

442290

■***

NOTE **BIO(79) 305** AUX BUREAUX NATIONAUX
C.C. AUX MEMBRES DU GROUPE ET A MM. BURGHARDT, DG I, LECOMTE,
DG VIII, COLMANT, SECRETARIAT GENERAL

432
437

■***

SUBJECT : COMMISSION EXPENSES : COURT OF AUDITORS ■ REPORT

PRESIDENT JENKINS APPEARED YESTERDAY BEFORE THE BUDGETARY
CONTROL COMMITTEE OF PARLIAMENT. THE FOLLOWING WERE HIS
INTRODUCTORY REMARKS :

MUCH HAS BEEN WRITTEN AND SAID ABOUT THE COURT OF AUDITORS
REPORT, SOME OF IT MISCONCEIVED, SOME OF IT A LEGITIMATE AND
NATURAL EXPRESSION OF PUBLIC CONCERN. I FEEL THE PARLIAMENTARY
COMMITTEE CONCERNED IS THE RIGHT PLACE TO DISCUSS THE ISSUES
RAISED IN THE REPORT. THE COMMISSION, LIKE THE OTHER INSTI-
TUTIONS OF OUR COMMUNITY, IS ACCOUNTABLE FOR ITS ACTIONS TO THE
CITIZENS OF EUROPE ■WHOM YOU REPRESENT.

YOU WILL HAVE SEEN THE COMMISSION'S OBSERVATIONS ON THE COURT
OF AUDITORS REPORT AND THE NEW RULES WE HAVE ADOPTED. I WILL
NOT REPEAT THEM. BUT AT THE PRESENT STAGE OF OUR DISCUSSION
I WANT TO DRAW ATTENTION TO FOUR GENERAL POINTS.

FIRST THE COMMISSION HAS ACTED PROMPTLY AND, IN MY VIEW, EF-
FECTIVELY TO PUT RIGHT THE DEFICIENCIES OR WEAKNESSES OR AB-
SENCE OF RULES REVEALED IN ITS ARRANGEMENTS BY THE COURT. WE
RECEIVED THE REPORT FORMALLY FROM THE PARLIAMENT ON 28 AUGUST;
WE CONSIDERED IT IN DETAIL IN EARLY SEPTEMBER; WE DECIDED UPON
A COMPREHENSIVE REVISION OF OUR PROCEDURES ON 19 SEPTEMBER; AND
WE BROUGHT THOSE NEW PROCEDURES INTO EFFECT ON 1 OCTOBER. AS
YOU WILL HAVE SEEN FROM LOOKING AT OUR NEW RULES, WE HAVE AC-
CEPTED MOST OF THE COURT'S RECOMMENDATIONS. WHERE WE HAVE NOT
DONE SO WE HAVE EXPLAINED IN A GOOD DEAL OF DETAIL WHY.

SECONDLY I WANT TO UNDERLINE THE TOTAL INACCURACY OF THE STORY
WHICH HAS BEEN WIDELY REPORTED IN THE PRESS AND IS STILL LODGED
IN SOME PEOPLE'S MINDS THAT THE COMMISSION OVER-SPENT ITS
BUDGETARY ALLOCATION FOR REPRESENTATIONAL EXPENDITURE FOR 1978
BY 23 0/0. THE TRUTH IS THAT ON THE FIGURES PRODUCED BY THE
COURT WE UNDER-SPENT OUR ALLOCATION BY 1.5 0/0. SINCE THEN
WE HAVE LEARNT THAT THE COURT ITSELF MADE A MISTAKE IN ITS
FIGURES. AS A RESULT THE CORRECT PERCENTAGE FOR OUR UNDER-
SPENDING WAS 3 0/0. HERE IT IS WORTH REPEATING THAT OUR EX-
PENDITURE IN THIS REPRESENTATIONAL CATEGORY HAS INCREASED BY
ONLY 16 0/0 SINCE 1973. COMPARE THIS WITH AN INCREASE OF 64
0/0 IN THE COMMUNITY COST OF LIVING. COMPARE IT ALSO WITH
////

NNNN

R. BEETHAM GPP BERL 1/12 - 2206 .9.79

THE INCREASE IN REPRESENTATIONAL EXPENDITURE BY OTHER COMMUNITY INSTITUTIONS UNDER THIS HEAD OF '86 0/0 FOR THE COUNCIL AND 167 0/0 FOR THE PARLIAMENT.

THIRDLY I WANT TO SAY A WORD ABOUT OUR EXPENDITURE ON TRAVEL. CRITICISM HAS BEEN FOCUSED ON OUR USE OF AIR TAXIS. WHILE WE AGREE WITH THE COURT'S RECOMMENDATION THAT THE RULES GOVERNING USE OF AIR TAXIS SHOULD BE TIGHTENED UP AND RIGOROUSLY APPLIED, AND INDEED GO FURTHER TO ABOLISH THE DISTINCTION BETWEEN JETS AND NON-JETS, WE REPUDIATE THE NOTION THAT THE USE OF AIR TAXIS IS A FORM OF LUXURY. I WILL NOT GO INTO THE QUESTION OF WHETHER THIS MODE OF TRANSPORT, WHEN IT HAS TO BE USED, IS COMFORTABLE. LET ME ASSURE MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE THAT IT IS NOT. MORE IMPORTANT IS THE FACT THAT AIR TAXIS ARE ONE OF THE MEANS BY WHICH COMMISSIONERS, LIKE MINISTERS FROM OUR MEMBER GOVERNMENTS, DO THEIR JOB. WITHOUT THEIR OCCASIONAL USE WE, AGAIN LIKE MINISTERS, WOULD BE UNABLE TO DO IT. OCCASIONAL USE IS ESSENTIAL TO OUR JOB.

THIS BRINGS ME TO MY FOURTH POINT. THE ONLY GENERAL CRITICISM WHICH I MAKE OF THE ASSUMPTIONS OF THE COURT OF AUDITORS REPORT IS THAT IT CONTAINS ASSUMPTIONS ABOUT THE ROLE OF THE COMMISSION AND ITS MEMBERS WHICH ARE NOT WHOLLY WELL CONCEIVED. INDEED THE PROTOTYPE OF THE IDEAL COMMISSIONER WHICH EMERGES FROM ITS PAGES WOULD BE A CARICATURE OF THE REMOTE BRUSSELS BUREAUCRAT, WHO STICKS TO A PARTICULAR FUNCTION, STAYS IN BRUSSELS AS MUCH AS HE CAN, AND ESCHEWS EXCESSIVE CONTACT WITH ORDINARY PEOPLE, ABOVE ALL THOSE FROM HIS OWN COUNTRY. THIS WILL NOT DO FOR THE ROLE OF A COMMISSIONER. MEMBERS OF THE COMMISSION FORM A COLLEGE AND TAKE COLLECTIVE DECISIONS. THEY ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR THE EFFECTIVE PRESENTATION OF THE COMMISSION'S - AND THE COMMUNITY'S - VIEWS AND POLICIES BOTH WITHIN THE COMMUNITY AND OUTSIDE IT. THEY HAVE PARTICULAR RESPONSIBILITY TO KEEP IN TOUCH WITH PEOPLE THROUGHOUT THE COMMUNITY AND ESPECIALLY THOSE FROM - IN THE JARGON - THE COUNTRY WHICH EACH KNOWS BEST.

I END AS I BEGAN. THE REPORT OF THE COURT OF AUDITORS THE OVERWHELMING MAJORITY OF WHOSE RECOMMENDATIONS WE HAVE ACCEPTED AND THE COMMISSION'S RESPONSE TO IT SHOULD BE SEEN AS PART OF THE PROCESS OF MAKING THE COMMUNITY'S INSTITUTIONS MORE ACCOUNTABLE. I WELCOME IT. I NOW LOOK FORWARD TO A MORE DETAILED AND SPECIFIC DISCUSSION WITH YOU.'

IN ANSWER TO SOME TWO HOURS OF QUESTIONS AND COMMENT, THE PRESIDENT ADDED THE FOLLOWING MAIN POINTS OF INTEREST :

////

