

eignty. There were some forces in Europe which would like a genuine federalist system but Europe was too old, too diverse in tradition, language and history to turn itself into a sort of United States. The federalist movement was not favoured by the leading Governments of Europe. Certainly not by the French Government. The alternative concept, the only practical one, would be a confederation or commonwealth — what General de Gaulle had called *Europe des patries*— which would retain the great traditions and the pride of the individual nations while working together in clearly defined spheres for their common interest. That concept seemed more in tune with the national traditions of European countries. It was one with which we could associate willingly and wholeheartedly. There was nothing in the Treaty of Rome which committed members to any kind of federalist solution, nor could such a system be imposed on member countries. There was nothing on the constitutional side which we need fear and which could not be satisfactorily resolved.

#### CONSEQUENCES OF FAILURE

He had always said frankly to the House that he thought the failure of these negotiations would be a tragedy. *"If I am asked whether the prospects are now improved, I can only repeat that I am more hopeful than before. The very deterioration of the situation in Europe must tend to increase the forces of unity."* He felt sure that European countries realised that there were special problems affecting our position. Special arrangements had been made for France's overseas interests and there were special protocols for Italy, Holland and Germany, which were all the subject of negotiation and debate. We must hope that the Six would regard the special arrangements which we required as negotiable in principle. In that case negotiations could begin. Necessarily they would be protracted, detailed and technical. As well as matters of principle, a large number of separate commodities had to be dealt with and agreement reached on them. No one could be sure that the negotiations would succeed. We had much to gain from membership and much to contribute. A great responsibility lay on the Six as well as on ourselves. If the present rift in Europe should continue and perhaps deepen then the consequences would be grave. There would then be a canker gnawing at the very core of Western Alliance.

The Prime Minister concluded with these words: *"I therefore ask the House to give Ministers the authority—not to sign a treaty—but to find out on what honourable basis such a treaty could be put forward for the decision of the House."*

## Opposition Leader Sits On The Fence

MR. HUGH GAITSKELL, Labour Opposition Leader, moved an Amendment noting the Government's decision to initiate negotiations, regretting that it would do so from a position of grave weakness, and declaring that Great Britain should enter the E.E.C. only if the House gave its approval and if the conditions negotiated were generally acceptable to a Commonwealth Prime Ministers' Conference and accorded with our obligations and pledges to other members of the E.F.T.A. There were those who saw the problem of whether or not we should enter the Common Market as a clear cut and simple one. They had no doubts. Some were passionately in favour and others were equally passionately against, unconditionally in both instances. The pictures they presented of what would happen if we followed the one course or the other were so different as to appear to be related to something totally different. Both extreme points of view had their adherents in the House, but the large majority of M.P.s in both parties felt that these views were greatly influenced by emotional attitudes and suspected that a more careful analysis would show that it was much more a matter of balance. For instance, the great expansion that had taken place in the Common Market countries was due to other factors beside the Common Market itself, such as in the case of France, the devaluation of the franc, and in Germany, the emigration from the east. The political consequences of joining were not as dangerous or profound as was sometimes suggested. Those who took the intermediate position said that before we could reach a decision, the conditions must be known and for that reason the Opposition would not oppose the Government's Motion if their Amendment was defeated.

#### SEARCHING QUESTIONS

It was hard to see why the decision to open formal negotiations had been hailed as historic and decisive. There had been protracted negotiations of the Free Trade Area and those between E.F.T.A. and the E.E.C. and the informal, official negotiations which had taken place for at least six months between France, Germany and ourselves. Did the Prime Minister stand by the statement he made four and half years ago that we must remain free to continue to grant preference to imports from the Commonwealth? That would severely limit the possibility of the negotiation. Did Mr. Thorneycroft still stand by the statement he made in November, 1956, that we could not enter into a customs union because that would mean that we should have to put up tariffs where none existed today against a whole range of Commonwealth goods?

In March, 1958, the President of the Board of Trade told the House that a clear undertaking had been given to the Commonwealth countries to maintain their position in our markets for foodstuffs, drink and tobacco. Did that undertaking stand? In February, 1959, the President had said it would be wrong for us and for the whole free world to adopt a policy of new duties on foodstuffs and raw materials, many of which came from underdeveloped countries, which were entering a major market duty-free. Mr. Gaitskell hoped he would bear that in mind when negotiations about New Zealand butter and lamb were taking place. The President had also said that for us to sign the Treaty of Rome would be to accept as the ultimate goal political federation in Europe, including ourselves.

In Europe, people of very considerable authority were saying that Britain was regarded as a liability to the E.E.C. We were dependent on support from European Bankers.

Unless we were able to secure a special protocol, membership of the Common Market would involve a very serious infringement of our rights to protect our foreign exchange markets. It was idle to speak about a common currency until there was a common government. The idea of not being in control of our own currency, and of having it subject to a supranational or international gathering, would be quite wrong. There was no question whatever of Britain entering into a federal Europe now. We did not have to commit ourselves for all time, for 20, 50 or 100 years hence, but we must be clear that there was no commitment at all, even to eventual federation. British opinion was not in any way ripe for such a step.

#### PROTECT CONSUMERS, NOT FARMERS

He was not frightened of continental competition for British farmers, who were efficient enough to stand up to it. "The people who have to be protected in this case are not the farmers at all, but the consumers." It seemed that the system of subsidies and deficiency payments would be replaced by a system of tariffs which would raise the cost of living. The Opposition would like an assurance that if this was so, the Government would balance out the saving they made on the Exchequer by reducing indirect taxes which fell heavily on poor people. The Opposition regretted that the very strong pledge the Government had given to E.F.T.A. was not incorporated in the motion. Why could not the same or a similar pledge be given to the Commonwealth?

It was very difficult to stomach the idea of switching preferences which had been in favour of the Commonwealth into preferences which were against them. This was tremendously important in the case of Australian and New Zealand dairy produce and Canadian and Australian wheat. It would be quite outrageous, if, by going into the Common Market, we did things which seriously damaged, for instance, the extremely poverty-stricken West

Indies because they lost their preferences in the sugar market. The best way of bringing these matters to the test was to call a Commonwealth Prime Ministers' conference. If the conditions were "generally acceptable" to such a conference, a great deal of the opposition here and elsewhere to our entry would disappear. If such approval were not forthcoming it was doubtful whether the Prime Minister would be able to carry this country into the Common Market.

Mr. Gaitskell hoped the Government, despite our economic weaknesses would not approach these talks in a suppliant mood nor, on the other hand, with any idea of dominating Europe. The greater unity of Europe could not be given a firm foundation on suspicion and fears in Great Britain, on anger and dismay among our other European friends, or on bitterness and disillusionment in our great multi-racial Commonwealth, of whose development we were all so proud.

### Tory Ex-Minister Says "Keep Out"

SIR DEREK WALKER-SMITH, a former Conservative Minister was opposed to Britain seeking to join the Common Market. He devoted the greater part of his speech to the long term implications of sovereignty. The Soviet Union would prefer Britain not to join. For some M.P.s that might be a reason why we should stay out. Emphatically, he was not one of them. "Rather the reverse, for I put Soviet advice in the category of Grecian gifts. If it were shown that it was indispensably necessary to the defence of the free world then that would be a different thing. But that is not the case that has been put, or has ever been put; it would seem, at least, an unlikely proposition that in order to counter the menace of a monolithic society one should create one for oneself. Surely that would be pushing, to extreme, the principle of by Beelzebub, cast out Beelzebub."

Article 3, paragraph H, of the Rome Treaty, involved some immediate surrender of sovereignty. The question that arose was not whether the matters in respect of which sovereignty was surrendered were good or bad but, so far as they were good, could they not have been achieved by the ordinary methods of international agreements entered into on a basis of sovereignty? The answer was "yes" in regard to the elimination of quotas and the lowering of tariffs. A common external tariff against third parties was a different matter — a supra-national consideration — but that was something we did not want because it impinged upon our obligations to the Commonwealth. Was it right and safe for us to surrender control of capital and services? We were not merely a European power but the centre and chief banker of the sterling area. Some argued that there was a substantial