

# BRITAIN AND THE E.E.C.

## The Rising Costs

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ONE may be forgiven for becoming bored with the subject of the Common Market, for our politicians have now been pursuing their dogmatic attempt to join the E.E.C. for some eight years.

However, those who become bored, together with those who fail to make themselves acquainted with the consequences of joining, are doing a great disservice to themselves, their families and their country. No doubt they would also be amongst the first to complain if we did join, but by then it would be too late, for the signing of the Treaty of Rome is an irrevocable step, as no member nation may ever of its own free will withdraw.

Those who have made the effort to learn the true consequences of joining, in the face of evasion by the majority of national newspapers and by most politicians, will already be aware of the wide range of political, social and economic matters that are covered by the Treaty of Rome.

At one time attempts were made to deny that any loss of sovereignty was involved in joining, but this is no longer the case; now it is not denied but just ignored. In fact the Council and Commission of the E.E.C. are given the power to take decisions that are binding in every respect upon those persons or companies to whom they are directed, and to issue directives that are binding on every member state even though they may be opposed by the Parliament of that member state.

Immediately upon joining, no less than three hundred Acts of Parliament would have to be withdrawn or amended, for the Treaty calls for the approximation of national laws. Although at present this affects only commercial law, one cannot but be concerned that the Council's powers could eventually extend to criminal law, for there are considerable fundamental differences between the British and Continental legal systems, and few would dispute the benefits of the British system whereby a person is considered innocent until he has been proved guilty.

It is only in the face of mounting pressure that the Marketeers grudgingly admit facts that were being pointed out years ago by those who had made a study of the Treaty and could see the dangers.

In 1947, discussing the drawing up of the Treaty of Rome, Mr. Peter (now Lord) Thorneycroft said: "No government dependent upon a democratic vote could possibly agree in advance to the sacrifices which any

adequate plan must involve. The people must be led slowly and unconsciously into the abandonment of their traditional economic defences." Certainly we are being led slowly, and many are being led unconsciously, into this "sludgy amalgam" as Sir Winston Churchill once described the Common Market.

What our pro-Market politicians cannot ignore they attempt to hide in a smoke screen of double talk, presumably in the hope that everyone will become so con-

fused that they will give up trying to understand.

With the disappearance from the arena of General de Gaulle the Common Market question has once again come into the spotlight, although it seems by no means certain that M. Pompidou will in the long run be any more in favour of having Britain as a member than was his mentor de Gaulle. Nevertheless, it presents another opportunity for our pro-Market leaders to seek permission for us to crawl in. No expense has been spared in trying to prove that we are "Good Europeans." The changeover to Continental road signs, presumably to show that we are getting prepared for the Common Transport Policy that is provided for in the Treaty of Rome, has been estimated to have cost £200 million. The changeover to decimal currency, by the time it is completed, will have cost £250 million, and another £200 million will be spent on metrication, not to mention the vast cost of maintaining troops in Germany which we dare not withdraw for fear of causing offence. We have to make economies in our diplomatic services to countries which eventually could become expanding export markets, while taxpayers' money is used by the Government to pay grants of £7,500 per year to propaganda organisations like The British Council of the European Movement whose purpose is to get Britain into the Common Market.

However, even these costs are nothing compared with those that would have to be met if we joined the Common Market. Various estimates have been made in the past of the possible costs of joining and these have never been very palatable. In 1967 the Government was even pushed into issuing some figures and even these raised an outcry, despite the fact that they were considered by many economists to grossly underestimate the position.

In a recent well-reasoned article in *The Guardian* it was estimated that the extra burden on our balance of payments of the Common Agricultural Policy arrangements alone would be £600 million each year, and this was arrived at by a forward projection of the Ministry



of Agriculture's 1967 figures. But this would be only part of the burden on our balance of payments; the total may well be over £1,000 million per year when allowance is made for loss of exports.

If the Government does not agree with these figures, why does it not publish its own version? Mr. Michael Stewart has said that it would not be helpful to publish the Government's calculations on the subject. Unhelpful to whom, one wonders?

There now emerges an even uglier proposition. I refer to the proposals for a European Federation, the principle of which is accepted by signatories to the Treaty of Rome. A Federal Europe would of course involve much more than the Treaty of Rome, and would therefore have even more far-reaching effects. Our Government, true to form, faces both ways at once on this subject. Harold Wilson says in the House of Commons that it is not the Government's policy to take the United Kingdom into any sort of Federal State, whilst Foreign Minister Michael Stewart signs the Anglo-Italian Declaration which advocates a directly-elected European Parliament. With the vast number of Communists in Italy and France, and the rise of the N.D.P. in Germany, it is not difficult to imagine the sort of representation we might have in "Our New Parliament," with the Queen having to give precedence to the "President of Europe."

None of the Governments that have attempted to take us into Europe have ever had a mandate to do so. The next Government may well have, however, for all three parties are now firmly committed to joining. Vote Tory, Labour or Liberal and we vote to join the Common Market, and yet a public opinion poll in May of this year showed a majority against joining and a further poll in June showed this majority to have significantly increased.

A referendum has never been held in this country but there is nothing to say that it cannot be done; indeed, this is one of the advantages our flexible constitution has over rigid, written constitutions such as those of most other countries and of the Common Market. In the circumstances a referendum should be held; even people who are in favour of our joining the Common Market agree with this. It has been said that it would be too expensive, but the cost would be minute compared with the cost of going into Europe.

Before the decision whether or not to sign the Treaty of Rome is taken, the British voter surely has the right to have the matter fully explained to him and to be given the opportunity to express an opinion on a matter that has such far-reaching consequences for himself, his children, and indeed for untold generations to come.