (a) firms getting aid should be committed to exchanging information about results achieved;
- (b) groups of firms as well as Member States should be allowed to submit projects and
- (c) the projects should be selected by the Commission.

It should not be for the Council to decide which projects to back, otherwise the budgetary powers of both Commission and Parliament would be undermined.

Spokesmen for Parliament's Political Groups shared this concern. Mr Guerlin, for the Socialists, Mr Damseaux for the Liberals and Mr Bouquerel for the EPDs all felt strongly about this. Mr Luster, for the Christian Democrats was concerned about Parliament's right to be consulted which he felt was not always respected in energy matters. Mr Leonardi, for the Communists, asked Mr Brunner if he

could say what proportion of total investment on oil prospecting the sum involved would represent.

Replying, Mr Brunner said he appreciated Parliament's concern about preserving a balance between the institutions but he did not think the balance would be tilted too far towards the Council if the present proposal were accepted. However, he remained open-minded.

Screening of EC staff

Mr Hamilton's report (Doc. 336/77)

Parliament concluded its business this evening by considering a report by Mr Willie Hamilton (UK, S) on the screening of applicants for employment by the European Atomic Energy Community (Euratom).

There was some disagreement amongst speakers as to the permissible scope and limits of the screening processes used, although most accepted the need for some controls under certain circumstances.

In reply, Commission Vice-President Henk Vredeling agreed that freedom of expression for Community officials was an inviolable principle but the need for confidentiality did not conflict with this principle. He pointed out that in fields like nuclear energy Member States were willing to make information available only on condition that the officials having access to it had been screened.

The House rose at 8.30 p.m.

TUESDAY, 9th May 1978

Vice-President Rudolf Adams opened the sitting at 10 a.m.

Helping young people

Mr Lezzi's report (Doc. 88/78).

There are at present some two million under-25s in the Community looking for work (40 per cent of total unemployed), and this situation is likely to worsen until 1985 at least. Particularly hard hit are young women.

In April this year Commissioner Vredeling announced new proposals for helping young unemployed people. These will involve spending 110 million EUA in 1979 (a 20 per cent increase in the Social Fund budget at least), according to highly selective criteria, in the hope of providing 150,000 new jobs.

Mr Vredeling said that 55 million EUA would be allocated under Article 4 of the Social Fund and 55 million EUA under Article 5.

Mr Pietro Lezzi (It, S) put down a motion asking Parliament to approve the proposals, subject to certain amendments. Speakers in the debate signified they would do so but without much enthusiasm. It was not generally felt the proposals would have much impact.

Promoting efficient air traffic control

Mr Luigi Noè (It, CD) opened a debate on air traffic control.

The House then adjourned from 1.10 p.m. to 3 p.m.

QUESTION TIME

QUESTIONS TO THE COMMISSION

1. New 1bn EUA loan facility (Hans-Joachim Hoffmann)

Mr Hoffmann wanted to know what use was to be made of this new facility and Lord Bruce rejected Mr Vredeling's reply that Mr Ortoli had already given details.

2. South Africa's uranium exports to EC (Piet Dankert)

Mr Burke said the Commission's view was that no source of uranium supplies should be disregarded especially as the EC would still be getting four-fifths of its supplies from third countries in the 1980s.

Pressed on this point by Mr John Osborn (UK, EC) and Mr Piet Dankert (Du, S), Mr Burke made it clear that supplies from the USSR were seen in the same light

as those from South Africa. He was unable to say exactly what the volume of transactions between the EC and third countries was for reasons of commercial secrecy.

3. Canal transport: use of energy (Sir Geoffrey de Freitas)

Mr Burke said that a Netherlands Institute had made a comparative study of energy use in the various forms of transport. Waterway transport was the cheapest but there were ancillary costs to be borne in mind. He took Sir Geoffrey's point about the enormous benefits to be gained from making the most of the inland waterways.

4. Commission attendance at COREPER meetings (Lord Reay)

The Commission was always represented at meetings of COREPER, Mr Burke said, usually by senior officials but, from time to time, by Commission Members.

5. Nuclear waste disposal (Mrs Winnie Ewing)

While agreeing on the need to consult those directly affected by nuclear waste disposal schemes, Mr Vredeling rejected Mrs Ewing's suggestion that each Member State should be responsible for disposing of its own waste: this would not be compatible with the Euratom treaty, he said. Replying to Mr Tom Normanton (UK, EC), who said nuclear energy was far safer than other forms of energy, Mr Vredeling pointed out that it was the only energy source that produced dangerous waste.

6. Summer time (Pierre-Bernard Cousté)

Mr Burke made it clear that the Commission had made proposals for a uniform summer time (in 1979, from 1 April to 14 October), but was not proposing a single time zone for the whole Community. It would not be realistic to expect Western Ireland and the Eastern part of the Federal Republic to have the same time. However, even agreement on the uniform summer time period was proving difficult to achieve in the Council.

At the close of Question Time, the House agreed to debate uranium imports from South Africa.

Tribute to Aldo Moro

Parliament observed a minute of silence this afternoon after hearing the news that Aldo Moro, leader of the Italian Christian-Democratic Party, had been found dead in Rome. He was kidnapped by terrorists two months ago.

After conveying Parliament's deepest sympathy to his family, Vice-President Hans-August Lücker paid tribute to Mr Moro's leading role in Italian and international politics: 'Aldo Moro was one of his country's foremost statesman who, in almost thirty years of tireless and selfless commitment, devoted himself to his country, to Europe and to international understanding and peace'.

Vote

Parliament agreed to the motions contained in the reports by Mr Normanton (Docs. 555/77 and 16/78) on oil policy and oil stocks, Mrs Walz (Doc. 90/78) on oil and gas prospecting, Mr Hamilton (Doc. 336/77) on screening of EC staff and Mr Lezzi (Doc. 88/78) on youth unemployment.

Emergency debate on uranium supplies from South Africa

At the request of the Socialist Group Parliament then held an emergency debate on uranium supplies from South Africa. In reply to a question at Question Time Mr Burke told the House that South Africa held 20 per cent of the world's uranium reserves and was the second largest producer in the West (being expected to produce 5,300 tonnes in 1978) but he was unable, for reasons of commercial secrecy, to say exactly what was the volume of trade between EC users and third country suppliers.

Mr Piet Dankert (Du), for the Socialist Group, argued it was undesirable for the EC to be dependent on South Africa for uranium supplies. And he was unable to understand why the exact measure of this dependence should be kept secret.

European Conservatives John Osborn and Tom Normanton, on the other hand, took a different view, as did Mrs Walz, speaking for the Christian Democrats. It was unrealistic to talk of switching off any source of uranium supply to the EC. If the Community was to reduce its dependence on oil imports, said Mrs Walz, it simply had to develop the nuclear alternative.

At this point, Mr Fellermaier, Socialist Chairman, reminded the House that his group had called for the debate because a question had not been adequately answered at Question Time. His group had no desire to switch off any source of supply; the Socialists were simply concerned to ascertain the degree of EC dependence on uranium from South Africa. The answer from Commissioner Burke was not consistent with Mr Jenkins's expressed intention of 'treating the European Parliament as if it were already directly elected'.

Air traffic control

Resumed debate on Mr Noè's report (Doc. 49/78).

Speakers in the resumed debate on Mr Noè's report on promoting efficient air traffic control stressed the wide range of problems and difficulties raised by increased air traffic throughout the world and in Europe in particular. There was general agreement that the role of Eurocontrol should be expanded rather than cut back in an effort to prevent the situation becoming unmanageable.

In reply, Commissioner Richard Burke praised Mr Noè's detailed and comprehensive report (it runs to almost 70 pages) and agreed on the need for international and European co-operation in promoting efficient air traffic control. However, he reminded the House that the scope for action by the Commission was extremely limited.

UN code of conduct for liner conferences

Mr Charles McDonald's report (Doc. 47/78).

The House then turned its attention to the complex matter of the UN code for liner conferences. The Commission is proposing that the Community accede to this code and Mr Charles McDonald (Ir, CD), rapporteur, told the House that his committee was ready to support this proposal subject to certain amendments being made to it.

Although some speakers such as Mr Horst Seefeld (Ge, S) and Mr John Osborn (UK, EC) were ready to support the proposal for the progress it represented towards a Community policy for sea transport, there were others, including Lord Bruce (UK, S) and Mr John Prescott (UK, S), who felt that there was something

inherently contradictory about acceding to a code while holding reservations about its compatibility with Rome Treaty competition rules.

Mr Prescott urged that the whole problem of shipping policy be seen in conjunction with a Community policy on trade and another on shipbuilding. This, he felt, would be far more meaningful than the proposals now before the House.

Home study courses

Mr Guerlin's report (Doc. 82/78).

The Commission is proposing that the Council enact a directive giving protection to the consumer in respect of home study courses. Mr André Guerlin (Fr, S), for the Consumer Protection Committee, welcomed the proposal subject to certain amendments.

Lord Bethell, for the European Conservatives, advised the House that the proposal was unlikely to be acceptable in the United Kingdom.

In reply, Mr Burke noted the consensus in Parliament's three committees dealing with the Commission's proposal. He said the Commission could accept the amendments called for except as regards the mandatory accreditation of home study course organizers. On this, he reserved judgement.

Nearly every steel firm in EC lost money in 1977 says Viscount Davignon

Replying to a question from Mr Sean Brosnan (Ir, EPD) this evening, Viscount Davignon told the House that the Community steel industry had sustained losses equal to 2.5bn EUA (1.62bn pounds) in 1977. Under these circumstances many firms should close down. But Europe needed its own steel-making capacity. The Commission's present crisis management strategy was aimed at creating the conditions for a fundamental overhaul of the steel industry, determining the level of production the EC needed to maintain its independence and keeping prices in line with what the market could take. The Commission would be putting forward new price proposals early in June, he said.

Self-employed to get benefit of EC regulation 1408/71

On behalf of Parliament's Social Committee, Mr Patrick Power (Ir, EPD) this evening asked Parliament to approve Commission proposals to extend the scope of the Community's social security legislation to self-employed persons. He added, however, that he would like third country nationals to be able to enjoy the benefits of this change in regulation 1408/71 as well.

In reply Mr Vredeling said he did not think the regulation could at present be extended to cover third country nationals.

Protest against principle of a minimum price for intra-community trade in wine

Parliament concluded its business this evening by considering a Christian Democrat motion calling for the rejection of the Commission's proposals. The group's main criticism, said Mr Mario Martinelli (It), was that the minimum price proposal could undermine the whole common agricultural policy.

The House rose at 11.35 p.m.

WEDNESDAY, 10th May 1978

Vice-President Cornelis Berkhouwer opened the sitting at 10.15 a.m.

In a short statement, Socialist Group Chairman Ludwig Fellermaier called on President Roy Jenkins to make a greater effort in future to ensure that the Commission was represented at Parliamentary debates by its most appropriate Member.

In reply, Mr Jenkins said the Commission endeavoured to do this whenever possible, but it was occasionally unavoidable that the Commission Member holding a particular portfolio had to be replaced by a colleague because of other commitments.

Belgrade CSCE follow-up

Mr Radoux's report (Doc. 76/78).

Introducing his motion on the outcome of the Belgrade follow-up conference to the Helsinki Agreement, Mr Lucien Radoux (Be, S) recognized the value of the conference in pursuing the goals set by the CSCE, but expressed disappointment that the final document failed to adequately cover the question of human rights.

Speakers in the debate generally endorsed Mr Radoux's assessment. There was disappointment at the lack of results on human rights but hope that the 1980 Madrid Conference would be more successful.

Replying, Council President K.B. Andersen agreed that, for all its shortcomings, Belgrade had to be seen as part of a process rather than as an isolated, and possibly disappointing, event.

Date for direct elections

Mr Patijn's report (Doc. 65/78).

Mr Schelto Patijn (Du, S) introduced his motion welcoming the European Council's decision fixing the date for direct elections and appealing to those Member States which had not yet done so to complete the ratification procedure of the Act providing for the elections.

Stressing the importance of an intensive publicity campaign, Mr Patijn argued that the most effective way of rallying public opinion would be the implementation and success of major Community policies between now and June 1979.

The House adjourned from 1.05 p.m. to 3 p.m.

QUESTION TIME

QUESTIONS TO THE COUNCIL

Council President K.B. Andersen answered questions by Mr Hans-Joachim Hoffmann (Ge, S) on the EC's 1bn EUA loan facility, by Mr Michael Herbert (Ir, EPD) on Protocol 30 to the Treaty of Accession, by Mrs Winifred Ewing (UK,

Ind) on the common fisheries policy, by Mr John Osborn (UK, EC) on limiting imports of cutlery, by Mr Michael Shaw (UK, EC) on illegal Council regulations, by Mr Ralph Howell (UK, EC) on identity cards, by Mr Tom Normanton (UK, EC) on state aids and by Mr Ib Stetter (Da, EC) on a human rights clause in a renegotiated Lomé Convention.

Mr Andersen also answered a number of questions addressed to the Foreign Ministers of the European Community.

Vote

The House then agreed to the motions put down by Mr Luigi Noè (air traffic control), Mr Charles McDonald (UN code for liner conferences), Mr Kai Nyborg (state-trading countries' liner conferences), Mr André Guerlin (home study courses), Mr Patrick Power (social security for self-employed), and Mr Lucien Radoux (Belgrade Conference). Mr Martinelli withdrew his motion.

Date for direct elections

Conclusion of debate on Mr Schelto Patijn's report (Doc. 65/78).

Replying to the brief debate on Mr Patijn's motion on the fixing of the date for direct elections, Council President K.B. Andersen said he could not give Parliament an assurance that it would be consulted before the summer recess — that depended entirely on whether the national ratification procedures were complete.

For the Commission, Mr Roy Jenkins agreed with Mr Patijn on the need for an information campaign but real progress by the Community on issues such as restoring monetary stability, enlargement and unemployment were the real key to winning people's interest. 'Direct elections cannot be a substitute for progress,' he said.

Parliament's relations with Council

Mr Corrie's question (Doc. 113/78).

Mr John Corrie, for the European Conservatives, asked Mr Andersen if the Council would consider suggestions for improving its relations with Parliament.

Mr Andersen replied that he was unable to accept the suggestions made. Relations between institutions were laid down by treaty. At the same time the governments represented in the Council had to conduct negotiations calling for concessions which would be less easy to secure if business were conducted in public.

As to other points raised: the Council had still to adopt its new Rules of Procedure. It had endeavoured to improve its working methods and to take far more items as 'A' points (i.e. decisions previously agreed by the Committee of Permanent Representatives) but he did not think it would be good practice to divulge details as to the way the voting went. Nor, he thought, would it be helpful to give details e.g. of mandates given to the Commission for the conduct of negotiations.

Sir Geoffrey de Freitas (UK, S) noted Mr Andersen's reply. Every six months he himself had raised the possibility of Council's distinguishing between executive and legislative sessions and admitting the public to the latter. Surely more open government was in the general interest, particularly with direct elections coming up.

Mr Hector Rivierez, EPD spokesman, on the other hand agreed with Mr Andersen. What mattered was that the Council should reach agreements. This said, his group would favour improving Parliament's control of the Council — perhaps by Council members appearing more frequently in Committee.

Lord Reay (UK, EC) asked if there were not any abuse of the Luxembourg compromise (when it was accepted that vital national interests were a sufficient reason for declining to reach an agreement). Had there been any improvement in this respect? And what were the prospects for reducing the decision mountain — with some 300 matters now awaiting a verdict.

Replying, Mr Andersen said he would report to his colleagues on what Sir Geoffrey and Lord Reay had said. He thought there was little prospect of treaty changes here, except on technical points. More positively, the climate in which decisions were taken in the Council had improved, he thought.

Supplementary budget No 3

Mr Cointat's report (Doc. 113/78).

Mr Andersen told the House that the Council was in favour of a third supplementary budget for 1978. This concerns the Court of Auditors. Mr

Cointat, for the Committee on Budgets, asked the House to approve this third EC supplementary budget for 1978.

Mr Tam Dalyell (UK, S) raised the question of the Court of Auditors' precise function. Mr Simonet had suggested it could investigate allegations of misuse of funds. Was this possible?

Mr Andersen said he would look into this matter.

Human rights in Uruguay and Argentina

Mr Patijn's motion (Doc. 84/78) and Mr Fellermaier's motion (Doc. 109/78).

The House concluded its business today by considering two motions on human rights in Latin America.

Mr Patijn's motion called for a joint Community representation to the Uruguayan authorities to press for the release of Ricardo Vilaro from jail.

In reply, Council President K.B. Andersen said he would bring the matter up with his fellow foreign ministers meeting in political cooperation.

Mr Fellermaier's motion, tabled on behalf of the Socialist Group, called for the Political Affairs Committee to organize a public hearing in Brussels on 25 May to investigate violations of human rights in Argentina.

There was considerable opposition to this proposal from Mr Hans-August Lücker (Ge, CD) and Mr James Scott-Hopkins (UK, EC), who put down an amendment to delete it. Several Socialist Group speakers found this difficult to accept because the Political Committee itself, they said, had already endorsed the idea – with the approval of Christian Democrats and Conservatives.

The House rose at 8.55 p.m.

THURSDAY, 11th May 1978

Parliament pays tribute to Aldo Moro

The European Parliament this morning set aside its first hour of business to pay tribute to the memory of Mr Aldo Moro. The House stood as President Emilio Colombo appealed for solidarity among the peoples and governments of the Community in combatting terrorism and violence and for a reaffirmation of the values of European civilization.

Mr Moro, President Colombo went on, had died for the ideals he had fought for throughout his long and often arduous political life. He had been a deputy of the Italian parliament for 32 years, Minister of Education from 1955-59, Foreign Minister from 1969-74 and Prime Minister on five separate occasions. As leader of the Christian Democratic Party in Italy he had striven for consensus in Italian politics.

He had been, moreover, a convinced European, seeing the need for a Europe united politically and economically and speaking with a single voice in world affairs.

Mr Colombo was followed by speakers for Parliament's political groups and by Mr Roy Jenkins, President of the Commission.

For the Socialists, Mr Ludwig Fellermaier described Mr Moro as a democrat and a committed European. Condemning what he described as 'this cold blooded murder', Mr Fellermaier said it was directed against us all. But the citizens of Europe rejected terrorism in all its forms and in that rejection lay its eventual defeat.

Mr Egon Klepsch, for the Christian Democrats, said Mr Moro had been a politician and a statesman of historical rank who had worked, in Italy and the world, for the cause of reconciliation and understanding. He had been murdered for his convictions.

For the Liberal and Democratic Group, Mr Carlo Meintz spoke of the Mr Moro's death as highlighting the need for European solidarity and progress towards European union.

Speaking for the Group of European Progressive Democrats, Senator Michael Yeats described Mr Moro as one of the great figures of world democracy. The

sole motivation of the terrorists, in all they did, was destruction. Mr Moro's death was an attack on our democratic way of life, not only in Italy, but in Europe as a whole.

Mr James Scott-Hopkins, for the European Conservative Group, said European politics had suffered a grievous loss. Mr Moro's death showed that European society was still not free from primitive and violent elements. He reminded the House of John Donne's words: 'Every man's death diminishes me; for I am involved in mankind; therefore never send to know for whom the bell tolls, it tolls for thee'.

For the Communist and Allies Group, Mr Renato Sandri said Mr Moro had been a political opponent, but the Italian Communists had always regarded him as an adversary worthy of respect who always had the interests of Italy at heart. The effect of this murder would not be to divide Italian political forces, but rather to increase their solidarity and determination to work together.

For the Commission, President Roy Jenkins called Mr Moro a European leader, committed to ever closer union of the peoples of Europe. After Mr Moro's death, there could no longer be any question of our treating terrorists with complacency, on the contrary, it would give us a new sense of urgency and resolution.

The last speaker was Mr Luigi Granelli, who spoke on behalf of the Italian members of the Christian-Democratic Group. He referred to the particular sense of loss that he and his political friends felt at the death of Mr Moro, but also reminded the House of the many other Italian Democrats who had fallen victim to terrorist attacks in the recent past.

The House then adjourned till 11 a.m.

Monetary compensatory amounts: the means by which parity is achieved between the Nine currencies for farm prices.

Mr Tolman's report (Doc. 102/78) and Mr Hoffmann's report (Doc. 104/78).

With one eye on the farm price debate going on in Council, the European Parliament turned its attention to the vexed and complex question of monetary compensatory amounts.

The Commission is proposing to phase out MCAs over seven years and that the way in which MCAs are calculated should be changed.

On the first point some speakers, such as Mr Albert Liogier (Fr,EPD), felt that seven years was much too long: two to three years would be perfectly realistic in his view; others such as Sir Brandon Rhys Williams (UK,EC), speaking for Parliament's Economic Committee, thought that ten years would be more appropriate.

And if Members disagreed as to the pace of the phase out, they also disagreed as to the manner in which MCAs should be calculated in future. But the general feeling was that the Commission's proposals before the House this morning were unacceptable. Mr Tolman's motion asked the House to reject the method-of-calculation proposal and Mr Hoffmann's motion called for a more flexible approach to dismantling MCAs.

Milk Marketing Boards

Mr Herbert's report (Doc. 116/78)

The Milk Marketing Boards in the United Kingdom do not comply with the rules of the common organization of the market in milk and milk products. But the Commission recognizes the value of the Boards in encouraging the consumption of milk and reducing the costs of intervention, and is now proposing to amend the 1968 regulation of the common milk market to allow the continued existence of MMBs under certain conditions – including the stipulation that 'a predominant quantity' of the milk produced in a given area is used for human consumption.

The Commission is also proposing special treatment of the Northern Ireland MMB to take account of 'the special economic situation' there, including a waiver of the 'human consumption' rule.

The motion in Mr Herbert's report called on the Commission to review these proposals for a number of reasons: these include concern that the MMBs are unacceptable under Community law, that they represent a monopoly and may lead to distortion of competition and constitute a barrier to free trade.

Mr Isidor Früh, for the Christian Democrats, Mr Pierre Bourdellès, for the Liberals and Mr Albert Liogier for the Progressive Democrats, all reiterated these points in expressing their support for Mr Herbert's motion.

Although there was considerable recognition of the value of MMBs in promoting milk consumption, there was also a feeling that the British insistence on retaining the Boards was too dogmatic and that similar results could be achieved by other means.

Both Mr Bourdellès and Mr Liogier were particularly concerned that the Commission's proposals had only been introduced in the final months of the transition period (under which MMBs were to be phased out on 1.1.78).

Mr Ralph Howell, for the European Conservatives, described the opponents of the Boards, in their turn, as being too dogmatic. Why get rid of a system whose value had been proved again and again and which was of benefit to the entire Community, simply because it was incompatible with the rules of the twenty-year-old EEC Treaty?

The Community had to be flexible if it wanted to be credible. Moreover, the United Kingdom was a net importer of milk and thus contributed to reducing the Community's milk surplus – and this was largely thanks to the efforts of the MMBs.

The House adjourned from 1.10 p.m. to 3 p.m.

QUESTION TIME

QUESTIONS TO THE COMMISSION

1. *Social security (Guillaume Schyns)*

Mr Jenkins said that it had submitted a memorandum to the Council on ways of achieving better distribution of income. The aim here was less that of harmonizing social security benefits than of achieving a reasonable minimum standard.

2. *Blind landing systems for aircraft (John Osborn)*

Mr Jenkins did not think it would be helpful for the Commission to intervene in endeavouring to establish the merits of different blind landing systems. Lord Bessborough (UK,EC) suggested it would be useful for all airports in the Community and even the ACP countries to have blind landing systems.

To this Mr Jenkins replied that there were at present French, British and German systems providing a classic example of a lack of cooperation. The Nine might do better if they were more united, he said.

3. *Plastic containers for milk (Charles McDonald)*

Mr Brunner said the Commission's scientific services were looking at the health aspects of plastics used as containers and if it were found that they were dangerous it would submit proposals accordingly.

4. *Compensation for misapplication of the Regulation on powder milk incorporation (Michael Shaw)*

Mr Brunner said that the Commission was awaiting Court rulings on this subject.

5. *Tree planting (Lord Bessborough)*

Mr Vouel said that the Commission had made proposals to promote silviculture and it would welcome any move to start a European year of the tree. In reply to further questions Mr Vouel confirmed that the Commission was consulting the national authorities and it was willing to study the idea of a European arboretum in Strasbourg. Mr Shaw then suggested that if there were to be a European tree there ought to be a European dog.

6. *Training for trade with Japan (Tom Normanton)*

Mr Jenkins said that the Commission would include 570,000 u.a. in the 1979 budget so that twenty people could go to Japan for 18 months to become familiar with the life and language of that country.

7. *Export refunds for pork (Michael Herbert)*

Mr Brunner said that the Commission had reintroduced export refunds for pork and in reply to a supplementary question from Michael Herbert (Ir,EPD) added that it would continue to do so as long as the market justified it.

8. *Equal pay (Gerard L'Estrange)*

Mr Jenkins said the Commission had received replies from all Member States to its questionnaire on the implementation of equal pay. It would be submitting its analysis of the information received to Parliament as soon as possible.

9. *Terrorism and control of arms sales (Jan Broeksz)*

President Jenkins agreed with the need for concerted action to combat arms smuggling and terrorism in general. If the Commission itself did not possess the necessary powers to take action, it would certainly use its influence to persuade national governments to cooperate closely.

10. *Safe polyurethane foam (Ronald Brown)*

Mr Vouel told Mr Brown (UK,S) that furniture manufacturers were working on the development of safe substitutes for polyurethane foam, but until such an alternative material was ready the Commission could not realistically put forward any proposals.

11. *Free movement of European footballers (Michele Cifarelli)*

Mr Vouel said that the Commission had contacted the football federations in all nine Member States and they had agreed to ban discrimination on the basis of nationality as from the 1978/79 season.

Mr Mark Hughes (UK,S) said he hoped that such non-discrimination rules would not be applied to the Yorkshire County Cricket Club, whose members had to be born within the county of Yorkshire.

Vote

The House agreed to the motions tabled by Mr Patijn (date of first European elections), Mr Cointat (approving a third supplementary budget for 1978), Mr Patijn (human rights in Uruguay), Mr Tolman (mcas: motion amended to read: 'welcomes the Commission's proposals') and Mr Hoffmann (asking the

Commission to amend its proposals for phasing out mcas). The House took a roll-call vote on Mr Fellermaier's motion (calling on Parliament's Political Committee to hold a public hearing in Brussels on 22 May 1978 into violations of human rights in Argentina) but in the event only 59 Members took part and the vote will be re-taken on Friday (67 Members – one third of the total membership plus one – are needed for a roll-call to be valid).

Milk Marketing Boards

Continuation of debate on Mr Herbert's report (Coc. 116/78)

British Members from both sides of the House this afternoon continued the defence of the UK's MMBs begun this morning by Mr Ralph Howell.

Following a detailed history of the Boards from Mr Mark Hughes, speakers stressed their value to both producers and consumers. MMBs ensured high health standards, fair prices, rosy-cheeked children and got the daily pinta to the doorstep through snow and rain, they said. It would be sheer folly to interfere with a system which everyone – not least the Commission – held in such high esteem. The Community should not meddle where meddling was unnecessary, warned Tam Dalyell.

Mr Brunner, replying for the Commission, expressed surprise at the passion of the debate. But the Commission faced three problems : it could not pursue a policy which would involve a distortion of trade; competition rules – and particularly Article 85 of the EEC Treaty – could not be broken; and there was no question of abandoning the Community's common organization of the market in milk. So its proposals were a compromise – and even so, it remained to be seen whether they were legally watertight.

Rejecting charges of inflexibility and putting the Treaty before common sense and the will of the people, Mr Brunner insisted that the Commission was trying to preserve the MMBs in a legally acceptable form – and that despite the fact that the UK, when it acceded to the EC, had agreed to phase them out by 1.1.1978.

Farming measures

Mr Lemp's report (Doc. 59/78).

The Commission is proposing the Council adopt four directives. These concern

1. investment aid to farmers earning below a certain income;
2. increased EC contribution to farm modernization schemes in the West of Ireland and Southern Italy;
3. retirement premiums for farmers;
4. drainage schemes in the West of Ireland.

Subject to certain amendments Mr Mark Hughes (UK,S), for the Committee on Agriculture, asked the House to approve the proposals.

Mr Gerard L'Estrange (Ir,CD), Mr Albert Liogier (Fr,EPD) and Mr Michael Herbert (Ir,EPD) and Mr Thomas Nolan (Ir,EPD) all spoke in favour of the proposals subject to certain reservations.

In reply, Commissioner Guido Brunner said the new proposals were aimed at increasing the flexibility of the structural measures. While agreeing in general with Mr Lemp's motion, he was somewhat hesitant about the latter's proposal to institute direct aids to incomes.

Farm intervention rules

Mr Ryan's report (Doc. 78/78).

The Commission is proposing to change the rules governing the financing of intervention purchasing, storage and disposal. Mr Ryan's motion called for various amendments to the proposal.

Financial regulation for the farm fund

Mr Shaw's report (Doc. 91/78).

The Commission is proposing a financial regulation for the farm fund's guarantee section for the periods 1967/68 to 1970. While criticizing the delay in clearing

farm fund accounts, Mr Michael Shaw (UK,EC), introducing his motion, said he could approve the proposal. He noted, however, that it might require final clearance by the Court of Auditors and the Court of Justice.

Crisis in the inland waterways sector

Mr Damseaux's question (Doc. 73/78).

In reply to Mr Damseaux's question about action the Commission was taking to improve the situation in the inland waterways sector, Mr Vouel said the Commission was devoting its full attention to the problem.

FRIDAY, 12th May 1978

Vice-President Carlo Meintz opened the sitting at 9 a.m.

Motions by Mr Hans-Jurgen Klinker (aspects of fisheries policy), Mr Erik Andersen (helping inshore fishermen) and Mr André Damseaux (inland waterways) to be regarded as urgent and, hence, taken today.

Protocols with Greece, Turkey and Portugal.

Mr Caro's report (Doc. 93/78)

Mr Jean-Marie Caro put down a motion calling on the Commission to amend its proposal on the application of the Financial Protocols concluded with Greece, Turkey and Portugal. His concern was with the budgetary aspect.

Publicity for Community projects

Mr Seefeld's report (Doc. 68/78).

Mr Seefeld thought that more should be done to publicise projects carried out in Member States with Community financial assistance. He suggested greater use of posters, hoardings or signs.

In reply, Commissioner Vouel agreed that publicity was essential and said that Member States had already agreed to display posters giving information about Community regional fund projects.

EC/Latin America Interparliamentary Conference

Mr Sandri's report (Doc. 574/77).

There was general agreement in the House this morning on the need to improve the EC's relations with Latin America and to contribute towards the economic and political development of the continent. The July 1977 EC/Latin America Interparliamentary Conference, held in Mexico, had been useful in working towards these aims.

Speakers also raised the question of the desirability of cooperating with Latin American States which violated human rights and thought the Community could apply pressure in this area. Mr Tam Dalyell (UK,S) and Mr James Scott-Hopkins (UK,EC), who praised the hospitality extended by the Mexicans to the EP Delegation, called for immediate discussions on the organization in Europe of the next Conference.

Rabies

Mr Spicer's question (Doc. 20/78)

Rabies, said Mr James Spicer (UK,EC), was a horrifying disease which had spread in recent years to all countries of the Community except Ireland and the United Kingdom, and it was vital that the Community, in collaboration with the WHO, should consider plans to control and eventually eradicate the disease.

Pointing out that eradication would probably prove impossible – it could only be accomplished through the wholesale slaughter of all wildlife in affected areas – Mr Spicer said that efforts should be concentrated on coordinating Community anti-rabies programmes and developing less painful and more reliable forms of treatment.

Mr Vouel, for the Commission, said that the Commission was aware of the situation and would pursue existing contacts with the WHO.

Grinding machines and hot water meters

Mr Nyborg's reports (Doc. 61/78 and 29/78).

The House then considered two reports by Mr Kai Nyborg concerned with harmonization of Member States' laws with regard to grinding machines and hot water meters.

Vote

The House then agreed to the motions put down by Mr Lemp (farming measures : amended); Mr Ryan (financing EAGGF interventions); Mr Shaw (financial regulation for EAGGF); Mr Caro (financial protocols for Greece, Portugal and Turkey); Mr Sandri (EC-LA Conference); Mr Müller (pollution control); Mr Verhaegen (veterinary programme); Mr Hughes (aspects of milk market); Mr Nyborg (grinding equipment); Mr Nyborg (hot water meters); Mr Cointat (educational allowances for local staff of EC); Mr Klinker (aspects of fisheries policy). Mr Damseaux's motion (inland waterways) was rejected.

The House then came to the motion put down by Mr Fellermaier and Mr Prescottt for the Socialist Group. The motion called on the Political Committee to seek, at a public hearing, to establish what has happened to Community citizens who have disappeared in Argentina. A roll call vote had been called for. After some discussion, in which strong feelings were expressed about the situation likely to result from recourse to this procedure, the roll was called.

Vice-President Carlo Meintz announced that only 27 EMPs had voted on the motion. The number voting being short of the quorum of 67 required for roll call votes, the motion will be put to the vote again on the first day of the next session.

The House rose at 12.25 p.m.

Parliament's next session will be in Strasbourg from 12th to 16th June.

NB Mr Herbert's report on the Milk Marketing Boards was referred back to committee at the request of the author.

SUMMARY

8th – 12th MAY 1978

(Document numbers in brackets)

MONDAY

The House sat from 5.05 p.m. to 8.30 p.m.

- In April the EP considered 17 Commission proposals, approving 14 of them. Of the remaining four, the Commission was ready to accept EP amendments to its proposals on chocolate products (Mr Lambert's report) and on the new 1bn EUA loan facility, Mr Brunner told Parliament. It could not accept the amendment to its Mediterranean proposals called for by Mr Ligios. As regards farm prices (Mr Hughes's report), Mr Gundelach would be making a statement later in the week.

(On the loan facility, the 'conciliation procedure' is envisaged because Parliament and Commission disagree as to where the power of decision to grant loans should lie.)

- Parliament asked Commission to withdraw its proposal for Member States' oil stocks commitment to be cut back from 90 to 54 days' supply. (Docs. 577/77 and 16/78)
- Parliament asked Commission to amend its proposal for 50m EUA backing for three oil prospecting projects to ensure adequate budgetary control. (Doc. 90/78)

The decision-making procedure proposed would be 'an arbitrary and unacceptable restriction on the prerogatives and responsibilities of both Commission and Parliament'.

- Parliament debated permissible scope and limits of screening applicants for employment at Euratom. (Doc. 336/77)

TUESDAY

The House sat from 10 a.m. to 1.10 p.m. and from 3 p.m. to 11.35 p.m.

- Motions to be treated as urgent
The House voted to regard as urgent the motions tabled by Mr Nyborg (state-trading countries' liner conferences), Mr Patijn (human rights in Uruguay), Mr Ligios (table wine market) and Mr Prescott (human rights in Argentina).
- Parliament approved Commission proposals for helping young people find jobs. (Doc. 88/78)
- Question Time
Six questions addressed to the Commission. (Doc. 98/78)
- The European Parliament learned with great regret of the death of Mr Aldo Moro.
- Vote
Parliament agreed to the motions contained in the reports by Mr Normanton (Docs. 557/77 and 16/78), Mrs Walz (Doc. 90/78), Mr Hamilton (Doc. 336/77) and Mr Lezzi (Doc. 88/78).
- Parliament debated air traffic control. (Doc. 49/78)
- Parliament had mixed feelings about EC accession to the UN code of conduct for liner conferences. (Docs. 47/78 and 81/78)
- Parliament approved Commission proposals regarding home study courses subject to certain amendments. (Doc. 82/78)
- Question on code of conduct for multinationals to be taken in June.
- Mr Cousté and Mr Brosnan, for the EPDs, question the Commission about the situation in the steel industry. (Doc. 75/78)
- Parliament approved Commission proposals on the application of social security schemes to self-employed persons and their families. (Doc. 87/78)
- Christian Democrat Group tabled motion calling for rejection of Commission's table wine proposals. (Doc. 105/78)

WEDNESDAY

The House sat from 10.15 a.m. to 1.05 p.m. and from 3 p.m. to 8.55 p.m.

Belgrade CSCE follow up: speakers expressed disappointment at lack of progress on human rights, but Council President K.B. Andersen pointed out that Belgrade is part of an ongoing process of détente.

Date for direct elections: House welcomed decision on direct elections' date, and Mr Patijn and Mr Jenkins stress need for visible Community action to win electorate's interest.

Question time: Mr K.B. Andersen answered questions to the Council and Foreign Ministers of the Nine.

Vote: Parliament agreed to the motions contained in the reports by Mr Noè (Doc. 49/78), Mr McDonald (Doc. 47/78), Mr Nyborg (Doc. 81/78), Mr Guerlin (Doc. 82/78), Mr Power (Doc. 87/78), and Mr Radoux (Doc. 76/78).

Parliament's relations with Council: Mr Andersen said he cannot accept Mr Corrie's proposals for a more open Council.

Mr Cointat asked the House to approve a supplementary budget to finance staff for the Court of Auditors.

House considered two motions on human rights in Latin America.

THURSDAY

The House sat from 10 a.m. to 1.10 p.m. and from 3 p.m. to 9 p.m.

- President Colombo, political group spokesmen and Commission President Jenkins paid tribute to Aldo Moro.
- Monetary compensatory amounts: call for a more flexible approach to dismantling mcas.
- Milk Marketing Boards: UK Members called for preservation of MMB system: Mr Brunner said Commission proposals represented compromise.

- Question Time: 11 questions to the Commission.
- Vote: The House agreed to motions in reports by Mr Patijn (Doc. 65/78), Mr Cointat (Doc. 113/78), Mr Fellermaier (Doc. 109/78), Mr Tolman, after amendment (Doc. 102/78) and Mr Hoffmann (Doc. 104/78).
- Farming measures: motion called for approval of Commission's proposals.
- Farm intervention rules: Mr Ryan called for amendments to Commission's proposal.
- Financial regulation for the farm fund: Mr Shaw's motion approved the Commission's proposal.
- Inland waterways: Mr Vouel said Commission was concerned with improving the situation.

FRIDAY

The House sat from 9 a.m. to 12.25 p.m.

- Protocols with Greece, Turkey and Portugal: Mr Caro called for amendment of Commission proposal.
- Publicity for EC projects: Mr Seefeld called for posters and hoardings to publicise EC-financed projects.
- EC/Latin America Interparliamentary Conference: House welcomed Mr Sandri's report.
- Rabies: Commissioner Vouel agreed with need for Community action to combat rabies.
- Vote: House voted on outstanding motions (see p. 25).

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