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PRESIDENT JENKINS' PROGRAM FOR EUROPE

In a major speech to the European Parliament in Luxembourg today, Mr. Roy Jenkins, President of the European Commission, described the Commission's policy for 1977. He stressed the need to "carry the people of Europe with us", and went on to point out that "as the Community develops and the Community budget increases in size, the need for direct democratic accountability becomes steadily more pressing". Mr. Jenkins emphasized that members returned to a directly elected European Parliament in 1978 will go there as "Europeans".

The following are extracts from Mr. Jenkins' speech covering the important policy areas:

Agriculture

Our ability to command respect and support for our longer-term plans will depend considerably on how effective we are in helping to provide solutions to immediate problems. I therefore begin with an issue which is both pressing and continuing: our policies for food and agriculture.

Consumers rightly insist that our policies for agriculture must be consistent with our other economic objectives, and particularly with the overriding need to combat inflation. Our proposals for this year's farm prices will be framed in this context. I have no doubt that the prudent course will be one of price moderation.

As well as submitting price proposals we must look more clearly at the underlying problems in the agricultural sector. The fundamental questions are clear.

How can we assure stable markets and fair incomes for producers, and at the same time guarantee supplies at reasonable prices to consumers? Should we plan, in the different and more difficult employment circumstances of today, for a continued movement of labor from the land, or should we for social and environmental reasons seek to encourage and sustain farming activity, if necessary on a part-time basis? How do we resolve the regional differences, structural difficulties and disparities of income? These questions cannot be answered merely by managing the existing mechanisms of the Common Agricultural Policy. We need to look closely at its long-term objectives. This will provide one of our most important priorities in the year ahead. Our review must serve, not merely to keep the Common Agricultural Policy afloat, but to chart its course in the right direction.

Economic Integration

We face three formidable, and interlocking, obstacles to advance. The first is the stubborn persistence of high unemployment. Second are the high, though varying, rates of inflation throughout the Community. The third is the widening gap between the economic performances and real standards of living of our member states. These three obstacles reinforce each other. If we are to move forward, we must move to overcome all three obstacles together. That will provide the central theme of our economic policies in the period ahead.

Further initiatives are therefore needed as well. In the first place, the Commission undertakes to devise a general policy to concentrate its present and future financial resources on the central problem of economic divergence. We must devise a more diversified and flexible means of responding to the urgent needs of various parts of the Community economy - a means which takes account of the fact that the underlying causes of cyclical problems are often structural. We shall work out our ideas and consult member states about how they can best be put into effect. It may be said that the gap between our member states is so wide that no conceivable Community intervention could narrow it significantly. I reject that view as a counsel of despair. All enlightened modern states - certainly all the member states of the Community - redistribute income from their richer regions to their poorer ones, none accepts the argument that because regional imbalances are hard to overcome, no attempt should be made to overcome them. What they do within their national frontiers, we should seek to do in the Community as a whole.

Industrial Policy

We must pursue the practical work of removing barriers to trade through harmonizing company law, competition law, and taxes. We should not indulge in a bureaucratic game of harmonization for harmonization's sake. Unless we can be sure that our proposals will lead to more trade, and better conditions for producers or consumers, there is no point in making them.

Energy Policy

The short-term economic case for a big immediate investment in nuclear power stations must be weighed against the possible environmental dangers. If the debate is to produce satisfactory results it should be conducted on a Community as well as a national level.

Unemployment

Full employment cannot be achieved simply by stimulating demand. Here we shall try to provide coordinated labor market policies throughout the Community.

Europe of the Citizen

We must never forget the overriding need to carry the people of Europe with us. If they fail to see the need for common solutions to common problems, then common solutions will not, in the end, be adopted. If they fail to recognize that the general interest of the Community can transcend the particular interests of the member states, then the general interest of the Community will not prevail. In the period immediately before us, leading up to direct elections, it is clear that as the Community develops and the Community budget increases in size, the need for direct democratic accountability becomes steadily more pressing. Secondly, it is clear that direct elections will in themselves help to foster a sense of common identity among the electors. The members returned in these elections will come as Europeans.

I have already promised that this Commission intends to treat the present Parliament as it will treat the directly elected one, and that, in particular, we shall send no proposal to the Council without seriously and systematically considering whether it is likely to receive a majority here.

In less than two years time, an electorate of 180 million will be called upon to determine the composition of this house. We have two clear objectives: to ensure that each voter is aware of the ways in which his own life is affected by decisions taken at Community level and of the way in which he can affect the tendency of those decisions by casting his vote and, at the same time, to ensure that we are aware of the attitudes and aspirations of the voters whose interest we seek to serve.

As well as strengthening the Commission's relationship with the Parliament, we must take action to strengthen the Commission itself and to make it more effective.

Enlargement of the Community

Having proclaimed a new way of learning from the bitterness and weakness of the past, a new way of transcending the restrictions of national sovereignty, we cannot convincingly say that these benefits should be limited only to some European countries. But our talks with applicant countries have to be carefully planned to face overtly the major problems which enlargement will present both for the Community and for the applicant countries. It is therefore our determination that the Community takes an overall approach to the question of enlargement.

By placing future talks on grounds of both realism and perspective, we shall be more likely to make a genuine and effective contribution to European unity. The Commission will be sympathetic to enlargement, but it will insist that the problems be faced and not glossed over. That unity must also be sustained outside Europe in handling our external relations. The Community must endeavor to speak with one voice to the world. If we are determined, inside the Community, to make clear our concern for our own weaker regions, to deal so far as we can with poverty and unemployment, we cannot divide that internal concern from the world outside.

Conclusion

We have to strike a difficult and delicate balance. We must not promise what we cannot achieve, for if we do so we will merely add to that cynical disillusionment with political persons and institutions which is today one of the greatest menaces to democracy. But at the same time, we must not limit our real possibilities of achievement by a deadening caution or an inability to lift our sights. We want our deeds to be a little better than our words. Let us always do more than we promise to do. In this way the great institutions we represent will be in a real and practical sense the means by which we go forward, the very engine of Europe.