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EDITORIAL

Let Them All Join Us!

SHOULD Britain join the Common Market? We say "No!" Between both sides in the hot debate now raging there seems to be a tacit agreement to avoid moral issues. Questions of right and wrong are "old hat" in politics today. Expediency—the supposed balance of advantage—is the criterion almost universally applied. Dithering as usual, and divided, the Government is chiefly concerned about the effects British entry would have on the Commonwealth, home agriculture and its partners in E.F.T.A.

From the outset we have contended that in all the complex deliberations the consumer is the forgotten man. This has been amply vindicated. His right to buy what and from whomsoever he pleases is paramount. It is an economic and political question, certainly, but towering above and beyond those important considerations it is a moral issue, a fundamental matter of human freedom and dignity. No man can be said to be free whose choice of supplier is arbitrarily curtailed. Economic freedom is not a pleasant luxury to supplement man's basic requirements or simply the purlieu of poets: it is the essential prerequisite of civilised society. Given freedom the human spirit and ingenuity knows no bounds; denied freedom the proudest civilisation splits asunder and collapses.

The writing on the wall is plain enough for all to see. In England the new barbarians, products of a society which has rejected economic justice and bowed the knee before the false gods of protectionism, inflation and state paternalism, are already abroad, coshing, robbing and smashing. Recruiting more police or restoring barbaric penalties will not abate the rising tide of crime and violence. If we are to survive we must set a compass course towards the free economy and limited government.

Entry into the Common Market would simply take us further in our present direction. Consumers might gain certain initial benefits if British industry were suddenly confronted by increased competition from European manufacturers but these would be partly or wholly offset by higher food prices and in any case short-lived. The British people have derived scant benefit from Imperial

Preference. From European Preference they can expect to get even less.

Nor is it necessary in order to make British industry more competitive to hand ourselves over lock, stock and barrel to the super-planners now flexing their muscles across the Channel. Unilateral removal of all barriers to trade—tariff taxes and quotas—would do the trick. Then, instead of our joining a protectionist clique in a corner of Europe, destroying our Commonwealth and tossing our Colonies and neutral countries as a gift to the Communist powers, we should, in effect, have the whole world—including the Six—join us.

A proposal to switch "overnight" from high protection to complete free trade is perhaps too radical to win support from a once proudly independent people now debilitated by decades of mercantilism. But there is no sound reason against an immediate all-round reduction of British tariff taxes, if only by a token percentage, and with the highest tax levels brought down into line with those of the Common Market.

As matters stand it is anyone's guess what the future holds. If the Government can win the consent of the Dominions, no simple task especially with Canada and New Zealand, and can satisfy itself and British farmers that on balance they stand to gain, as some are now claiming, and can somehow persuade its E.F.T.A. partners to put their heads in the noose (Denmark is willing to do so if we do), it will seek negotiations with the Six. If that time comes our final hope may be that the French will place insurmountable obstacles in the path.

NOTES OF THE MONTH

AN INTERNATIONAL BUREAUCRACY

SUPPLEMENTING the foregoing is the following letter reprinted from the *City Press* written privately by an executive member of the United Committee, Mr. Stephen Martin:—

"Anyone who has read the Rome Treaty must realise that the real objective of the Common Market is the creation of a supra-national authoritarian planned