

NO DANGER TO SOVEREIGNTY

From the U.S.A.

SIR, — I have read the articles on the Common Market in *LAND & LIBERTY*. Basically your position is right; that is, that a full free trade programme is what we want; and that a common tariff wall around the Common Market countries is not free trade.

But there are other aspects to the Common Market that strike me as significant and encouraging. Firstly, it was a great step forward that six countries, traditionally hostile to one another could have achieved such a rapprochement. Each one had surrounded itself with trade barriers against the others, and now such barriers have been reduced and are in line to be abolished altogether; and other benefits have resulted, such as greater freedom of movement and common business rules. That Europe did not go all out for free trade is to be regretted, but historically few advances toward freedom are made on such an all out basis; rather they are built up bit by bit. Our own U.S.A. took a similar step when the Constitution forbade tariffs between states. This was a great improvement over the previous condition, in which thirteen separate bickering states had tariffs and other barriers against one another. True, it would have been better if the U.S.A. had not also erected a common tariff barrier against the rest of the world, but the step that was taken was nevertheless an advance.

Besides the internal good that the Common Market has done, it has also had a great effect on the rest of the world. It has served to demonstrate the advantages of freer trading. The world may not yet be ready for the next logical step, to see that full free trade is the best way; but the Common Market has at least shaken loose some old fixations and, in countries far and wide, it has given rise to some very earnest thinking about freer trade. The U.S., too, has been stimulated to undertake a freer trade programme.

I realise that the discussions in *LAND & LIBERTY* have been dominated by the urgent question of whether Britain should or should not join the Common Market. The main arguments against joining are: that it would not be a real step toward free trade, but simply joining a trade bloc; that it would endanger the political independence of Britain; and that it would force less favourable trade arrangements upon the Commonwealth countries. If you will pardon the temerity of an outsider offering opinions on these points I offer them herewith.

True, joining the Common Market would not be a real free trade programme. But what really are your chances of persuading the British Government to adopt an out-and-out free trade policy as an alternative? On the other hand, if Britain did join the Common Market, the other members of the E.F.T.A. would undoubtedly follow suit. Besides the beneficial effects on the countries concerned, the effect on the world at large would be redoubled, protectionist theory and practice would be still more jolted,

COMMON MARKET

America

Scandinavia



and the move toward freer trade would be further accelerated.

As for Britain's political status, would that not depend upon negotiations? The Treaty of Rome is rather general on that point, and so far the member countries have certainly not relinquished any of their national sovereignty. They have come more readily to agreement on economic matters; but there is at present some disagreement as to how to proceed toward political union, and meanwhile, no country is giving up a jot of its identity. Should an agreement be reached, it is one that all will find acceptable. If Britain were in the negotiations her terms would be part of the deliberations. I think a desirable outcome would be some sort of federal union. (Do you recall, the British Government went even further than that just before the fall of France in 1940, and proposed that France and Britain form one government?)

As for trade relations with the Commonwealth countries it is true that is a tough nut to crack. But, there again Britain in her negotiations with the Common Market can surely work out some sort of agreement, even if it is a compromise. The Commonwealth countries are already looking around for other trading opportunities in anticipation of Britain's joining the Common Market. They may not fare so badly; and may we not anticipate their re-joining when the idea catches on; when we all finally realise that we should have nothing less than a world-wide Common Market?

Yours faithfully,

New York.

—R. CLANCY.

NEW BYZANTINE EMPIRE?

From Denmark

SIR, — Sometimes history is stronger than ideas, at other times it is not. But if history and ideas unite, nothing will be stronger. European integration is both history and ideas.

Much more unites our countries than divides them. Western Europe is a product of the Atlantic Ocean; our climate is Atlantic; our rivers flow to this ocean and our trade goes across it. We have a common cultural heritage from Palestine and Greece, and we all honour