

WHAT OTHERS ARE SAYING

Tory Sleight of Hand

Rt. Hon. J. Enoch Powell, M.P., April 17

THE CONSERVATIVE PARTY'S manifesto at the General Election said that, "If we can negotiate the right terms, we believe that it would be in the long-term interest of the British people for Britain to join," but it also said that "obviously there is a price we would not be prepared to pay and only when we negotiate will it be possible to determine whether the balance is a fair one and in the interests of Britain." Finally it said: "Our sole commitment is to negotiate." This was the reason why at the Election the Common Market was not an issue, because the Conservative Party was committed to nothing but negotiation.

But the electorate turns out to have been misled. Nobody could have imagined that the British government was going to start by accepting the Community and its rules and principles, exactly as they stand, and that the negotiations would merely be about what would happen in the transition period and not at all about what would happen afterwards. So far from there being, in the words of the manifesto, "a price we would not be prepared to pay," the government agreed to the price before the negotiations began. So far from determining whether "the balance is a fair one," the negotiations leave the balance untouched because they are not concerned with Britain's rights and obligations after she has become a member. In the so-called negotiations at Brussels, so said the British Ambassador in Paris recently, "the only argument is over the terms of the transition period." This is not only not what the Conservative Party told the country at the election; it is not what the Conservative Party led the country to believe.

It may, or may not, be possible to persuade the British people so to identify their interests with those of their Continental neighbours as to join the European Economic Community. I do not know. What I do know is that the British people will not submit to become part of the Community as the result of a trick, and that they will never forgive any person or party who they feel has got them there by sleight of hand.

Then again, just before the election, Mr. Heath told the country quite plainly that British entry "would be impossible unless it was supported by the British Parliament and people." No doubt there is room for honourable difference of opinion as to what exact percentage of the electorate of this country is against British entry; but there can be no doubt or dispute that a majority of the electorate, let alone, in Mr. Heath's words, "the British people," do not support entry.

Has Mr. Rippon told the Brussels negotiators that the support of the British people, which Mr. Heath made a

prerequisite of entry, is lacking? Or is the plan to present Parliament and people with a *fait accompli*, and simply say: "Well, it's too bad; you have to support it now. But cheer up; you'll find you get used to it as time goes on."

The Common Market countries make no secret of the fact that, sooner or later, political as well as economic integration and unification is the end and object of the Community. It is not a free trade area: it is intended to be an economic unit with a single currency and economy. It is not an alliance; it is intended to be a political entity, with a single policy and will. This is the reason why, on this issue, no-one can presume to know better than the British people themselves. On the other subjects, governments may well act in the light of their own beliefs and insight as to what is right. Not so on this. Only the nation itself can say what it is and feels itself to be.

Dishonest and Fraudulent

The Spectator, July 3

IT IS CLEAR that the policies adopted both by the present Conservative government, and by previous governments, both Conservative and Labour, towards the two great nationalized industries, coal and steel, will not be permitted should this country, or more accurately, its government and Parliament, elect to join the Market. This is not all. The kind of regional policies that previous Conservative and Labour governments have thought it politically or socially desirable or prudent to pursue will also be ruled out. It may be that it is logically sensible to charge coal consumers the real cost of getting the coal from pithead to coal-cellar; it may be that it is foolish to direct new steelworks into Scotland or Wales; it may not make logical sense that nationalized industries unable to pay dividends should still be able to acquire loan capital. But hitherto it has been for the British government of the day to decide about such matters. Now, as the Commissioners of the Six and the other community authorities have already begun to make clear, the decision on such matters will be taken out of British hands should we sign the Rome Treaty. And it is not as if the Treaty itself is negotiable, or being negotiated. The Treaty is written, and the Commissioners have for some years now been interpreting it. Those interpretations have the overriding force of supranational law: and one of the first acts the Commons would have to pass following accession would be an Act of Parliament declaring the precedence of Community over British statutory and common law.

It has already been made plain as a pikestaff that the claim that in joining the EEC this country will suffer no loss of sovereignty nor any diminution of national identity is a dishonest and fraudulent claim which cannot be made by any statesman conscious of his public duty.