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\*\* Replying to a written question from Mr Oele, a Dutch member of the European Parliament, on the TAKE-OVER OF THE VERBLIFA GROUP BY THE AMERICAN CONTINENTAL CAN COMPANY, the Commission of the European Communities said that it:

"considers that FOREIGN INVESTMENTS CONTRIBUTE SUBSTANTIALLY TO THE ECONOMIC GROWTH OF THE COMMUNITY. It observes, however, that the only international links developing at a comparatively rapid rate are those which join Community firms to firms in non-member countries, usually the United States. They frequently consist in purchase or acquisition of control by a more powerful non-Community concern. Whilst recognising the great potential offered by links with firms of non-member countries, the Commission considers that THE COMMUNITY MUST SEEK A BETTER BALANCE IN THIS FIELD.

With this in view it has proposed in its memorandum on the Community's industrial policy that, in certain cases where Community firms are taken over by non-Community concerns, contacts should be established between Member States at the request of any one of them or of the Commission.

Whilst it does not advocate a protectionist attitude, the Commission considers that the development of cross-frontier investments must conform to the Community's rules of competition and ensure a proper balance between the

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facilities offered to foreign investments in the Community and the facilities obtained for Community investments in the major non-member countries".

\*\* Various recent projects have brought up for discussion the problems facing the Community in the field of IRRADIATED FUEL REPROCESSING. A brief note on the subject will be found in the ANNEX.

\*\* The Commission of the European Communities has started consultations with the producers, users, trade-union organizations and government experts of the steel industry in the Community countries, with a view to preparing the GENERAL OBJECTIVES FOR STEEL 1975-80.

\*\* Mr Oele, a Dutch member of the European Parliament, had asked the Commission of the European Communities about THE CONDITIONS OF COMPETITION IN THE RUBBER SECTOR of the Common Market, more especially in the light of the struggle for control of the Dutch firm Vredestein Rubber. The Commission has now replied in substance that:

"At first sight, it appears that inside the Common Market there is active competition in the rubber sector, not only between European groups but also between the American and the Community firms. The Commission has no information on the reasons that prompted the American firms to seek control of the Dutch firm (in question). It cannot be ruled out, however, that these firms desire to obtain in this manner a larger share in a market which is one of rapid growth.

As it has said before, the Commission is at present examining, from the angle of the Rome Treaty rules, the projected cooperation between Pirelli and Dunlop."

\*\* The conference on RADIATION PROTECTION PROBLEMS RAISED BY THE TRANSURANIC ELEMENTS, held by the Commission of the European Communities and the European Nuclear Energy Agency at the Institute for Trans-uranium Elements at the Karlsruhe establishment of the Joint Research Centre on 21-25 September (see "Research & Technology" No. 66) opened with a lecture by Dr Glenn Seaborg, Chairman of the US Atomic Energy Commission and Nobel Prize winner for his work on the trans-uranic elements. The Proceedings of the conference will be published by the Commission of the European Communities.

- \*\* SEVERAL EXPERTS FROM THE COMMISSION OF THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITIES attended the Fourth Congress of the European Atomic Forum (FORATOM) held in Stockholm on 21-23 September 1970 on "Industrial Aspects of the Nuclear Fuel Cycle in Europe".
- \*\* The Commission of the European Communities and the Stichting Europees Instituut of the University of Leyden are to sign a contract with the object of establishing a SYSTEMATIC LIST OF THE LEGAL PROVISIONS OF THE MEMBER STATES CONCERNING NUCLEAR MATTERS, and carrying out, in particular, a study of the provisions under PENAL LAW and TRANSPORTATION LAW for ensuring that nuclear materials are not diverted from their proper use.
- \*\* Replying to a question by Mr Leonardi, an Italian member of the European Parliament, on STATISTICS for the purpose of establishing uniform and comparable data inside the Community, the Commission of the European Communities has stated that it has prepared "a co-ordinated annual survey of industrial activity in the Member States of the European Communities, which will start next year and will fill a good many gaps in the statistics on Community industry. In particular it will provide information on the number of firms and their size sector by sector and on the horizontal concentration of activities within these firms".
- At a more general level, the Commission intends to transmit to the Council in the near future a comprehensive programme of action for the forthcoming years in the field of statistics.
- \*\* A conference on the TECHNOLOGY OF THERMONUCLEAR FUSION was held at Aachen on 22-25 September by the Commission of the European Communities and the Institut für Plasmaphysik, Jülich.

Reprocessing of Irradiated Fuel Elements in the Community

Various recent projects have highlighted the problems facing the Community in the field of irradiated fuel reprocessing. The dominant feature of the situation in this sector is the general over-capacity of plant existing in Europe.

For 1970 the quantities of oxide fuel elements to be reprocessed for all the FORATOM countries amount to about 60 tonnes, whereas the existing reprocessing capacity for this type of fuel is now about 460 tonnes. The amounts of oxides scheduled for reprocessing in 1973, 1978 and 1983 are 185, 1240 and 3650 tonnes respectively, whilst the capacities scheduled for installation are, as early as 1974, 1360 tonnes and, in 1978, nearly 2000 tonnes (plus, if necessary, a further 300 tonnes at Windscale, UK). Thus demand will not exceed supply until the 'eighties.

On the European market the prices now in force are aligned on the British prices, which can at best be described as marginal, and this further increases the operating deficits suffered by the Community plants by reason of their production capacity and charge rate, both of which are generally too low.

In addition to the chief reprocessing plants located in Europe today, in France and the United Kingdom, and the pilot plant Eurochemic set up under the OECD, there are a certain number of plants in Italy (PCUT and Eurax) and in West Germany (WAK).

Hence, in addition to the overall over-capacity mentioned above, the Community is faced with the problem of how to make the best possible use of these plants, the original features of which sometimes seem to be quite out of proportion to the capital investment involved.

A concerted development of the capital investments and a joint effort to make the Community reprocessing plants more profitable and correspondingly cut down the public subsidies they are now receiving appear to be essential in the light of the present situation.

A number of questions thus arise:

Ought not the Member States to make a determined effort to map out a policy for the rational utilization of the various existing plants

during the 'seventies and a concerted programme for new plant construction after 1980, the date at which it appears that substantial new capacity will be necessary?

As to the defining and implementing of such a policy, which concerns all the Member States at once both as users and as operators, ought it not to be in the first place defined and implemented within the Community, without, of course, ruling out the possibility of extending these consultations to include the United Kingdom?

With all due respect to the market requirements, ought not care to be taken in mapping out such a policy to avoid creating or accentuating inter-regional imbalances which might prove prejudicial to the harmonious development of the nuclear energy industry and of the firms engaged in it?

It should be possible to open a wide-ranging discussion on these questions within the Community in the near future.