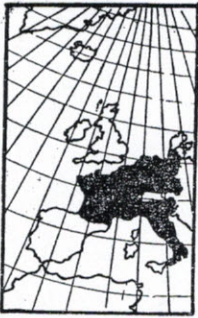


# A Bureaucracy Beyond Control ?



**T**HERE is widespread frustration and discontent with the complex EEC regulations at present in force, which spreads right up to and includes the West German

Finance Minister, Helmut Schmidt, reports Jonathan Carr, *Financial Times*, October 26. "It might have been thought," he says, "that with the progressive reduction of tariffs between the Community's member countries, customs officials would increasingly find themselves out of a job. In fact, in the case of West Germany, the customs work has increased ten-fold in the past ten years and is bordering on the unmanageable." He quotes an official as saying: "We have rid ourselves of the internal national system only to find

ourselves with Community work which is unimaginably more complicated."

Pages and pages of new rules and regulations find their way to the customs house daily, creating near chaos with the complex calculations that have to be made on a wide range of goods. It might be thought, says the correspondent, that duty free imports should give little trouble or work. However, these goods still have to be processed for internal taxation, including consumer taxes, turnover taxes, etc. and, of course, tax work continues to apply to many goods imported from fellow-member countries.

Germany is also unhappy that during the last ten years she has paid DM 3,200 million more into the Brussels farm fund than she has received from it. Changes, it appears, can come only from the highest political level, but since one or another national govern-

ment would be the loser from such changes, there appears to be little prospect of decisions being reached.

"Despite the enormous economic and industrial power behind it, the Bonn government tends from time to time to lose heart in the Community," says the correspondent. "At the Finance Ministry there is some limited hope that an advance will be made, but fears are also widespread that the system has already become ingrained - that like the Dickens law-suit people will be born into it and others will die out of it, but the system in



itself will continue on its way fundamentally unchanged and perennially hopeless.