

Debates at the Irish Parliament (23 June 1970)

Caption: On 23 June 1970, Irish MPs examine the Dublin Government's White Paper on Ireland's accession to the European Economic Community (EEC) and debate its potential economic, political and social repercussions.

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[...]

The Taoiseach: I move:

That Dáil Éireann takes note of the White Paper entitled *Membership of the European Communities: Implications for Ireland*.

The decision to issue a White Paper on the implications of membership of the European Communities was taken by the Government following the Hague Summit Conference of December, 1969, at which the Member States reached agreement in principle on the opening of negotiations with the four applicant countries. The indications were that negotiations would open about the middle of the year and the Government felt, in these circumstances, it would be desirable to make available a document setting out what membership of the Communities would involve.

The earlier White Papers of 1961, 1962 and 1967 had been aimed at giving a factual account of the provisions of the Treaties of Rome and Paris and the action taken in implementing the treaties. As Deputies are no doubt aware the formal opening of negotiations will take place in Luxembourg on June 30th. Following this the Community will have meetings at ministerial level with the United Kingdom on July 21st, with Ireland on September 21st and with Denmark and Norway on September 22nd.

The primary purpose of the White Paper is to set out, for the information of both Houses of the Oireachtas and the general public, what membership of the Communities will involve for the country as a whole and for particular sectors of the economy. In doing so we aimed to be objective, to cover the full range of implications, constitutional and political as well as economic and social, and to give as complete an assessment as possible, given the many uncertainties and imponderables involved. I think it has been accepted generally that the White Paper is an objective document.

Some people may think, however, that the White Paper should contain more detailed quantifications and more sophisticated analyses of the implications of membership for the economic sectors. I need not go into these at length here since they will be dealt with by the Ministers concerned in the course of the debate. I should like to emphasise that it is the long-run consequences of membership which are the more relevant factors on which to base any judgment about the merits or demerits of EEC membership. Detailed statistical estimates, on the other hand, tend to relate primarily to the immediate impact and the short-run transitional effects of entry. While such adjustment problems are undoubtedly of importance in their own right it would, to my mind, be wrong that they should dominate any discussion on the overall question. Numerous studies and estimates will, of course, be prepared and used in the course of the negotiations on entry but it did not seem appropriate that these should be extensively quoted in the White Paper itself. The reasons for this are given in paragraph 6 of the introduction, but as these seem to have been overlooked by many commentators I may summarise them briefly here. They are:

- (i) the necessity to avoid prejudicing our negotiating position on particular issues.
- (ii) The fact that the assessment depends, in the more important instances, on the outcome of the accession negotiations, including the transitional arrangements that may be arranged.
- (iii) The fact that in the case of industry and agriculture the consequences will be determined not only by the terms of accession but also by the response of individual firms and producers to the opportunities which our entry to the Communities will create for them, and
- (iv) The consideration that the Community will continue to evolve and decisions taken by the present Member States before the negotiations are completed could modify the implications of membership in

particular areas. Where necessary the assumption by new members of obligations arising from such decisions will, of course, be included in negotiations relating to transitional arrangements.

Turning now to the body of the White Paper, I propose to comment on some of the implications given. On the questions of constitutional and legal implications, the Government accept the view of the Attorney General's Committee that an amendment of the Constitution would be necessary to enable the State to undertake obligations which membership will entail. Membership will, of course, involve for us acceptance of the Treaties of Rome and Paris and the legislation of the Communities in the form of regulations and decisions in the implementation of the treaties, and the purpose of the amendment will be to ensure that this can be done in conformity with the Constitution.

It is important that it should be clearly understood that the provisions of the treaties themselves and the implementing legislation are concerned solely with economic and commercial activities and related social matters. A few commentators have talked of our scrapping the Constitution and replacing it by the Treaty of Rome. There is no basis whatsoever for such far-fetched ideas.

In the final analysis of course it is the Irish people who will decide whether the Constitution will be amended and commitment to membership of the EEC on our part necessarily involves commitment to convincing the public that an amendment of the Constitution is desirable.

Some concern exists as to the effects which membership of the EEC in its present form and as it may in future evolve may have on our national sovereignty. Since our sovereignty was won so recently and at such great cost it is only proper that any issues affecting it should be fully examined and debated here. Membership of the Communities involves only a limited transfer of sovereignty. As I have said, the Treaties of Rome and Paris deal with economic and commercial activities and related social matters.

By acceding to the treaties we will accept obligations in these fields, some of which are set out in the treaties and others are set out in the regulations and decisions issued by the Council and Commission under the treaty provisions. We will, for example, undertake commitments relating to the free movement of goods, the implementation of the common agricultural policy and the abolition of restrictions on the movement of persons and capital and on the supply of services. By assuming these obligations we undertake not to act contrary to them but such a partial surrender of our freedom of action is inherent in our becoming a party to any international agreement.

In so far as trade is concerned our obligations under the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade, known as the GATT, and the Anglo-Irish Free Trade Area Agreement, are not dissimilar to those we will assume as a member of the Communities. It should be recognised that EEC membership will lead to a greater degree of coordination and interdependence of economic policies among the members than would be entailed under a simple trade agreement. The machinery exists and is gradually being put in motion for the harmonisation of tax systems, economic and monetary arrangements. The White Paper refers to the fact that a value-added tax would need to be introduced here since the existing member countries of the Communities have already agreed on the measure for harmonisation in this sphere. The actual rate at which this tax would be levied and the consequential changes in the components of our tax structure are matters which remain to be discussed.

At first glance it might seem that such a requirement to harmonise fiscal, monetary and economic policies generally over a wide sphere must entail a substantial curb on the exercise of our sovereignty. The reality for any small nation is that the environment within which it conducts its economic affairs can be substantially influenced by the actions of the larger nations and trading blocs. Membership of the Communities, far from diminishing our situation, could result in our having a greater influence and scope for the exercise of economic policies because as a member we would participate in the formulation of common codes of action by Member States.

This in turn raises the question of the manner in which decision-making takes place in the EEC. It is possible

that uneasiness regarding our sovereignty stems from the fear that Community decisions will be taken without proper regard to Irish interests and that we will have little or no effective say in the making of these decisions. The process of decision-making in the Community takes full account of the interests of Member States. Most decisions of importance are taken by the Council — that is the Council of Ministers — on proposals by the Commission. It seems likely that the Commission of the enlarged Communities will consist of 14 members, two nationals from each of the four larger countries and one national from each of the smaller countries. We shall be anxious to ensure that there will be a permanent place for an Irish national on the enlarged Commission. While an Irish Commissioner would be completely independent — like the other Commissioners — in the performance of his function and would act in the general interests of the Communities he would naturally be alive to any problems that proposals under consideration by the Commission might create for Ireland, if they were adopted.

The formulation of proposals by the Commission is preceded by detailed discussion with experts of the Member States. In the case of all major proposals discussion takes place in the Economic and Social Committee and the European Parliament, in both of which Ireland would be represented, before decisions are taken by the Council of Ministers.

We would have full participation in the consideration of proposals by the Council through membership of the Committee of Permanent Representatives, which prepares the Council's work, and membership of the special committees and expert groups which assist the Committee of Permanent Representatives. In all these bodies the Irish Government will have a voice and the capacity to influence decisions. The member of the Irish Government sitting in the Council would participate fully in the process of decision-making. The practice in the Council has been to seek decisions which are acceptable to all the Member States and which allow for each member's interests as well as those of the Community.

It will be clear from what I have said that accession to the Treaties of Rome and Paris will involve some pooling of sovereignty with the other Member States and that in all important respects we will participate, as a full partner with the other Member States, in the formulation of and in decisions on proposals on matters with which the Treaties are concerned.

In my earlier remarks I distinguished between the Communities as they exist and as they may evolve towards political unification. This process of evolution is clearly envisaged in the opening words of the preamble to the EEC Treaty which records the determination of the signatory states and I quote, "to establish the foundations of an ever closer union among the European peoples." This closer union is something to which the peoples of Europe including our own must surely aspire but as yet progress towards the attainment of this goal has been limited. It is not possible at this stage to indicate what form it will take or when it will be achieved. The form of political unification to be agreed upon eventually may necessitate the adoption of a new Treaty to stand alongside the Treaties of Rome and Paris. All Member States, including Ireland, would participate in the negotiation of such a Treaty. Ireland would be in a position to play a full part in shaping the future political evolution of the Communities. We recognise that this may involve in time some commitment to assist, if necessary, in the defence of the Community but it is too soon to say what form any such commitment would take.

In the discussion on the question of Ireland's membership of the European Communities some mention has been made of the possible cultural implications of such membership. It is to be expected that membership would have some cultural consequences but the extent and direction of these effects is not a matter on which there is likely to be a unity of view. For my part I can see no reason why such effects need be anything but good. Culture is a living thing which is enriched and revitalised by successive generations. The ease of communication and movement in recent times has meant a heightened degree of cross fertilisation between peoples which will influence our way of life whether we are inside or outside the EEC.

For some centuries past the outside influences have come mainly from one source. The wider range of stimuli which would result from closer relations with continental Europe would correct any such imbalance and be of potential beneficial influence. Our culture has flourished in the past when there was active two-way interchange between our centres and those of western Europe. While the contemporary world has

changed dramatically since these earlier periods there is no reason why we should not confidently expect that all that is good and valuable in our culture will flourish in the enriched climate provided by membership of a wider Community.

In the chapters dealing with economic aspects of membership, the White Paper attempts to set out the principal obligations which membership will involve for us and to assess their implications as fully as possible. I would again emphasise that a distinction should be drawn between the long-term results and the changes that will be required during the transitional period from the date of accession to the stage at which full harmonisation with the Communities' policies is attained. It is possible that this transitional period may be comparatively short in duration. Variations in the length of the transitional period would affect the rate at which adjustments would proceed in the different sectors of the economy and hence would influence any detailed assessments of the likely consequences of membership.

In addition to seeking the most suitable period for the transitional phase we shall be concerned to explore how the adjustments in tariffs and alterations in relevant trading rules can proceed in the most suitable manner. The Departments and the other agencies concerned are examining these issues.

The conclusion reached in regard to industry is that it is reasonable to expect that the gains from membership would be progressive and, in the longer term, should significantly outweigh any losses that might occur. The problems of adjustment to the enlarged market would chiefly arise in the earlier years of membership but it should be possible, nevertheless, to maintain in these years an industrial growth rate of the order projected in the Third Programme.

Irish industry would come under increased competitive pressure but, to a large extent, this will occur in any event as the Free Trade Area Agreement is implemented. The additional competition which would result from our membership of the Communities should be more than offset by increased opportunities for existing firms through access to wider export markets and by the establishment of new industries to serve the enlarged Community market. Higher farm incomes would also provide a considerable stimulus for the home market. Therefore, we consider that the balance of advantages in the industrial sector favours membership.

The advantages of membership for Irish agriculture are fairly clear. The Irish farmer would receive substantially higher prices for most of his agricultural produce, prices that would apply whether the produce was disposed of on the home market, on the market of the enlarged Community or was exported to third countries. The White Paper summarises the position for our principal products. While it is difficult to forecast with any precision the overall effects of membership on our agricultural production, it is estimated tentatively that the volume of gross agricultural output might be expected to increase by 30 to 40 per cent by the end of the decade. I have already referred to the beneficial effects which the increased farm incomes would have on the demand for the products of Irish industry. We must also bear in mind the influence which the increase in the volume and value of our agricultural exports would have on our balance of payments.

In assessing the overall economic implications of membership, the White Paper states that in the light of the growing strength of the economy and given equitable transitional terms, it is reasonable to conclude that membership would give a strong impetus to production and exports from the agricultural and industrial point of view and hence to the growth of the economy. The opportunities for maintaining a satisfactory rate of economic growth would be greatly reduced if we remained outside an enlarged Community which included Britain.

In my statement to Dáil Éireann in July, 1967, on the reactivating of our application for membership, I adverted to a suggestion that our relationship with the enlarged Community should take the form of association rather than membership and pointed out the shortcomings of this kind of link as compared with membership. As the question may be raised again, I think I should take this opportunity of restating the Government's views on the matter.

The Community's attitude is that a European country should not be granted associate status in place of membership unless it is economically undeveloped or is unable because of its international relations to

become a full member. Neither of these obstacles applies in our case. The Commission in its Opinion of October, 1969, on enlargement refers to the applicant countries, including Ireland, as having achieved a level of development comparable with that of the six Member States. There are no political obstacles to our acceptance of the obligations of full membership.

If we were, nevertheless, to seek associate status the question must be asked what form of association would be of value to us assuming, of course, that the Community would be prepared to give us such status and bearing in mind that the United Kingdom would be a member of the enlarged EEC? A trading arrangement would not be of any real value: under the GATT any tariff or trading concession given us under such an arrangement would have to be extended by the enlarged Community to all GATT countries and, therefore, the content of any such arrangement would be very meagre. Almost all of our exports would remain subject to the common customs tariff on import into the enlarged Community including the United Kingdom, as well as to the levy restrictions applied to agricultural imports under the common agricultural policy. These levies have had disastrous effects on our agricultural export trade with the Six. What would be the effect on this country's economy if the same were to happen to our agricultural trade with Britain?

A preferential trading arrangement would be contrary to the provisions of the GATT unless it took the form of a free trade area or customs union. It is clear, therefore, that an association agreement of any worthwhile scope would have to take the form of a free trade area or customs union. The Community has always been opposed in principle to entering into a free trade area arrangement with European countries and would probably insist on any such association agreement taking the form of a customs union which, under the terms of the GATT, would have to apply to substantially all the trade between this country and the enlarged Community. In addition, it must be expected that an association agreement would incorporate rules of competition analogous to those in the EEC Treaty. So far, therefore, as industrial trade is concerned, our obligations and rights under an association agreement would be very similar to those under the EEC Treaty.

The principal difficulties would arise in regard to the agricultural sector. All the indications the Government have received point to the conclusion that an associate country would be unlikely to be accorded anything approaching full participation in the enlarged Community's common agricultural policy. The agricultural concessions which we would be likely to obtain would be relatively minor and we would have no say in the formulation of the Community's agricultural policy as it would affect us. Our agricultural exports to the British market would be in jeopardy and we would have little hope of expanding exports to the Continent. Therefore, the Government's view is that an association agreement would not afford us a favourable balance of economic advantages and that only full membership of the enlarged Community would provide an environment favourable to the continuing expansion of our economy.

I cannot emphasise too much that, as an associate member, Ireland would have no voice or vote in the decision-making process of the Community and many Community decisions could certainly have a significant effect on our position as an associate. Apart from purely economic considerations, we would be cut off from full participation in the future evolution of the European Communities, participation which will only be possible for us through membership.

The Government hope that the White Paper will encourage discussion of the important issues that arise in relation to our accession and will stimulate the various economic and other interests to prepare in good time for the changes which membership will entail. The question of membership has been before us now for close on a decade and the false starts that have occurred may have caused some people to think that our accession will never take place. The present situation is very different from that in the 1961-63 period and in 1967. All the Member States have expressed their commitment to the enlargement of the Community and we must plan, therefore, on the basis that negotiations will succeed. Accession may take effect within a few years. It will be the most momentous step taken by the Irish people since the foundation of the State.

Mr. Corish: Hear, hear.

The Taoiseach: If our people are to reap the full opportunities which membership will open to them an effort will be required of all economic sections, of management and labour, of all shades of opinion and, not

least, of all political parties.

In the nine years since our application for membership of the EEC was first made, major steps have been taken to prepare and adapt the economy for conditions of free trade and, specifically, for membership of the Community when that becomes a possibility. This objective of membership and a recognition of the obligations and opportunities involved in it has informed the Government's policies and actions in the economic field and we have endeavoured to interest and involve all sectors of the economy in this essential preparatory work. The imminence now of negotiations makes it all the more essential that our preparations for entry to the Community be intensified and completed. I am fully conscious this is not a task for the Government alone. Our people as a whole, all sectors of the economy, have a significant part to play in this preparatory work and should be very closely involved in it. I see the need for a close liaison, therefore, between the Government and representative bodies during the period of negotiations. It is the Government's intention to maintain consultation with bodies such as the NFA, the Confederation of Irish Industries, the Irish Congress of Trade Unions, Chambers of Commerce and others during the period of the negotiations. I should mention that the process of consultation has, in fact, already been instituted. The national interest is so very much involved in this question of our negotiations for membership of the EEC that I consider it most desirable that the Opposition parties should also be kept informed of developments during the period of negotiations.

Mr. Corish: That is a change.

The Taoiseach: A welcome change, perhaps.

Mr. Corish: The Taoiseach is bursting for allies.

The Taoiseach: I am not looking for allies. It is purely a courtesy and, as I said, I think it is in the national interest. For this reason I propose to initiate a system of briefings of Opposition parties on the progress of our negotiations. I shall be in touch with the other parties on this matter in due course.

I consider it most desirable, indeed necessary, that the general public also be kept informed. For that purpose a system of briefings for the Press and other news media will be established. I understand the Minister for External Affairs has already indicated as much to the Press and Press representatives.

In this debate we will be concerned with the obligations and advantages of membership for Ireland, but we must not lose sight of the larger issues involved. The European Communities have sprung from the determination of the Member States to end the long history of wars in Europe, wars which, in recent years, have involved all the continents of the world. By pooling their resources the Member States have not only removed any danger of war between them but have also enhanced their ability to promote the maintenance of peace throughout the world. This is a cause which we, as a nation, are anxious to support. We also wish to participate in the contribution being made by the Member States to the less developed countries. In this field it must be admitted that our effort has fallen short of that of the Member States but the increased prosperity which membership will bring will enable us to raise substantially the present level of our assistance.

Finally, we must not forget the part that Europe has played in the development of mankind and the contribution Europe is capable of making in the years to come. We can claim a share in what has been achieved. We wish to contribute fully to Europe's achievements in the future.

I have outlined the Government's purpose in issuing the White Paper and I have commented on some of the more important implications. Other Ministers will deal more fully with aspects which fall within their particular spheres of responsibility. I recommend the motion to the approval of the House.

[...]

Mr. Cosgrave:

[...]

This debate is not primarily an argument about whether we should or should not become a member of the EEC. I think most responsible opinion has come to the conclusion, over a number of years, that there is a clear case for participation by this country in the EEC. I agree with the view that has been expressed that, in this matter, it is not a choice between full membership and associate membership. Whatever disadvantages there may be in membership in the initial stages, the disadvantages of associate membership are far greater. We should have no voting rights; we should have no rights of influencing decisions; we should have no effective voice in or influence on the train of events. If anything other than membership were to be considered, it seems that the only arrangement that would offer us any scope for development or any advantages would be a trade agreement with the Community.

The case, however, for membership does not rest merely on the argument that we have no alternative but rather on the condition that the objectives of the EEC are objectives which we as a nation share and want to play our full part in achieving.

[...]

The most important result of our membership of the EEC will, therefore, be the prospect of escaping from this long period of economic dominance by Britain. We shall have, for the first time since the State was founded, a realistic opportunity to take our place on equal terms alongside the other sovereign nations of Europe and to work with them in building a new kind of European community which embodies the ideals and traditions common to all of us, at the same time safeguarding the special identity of each. It is, therefore, vital that the strongest possible efforts be made by Ireland to influence decisions during the negotiations and that we participate in negotiations during the discussions on the British application for membership so that Ireland may have a say during these negotiations and before a final decision is made on the British application. Otherwise decisions may be arrived at which would indirectly affect our interests and in the conclusion of which we should be directly involved.

These apply in particular to the length of the transitional period and the rhythm of tariff reductions as well as the permitted exceptions during the transitional period. The actual details in respect of individual aspects will be referred to later on in the course of the debate, but it is of crucial importance to the course of the whole negotiations that no final decision should be taken in respect of Britain's application, so far as it may impinge on our trading position, unless this country is allowed actual participation in the discussions on these negotiations.

Those who are arguing against the loss of national independence have failed, I believe, to grasp the reality of international relationships so far as the European Economic Community is concerned. That is, that it is small nations which benefit from communities like the EEC. It is possibly the large nations which have to sacrifice most. In the free for all world of power politics, a large nation has no formal obligations towards a small nation. We have seen that already in respect of the Anglo-Irish Free Trade Area Agreement. The small nation has no effective procedure for ensuring that its interests are respected by others. A community like the EEC strictly defines the obligations of the large nation to the small nation, and gives the small nation legal rights and legal institutions to secure them. It is of vital importance for us to understand this. Even in the present community tiny Luxembourg has its rights and cannot be pushed around by anybody.

In the past in our bilateral trade agreements, particularly as I said in our trade agreements with Britain, to a very great extent we were in a position of dependence for much the largest portion of our trade with Britain. It is right to say in this connection that our trade with Britain will continue to be of a considerable size. That has meant that under our existing trading arrangements for many years we have supplied the British housewife with subsidised food at relatively low prices. It has also meant that, although we had a trade agreement with Britain for industrial goods, when it suited the British they were in a position to impose levies against us contrary to the terms of that agreement.

Indeed, in our trading arrangements with other countries we have not had much greater success because,

although the terms of particular agreements might have been acted upon in the spirit, we had experience with some continental countries of administrative devices being used to interfere with the spirit of the agreement, if not the letter. The fact is that in trade negotiations, with our tiny market here, we have little or nothing to offer and, therefore, little claim to consideration from anybody. While nobody can suggest that the EEC represents an effortless bonanza for any Irish interest, whether industrial or agricultural, the fact is that membership of the EEC will, for the first time in the history of the State, give us absolutely guaranteed access to large and profitable markets for anything we can make or produce. Those markets will, of course, have to be fought for with vigour. The competition is tough, but at least the opportunity is there as it has never been in the past. If we fail to rise to the challenge that failure can be blamed on no one but ourselves.

These then are the basic arguments in favour of EEC membership for Ireland: first, the opportunity to achieve effective economic as well as political independence; and, secondly, new opportunities to develop economically and socially. This decision is being referred to as one of the most momentous decisions to be taken since the establishment of the State. Because of that we are convinced that on this great national question of entry into the EEC the people are entitled to express their opinion. In moving this motion the Taoiseach referred to the constitutional and legal changes which will be involved and said that an amendment of the Constitution will be required. We believe that the people must be consulted by means of a referendum and their approval obtained before a final decision is taken.

It is important to approach negotiations with the EEC from this point of view. It is important for us to realise the implications involved and to ensure that the public are fully aware of the consequences. At the same time, it is right that we should make it clear that, while theoretically there are arguments against any limitations on our sovereignty, the historical association of this country with Europe in the past was based on a number of factors similar to those that influenced the people responsible for initiating and drawing up the Treaty of Rome.

To remain outside the EEC would, to a much greater extent, make this country subservient economically to British dominance and influence. In present circumstances surely this would be a retrogressive step and opposed to the real interests of Ireland. In approaching these negotiations, therefore, the worst mistake we could make would be to adopt a hangdog defensive attitude. We should establish from the very beginning that we are not simply being dragged into the EEC in Britain's wake, but that we value the opportunity to participate in the EEC and look on it as something which is positively good. We must try to avoid appearing obsessed with our own detailed problems which are in many respects large in our own estimation but which are small compared with the problems of certain other European countries.

We should rid ourselves of the mentality of thinking that the EEC is an antagonist we should try to outsmart in negotiations. At the same time, it is important that we ensure that we are in at every level of the negotiations and that the maximum possible advantages are secured from these discussions. These negotiations are not bilateral trade negotiations in which each side is higgling and haggling to get the best bargain. The negotiations are really discussions about the whole future of the European Community and in particular about how we as new members can help to make that Community stronger and more effective, more effective not only for ourselves but for the other members as well.

If we join the European Community we shall be entering into a partnership with friends and the emphasis must be on what we can do together rather than what we can get out of each other. It is necessary to say this, I believe, because on the last occasion when this country was involved in negotiations there was some surprise that our approach lacked the essential understanding of the real purpose of EEC as laid down in the Rome Treaty. It is natural that we should be strongly influenced and affected by Britain and, to a great extent, our attitude in the negotiations reflected the concern shown in the British application in presenting long lists of goods that were likely to be affected and which they regarded as necessary to bring before the Community, because on the feasibility of satisfactory arrangements in respect of these goods they depended for their terms of entry.

I believe this to be the wrong approach. The right policy is to join the Community on the basis of the known facts of the terms of the Rome Treaty, secure the goodwill of the other members on the basis of the terms of

the treaty and the arrangements that have already been negotiated, and work out the internal problems as they arise in the development of the Community. The EEC laws and institutions are not fixed for all time. It is true that amendments would involve a complicated and protracted procedure. Nevertheless, there are obviously within the framework of the Treaty of Rome procedures and arrangements and provisions for consultation in order to make the changes necessary for the development of the Community as a whole.

The strongest possible argument for not bogging down the negotiations with detailed lists of problems is that these problems can be more effectively dealt with once we are inside rather than trying to get in. The whole concept of EEC is not to cause problems to members but rather to try to solve them. Naturally, one of our principal preoccupations is economic development, particularly regional development and the extent to which State aid for it can be continued and maintained. In that connection, to a very considerable extent we have common cause with a portion of the territory within the jurisdiction of the North of Ireland Government. Most of our undeveloped areas are in the western and seaboard fringe, and west of the Bann the Northern Government also have a problem of regional development. I am convinced that an imaginative approach to this problem would be to advocate a joint national scheme for undeveloped areas of the west and southwest as well as west of the Bann in the north. In that we would have common cause and a common interest in producing a common solution.

The primary aim of EEC is to get the fullest possible development for all Member States and all regions and areas within member countries. In the first decade of its existence EEC has proved extremely flexible in reconciling the problems of its members within the overall objective of the Community. This might be regarded as one of its most impressive achievements. I think it can be said that no member, from the largest to the smallest, feels at the moment that membership of the Community has seriously damaged or interfered with that member's vital interest. All are agreed on the enormous benefits which have followed from it.

[...]

A good deal of the concern and alarm that has been expressed about the effect of membership of the Common Market has not come from those directly concerned. In fact, many industrial organisations and, of course, the agricultural organisations, have made it clear that they favour membership. Indeed, the Confederation of Irish Industries, while expressing concern about certain aspects, has also expressed the view that it offers important opportunities for expansion. These people directly involved, either industrialists or representatives of farmer organisations, are much more likely to be well informed than those who have expressed the view that industry would be ruined or certain aspects of agriculture might be adversely affected.

There is one area in which I believe the White Paper is not being sufficiently explicit in respect of agriculture, and that is fisheries. This is a sensitive area and some fish conservation policy particularly in respect of sea fisheries must be adopted so as to ensure that fishing in Irish territorial waters by fishing fleets with much greater capital and more modern equipment will not adversely affect the interests of Irish fishermen. How the details of that will be worked out is a matter for consideration and discussion, but it is a sensitive area and one in which care must be taken to ensure that our interests and the interests of our fishermen are safeguarded.

The key to effective negotiations in Brussels this year is how we as a nation perform when we become members. In this connection our present political situation must cause some concern. Already the recent political crisis has caused bewilderment in Brussels and in political circles in other European countries. To that extent I believe the proposal to brief Opposition parties and the direct involvement of this Dáil as representing the nation is important. There can be no doubt that recent events have to some extent damaged our standing. It is important therefore that the Government should fully recognise this and make a conscious effort to re-establish confidence and respect for this country as a mature democracy.

We have argued that one of the most pressing reasons for a general election at this time was the need to have in power during the coming negotiations with the EEC authorities a Government which was recognised in Europe as stable and responsible and which could be shown to have a clear mandate from the people.

Without such an election the task of restoring credibility is greater. Nevertheless it is essential that all our efforts should be concentrated on impressing on those who will be involved in the negotiations that this is a national decision, that this Parliament speaks for the nation.

One of the aspects of EEC membership about which concern has been expressed from time to time is that of a possible commitment to defence arrangements should we or when we become members. The fact is that at this time membership of the EEC involves no defence commitments. Indeed one of the principal members, France, is not a member of NATO. On the other hand, it may well be — and this should be realised — that in future members will think it desirable to develop some common defence institution. Should this come about we shall have as members the fullest opportunities to influence policy. We should, however, recognise right at the beginning that as responsible members of the Community we must shoulder our share of responsibility for the defence of the Community, no less than our share of responsibility for securing its well-being in every other department. At present we can be certain that there is no question of membership of the EEC involving the imposition on us of military policies or military commitments against our will.

[...]

The really important responsibility of the Government now is to give an effective lead at home in securing, on the widest possible basis, an understanding by the country of what membership means and what we must do to prepare ourselves for effective participation in it. The most effective lead is by example. One of the great tasks will be one which has not so far been seriously tackled: the adaptation of the machinery of Government and administration.

[...]

Given good leadership Ireland can win a position of respect and influence in the European Community of nations far out of proportion to our size and influence in economic terms. This is an opportunity which should appeal to all the most dynamic, ambitious and imaginative among our people. Many of those who in the past had to emigrate because of the smallness of our economy and because the size of the country did not offer them sufficient scope, may now feel confident that in Europe we are offered much greater possibilities, possibilities that will, of course, have to be fought and worked for in business, farming, industry, and public affairs. This surely is a prospect which should appeal to the best elements in our community, the energetic, the courageous and those prepared to make the necessary effort.

[...]

Mr. Corish: On this matter of our application for membership of the EEC and the EEC itself, the House could be divided into two — those who have hopes and those who have fears. In the last hour or so we have heard from those who have hopes. Frankly, I must confess that as far as my party and I are concerned we are the people who have fears. One hope I would like to express is that the maximum number of Deputies will participate in this debate because, as has been said by me on other occasions, a decision to join the European Economic Community will be the most important decision representatives of the people will ever have been called upon to make. Our application for entry to the EEC has been off and on for ten years. Our application has been hot for one particular period and cold for another. When it was hot we all got excited and exhorted people to do this, that and the other thing but when it was cold — and this was for most of the time — I would suggest that not sufficient was done to equip ourselves to compete not alone against the six existing members of the Community but the three other applicants who have hopes that they may be admitted as well.

We have repeatedly voiced our opposition to the concept of the EEC and, needless to remark, we have been severely criticised for that, particularly by the Government party. As far as our opposition is concerned, we believe it is just as valid now as it was when we first expressed it in 1960.

[...]

We oppose the concept of it because not alone are we republican but we are socialist as well. As republicans we believe that if we have to accede to the conditions of the Treaty of Rome we will lose our sovereign, independent status and be dominated by a Brussels bureaucracy. We oppose it as socialists because we believe the EEC is anti-planning and is based on the principles of *laissez faire* and free competition. We have always said in this House — and this is not the least important — that there is little, if any, concern for the Third World — the Third World of underdeveloped and starving nations which are still being exploited by their former colonial masters.

I have not got the same trust in the EEC countries or those at the head of affairs in those countries as Deputy Cosgrave appears to have and as the Taoiseach appears to have. This is called a free trade area. This is an area in which there will be common trading, an area which in some time to come will be regarded more or less as the same area, but *vis-à-vis* the rest of the world in my view and the evidence is there, it appears to be a trade bloc not so much against the rest of the world, when one thinks in terms of Russia and America, but the undeveloped countries, these countries which at present have starving millions. Therefore, we must ask ourselves: “Must we seek membership of the European Economic Community?” Of course, the view is, although it was not stated here today by the Taoiseach, that we have to, according to him, seek membership because Great Britain has also applied and because Great Britain’s application has been reactivated and negotiations will commence within the next month or six weeks.

I suppose we are ashamed, so to speak, to say this, that we seek membership because Britain does, because of our continued economic dependence on Britain; this dependence is so great it appears, that we have to.

[...]

The consequences of membership have also to be spelled out. We cannot talk vaguely about what we may expect for industry and agriculture and neither can we talk vaguely or gloss over what constitutional amendments we may have to make. These I should like to deal with first of all — the constitutional changes to which the Taoiseach referred but did not examine or consider in very great detail. The White Paper did to a greater extent refer to what constitutional changes might have to be made. I think they are much greater and much more far reaching than we were led to believe over the past ten years. The Taoiseach must remember — and I do not expect that he would hold himself out to be an expert constitutional lawyer — that in recent years, when questioned about what changes might have to be made in the Constitution, he was even less than vague. He did not believe the Constitution would have to be changed, he said on one occasion, and on other occasions he said there might have to be a change to some degree.

[...]

Therefore, as far as constitutional changes are concerned the then Minister for Finance dismissed, or treated of these constitutional changes in 13 lines of the Dáil debate. The White Paper has been a little more frank in this respect. It is not good enough for us to be told at this relatively late hour that greater changes are required in our Constitution than were at first envisaged. Let us remember that in 1960 we thought we would be in the EEC within a few years and when, again, the subject became hot, we were to have got in within a few years. It is amazing that only a White Paper issued in April of 1970 can further expand on these constitutional changes. This is something that should have been considered and announced in this House years ago by a Member of the Government.

According to this White Paper we must now consider changing Article 5 of the Constitution. This article reads:

Ireland is a sovereign, independent, democratic state.

The Attorney General, or whoever is the author of this White Paper, believes that we may have to either change or scrap Article 5 of the Constitution — the article which declares the Republic of Ireland to be a

sovereign, independent and democratic state. We have heard much talk of republicanism in recent times but to what extent are these changes to be swallowed by the republican Fianna Fáil Party? One might ask what price that type of republicanism? We may have to abandon our sovereignty. It is suggested that we might have to delete the word “independent” from Article 5 of the Constitution so that in future we might be subject to decisions of other states acting collectively. According to this White Paper, we may be expected to scrap Article 5 which describes us as being a democratic state.

Here again, in those circumstances we might be subject to decisions not made by the democratically elected representatives of the people of this country but by autocrats or bureaucrats acting as commissioners in Brussels. This White Paper also suggests that Article 6.2 of the Constitution, which deals with the powers of government as being exercisable only by or on the authority of the organs of State established by the Constitution, may have to be changed or deleted. Therefore, with membership of the EEC we may expect — I say “may expect” because the White Paper is not specific — to give away the powers we have to act as a sovereign and independent State to a European Parliament, where we may have about eight seats out of a membership of 206 or to a Council of Ministers of ten, on which there will be one representative from this country, or to the all powerful Commission to which the Taoiseach referred on which we would probably have a representation of one on a body of 14. These commissioners, who are not politicians and who are not elected in any democratic way, will have the sole right to initiate proposals for legislation. It is true that there may be a curb by the Council of Ministers but, as far as I can gather, they have only power to propose amendments but not to change decisions.

It is suggested also in the White Paper that consideration may have to be given to Article 15.2 of our Constitution. This is the Article that vests in the Oireachtas the sole and exclusive power to make laws for the State and which provides that no other legislative authority has power to make laws for the State. Again, this provision may have to be abandoned and I ask the Taoiseach if he believes that this power should be given away in return for the hoped for benefits of membership of the EEC.

[...]

We are told — perhaps this is a joke when one remembers that our negotiations will commence in September — that the Attorney General is examining all these matters and the possible changes in our domestic law. However, when one thinks of recent happenings in the country, one wonders what time the Attorney General has to devote to this trivial matter of the Irish application for admission to the EEC. Apart from other considerations, we may be expected to surrender these constitutional rights for the very doubtful — and I stress the word “doubtful” — economic advantages of EEC membership not only in industry but also in agriculture.

I must confess that, as far as I am concerned, it is frightening that the so-called republican party — which brand I do not know — are prepared to sell out what is left of the republic and, goodness knows, they have sold out quite an amount of it during the past ten or 13 years. Since the Taoiseach has said our entry to EEC is imminent, it should be stressed — although it has been said before — that foreigners, and I do not use the word in any disrespectful sense, may come in here and purchase Irish land. This has been a serious bone of contention with Irish people, particularly Irish farmers. Some years ago, when people were free to come here and buy land, certain restrictions were imposed on foreigners buying land in this country. On entry into the European Economic Community they will have absolute freedom because those controls are to go. We will have a situation where there will be wealthy Europeans — remember there are wealthy Europeans — who will be engaging in what I would regard as unfair competition with Irish farmers who certainly have not the financial resources to go into competition with them when it comes to buying farms or land.

The White Paper is an improvement on the document we got a few years ago but it is fair criticism to say it is not specific particularly in respect of Irish industries. It is not specific as to what Irish industries would be vulnerable. In the second paragraph of the Introduction and Summary it says:

There would be problems in the short term but gains would be progressive in the long term.

It talks again vaguely, and I suppose hopefully, about Ireland being attractive as a base for new foreign industries. That is just an opinion. There is no evidence in that White Paper to support that opinion. There is no evidence in that White Paper to support what one might regard as a contention. There may be problems in the short term it says but gains would be progressive in the long term.

Might I be permitted to pose the question: "What happens in the short term? What happens during those times when we are having problems? Do we send another 30,000, 40,000 or 50,000 per year across to Great Britain or to some other country in order to get employment?" It describes Ireland as being attractive as a base for new foreign industry. I think it has been attractive for quite a time. I am not very well acquainted with the grants that are offered by other countries in order to attract industries but I say that the Irish Government, the Fianna Fáil Government, could not be considered as having been ungenerous in the grants, the loan facilities and the general financial facilities given to foreigners in order to attract them to invest in this country but they have not done so to the degree we need in order to cut down our unemployment figures and cut down our emigration in free trade circumstances or in the free movement of capital.

I cannot see what greater attraction there would be for those people to come to this country when they have not been attracted by the financial facilities that have been and still are offered by the Irish Government.

The White Paper also says that whilst our industrial grants would come under review they might be acceptable. Again that should be gone into in more detail. It talks about grants but there is no reference to the tax reliefs we offer on export profits. I do not know whether or not those will have to be scrapped. If they are scrapped it certainly will be the contrary to an attraction to foreign industrialists to establish industry in this country.

I said this White Paper is not specific and I repeat that.

[...]

We have not been told in this White Paper, nor have we been told by the Department of Finance, in what firms and in what industries there has been successful adaptation. The only thing we are told here is that 1,400 firms received adaptation grants. First, what happened in respect of the other two thirds? Secondly, was adaptation successful in respect of the one third of the industries of this country that got the adaptation grants? Thirdly, and above all, what was the employment involved in the 1,400 firms that received the grants?

It is only reasonable to ask ourselves, and let this not be regarded as defeatist, are we equipped to take on what was described by Mr. Lemass as this challenge of Europe? I do not think the picture is so good that we can expand our chests and claim that we can compete with the giants of Europe. In 1969 there was an increase in imports that competed with Irish manufactured goods. This increase practically offset our increase in manufacturing exports. This shows that the increase in imports under free trade is nullifying our exports. I do not think we have any reason to pat ourselves on the back for that sort of development.

I would like to give some examples with regard to the vulnerability of Irish industry. Since 1965 imports of foodstuffs have practically doubled. In 1965 we imported foodstuffs to the extent of £6½ million and in 1969 the figure had gone up to £10.1 million. In textiles, the increase in imports was from £17 million in 1965 to £32.2 million in 1969. This is an industry in which we all express pride. Imported textiles now represent over one third of the home market. Imports of clothing and footwear have nearly trebled, from £2.5 million in 1965 to £6.9 million in 1969 and now account for one sixth of the home market. In other manufactured goods the increase since 1965 has been from £5.2 million to £15.7 million and now such imports constitute one quarter of the home market. Total imports of manufactured goods have doubled from £88.9 million in 1965 to £161.5 million in 1969 and now account for one fifth of the home market.

[...]

The question we pose is “Can we compete and can we improve our economy?” If one were to think in terms of leagues and points, one could not regard the economy as being anywhere near the top of the league table. It might be rather near the bottom of the table. It is no consolation for me to tell the Fianna Fáil Party about this. The facts speak for themselves. The Fianna Fáil Party are responsible for our economy being at such a low level. Fianna Fáil must take the major portion of the responsibility because they have been in Government for the past 13 years. They have been in Government over the last ten years when we first thought of making application for membership of the EEC. Fianna Fáil have been the Government of this country for 32 years out of the last 38 years. The burden of responsibility in so far as our economy is concerned must rest on the shoulders of the present Fianna Fáil Party members and those who were in that party over the last 32 years, and particularly during the last 13 years.

We should not be ashamed or afraid to admit our shortcomings. We cannot go into the Community as equals having regard to the state of the economy. With the exception of Luxembourg, our population is the smallest of the new applicants. Our average increase in population from 1958 to 1968 is the lowest of the ten countries standing at 0.2 per cent. Our rate of unemployment which was 6.4 per cent, stood at the top of the league in 1969. How do we think we will fare? How will our unemployed fare if Ireland becomes a member of the EEC? Will our men end up in Britain or in Germany, where they are looking for workers, or in Belgium or Holland, where they are short of workers, or will they be permitted to be employed in their own country at reasonable wages? Needless to say, this is not something we should shout too loudly about. We have the highest emigration rate of all the nine countries. In the two years ended March, 1969, despite the boast of industrial progress in this country, 82,000 Irish men and women failed to get employment at home and had to emigrate to Britain or elsewhere. Our record in house-building is at the bottom of the league. Our national income per head of the population is also at the bottom of the league. Our social welfare expenditure per head of the population is also very low in comparison with those of the other countries. It is not unreasonable to ask ourselves whether we are properly equipped to go into the EEC as a full member. I have said that we in this party are opposed to entry. We are justified in our opposition having regard to the state of the economy, not alone in regard to the things I have mentioned but in other respects also.

The Government have not proved so far in this debate — we will see whether they do so later on — that we are fully equipped to take our place with the other nine European nations. The onus is on the Government to prove that we are capable of competing. In so far as agriculture is concerned, according to the White Paper, there will be benefits. We are told that there should be benefits in regard to cattle, beef, milk, dairy products and sheep; that a reduction could be expected in cereals and in horticulture, that the production of beet and potatoes would be down. This is not good for the country. Cattle, beef, milk, dairy products and sheep are not products which are regarded as being high in employment content. If we do well with cattle, beef, milk, dairy products and sheep this will result in a reduction in employment and would necessarily lead to an increased flight from the land. There is no estimate in the White Paper of the numbers who will be left in agriculture.

We must have regard to the special position of agriculture in our economy. The position of agriculture is very different in the other nine countries. Those sectors in which it is suggested that we will benefit are not labour-intensive sectors. Paragraph 112 of the White Paper says that in so far as agriculture is concerned there will be an increase in output by 1980 to the extent of 30 to 40 per cent. It does not tell us what this will mean in terms of farmers or loss of farms. We would like to know the effect of the EEC agricultural policy. We have not been told what effect it will have on rural Ireland. There must be some special reference to Ireland's position of dependence on agriculture compared to that of the existing members and the applicant states.

The work force in Irish agriculture represents 28.4 per cent of our total work force.

[...]

It is the stated policy of the EEC to get some farmers off the land by 1980. Irish farmers should think about this. This would not be too bad if we had industrial employment to offer them. There is no suggestion in the

White Paper that industrial employment would be provided in the next five to ten years in order to absorb those who undoubtedly will have to leave employment on the land, whether as workers or landholders.

One also is not impressed by either the document on agriculture or the document entitled "Membership of the European Communities". They refer all the time to the economy. I know the economy is important, that the state of the country's wealth or otherwise is very important. However, there is no reference at all, or if there is, very little, to society. This is typical of the approach of the EEC commissions. As far as my colleagues and I are concerned, after two or three days of discussion with officials in Brussels, this appears to be their approach. They are concerned about economies rather than people. I feel we must temper the two. It appears to me that this is a dehumanised approach. There is no point in talking about the prosperity of this country if it is all concentrated in Dublin or Cork when there are people in Connaught, in Donegal and in other parts of the country who have to live and expect to live in these places. Economic statistics are no more than indications of some aspects of human development. We cannot, therefore, take economic statistics as an indication of the true state of people in various areas. Our approach must always be in terms of people.

I will not say that the present members of the EEC are not concerned about people but I do not believe they are concerned where people work. We have this particular problem in Ireland where our population has been depleted so much over the last 100 years. We should be very much concerned in our negotiations to ensure, by our demands, that not alone will the people who are at present in Ireland receive full employment but that we can attract Irish people to the country as well.

We are a minority Opposition party. The Government have made this decision to apply for admission to the European Economic Community. The Government have the responsibility to negotiate. They have the members to ratify the decision.

[...]

Mr. Donegan: The Taoiseach gave a résumé of what is contained in the White Paper but, apart from giving an undertaking to keep Members of the House informed of events regarding our application for membership of the EEC, we heard nothing new. None of the Government speakers has given any information to anybody about any steps that are being taken as to what sections of industry and agriculture will be in difficulty and what sections will be in a better position. There may have been political reasons before an election for not stating the position because people do not like to be told that their lot is not as good as it was. Therefore it was the Government's policy to keep the people in the dark. However, as negotiations are now about to commence it is time that the people were told precisely the situation and what they will face in the Common Market. Our party have not the information that is at the Government's disposal; we have not the private files that are available from the Ambassador in Brussels; we can only tell the truth as we see it.

It appears we have no choice but to enter the Common Market. When one bears in mind that 74 per cent of our external trade is with Britain and that trade with the Common Market countries has multiplied by eight since 1961, one realises we have no choice. The fact that the child may not wish to be thrown into the swimming pool may mean that the child although he can swim is not a very good swimmer; the temperature of the water may be cold and the first douche may be unpleasant.

There is no point in the Government trying to make political capital of this matter. What we need is an assessment of the difficulties and advantages and plain talking to the people.

[...]

It is obvious that if we do not enter the Common Market there will be raised against us a common external tariff. Automatically that would create another economic war with Britain, having regard to the extent of our trade with that country. Whether unpalatable or not, we must accept the fact that if Britain joins the EEC we have no choice but to do likewise. Therefore, our job must be to watch events very carefully. An té nach bhfuil láidir ní foláir dó bheith glic — those that are not strong must be clever. We must see to it that every

opportunity is taken to get special terms for us. There has not been any evidence that the Government have been doing this in the years since our application was first discussed. Neither have the Government warned our people about the implications of membership.

Agriculture will probably do well as a result of membership of the EEC. Apart from the production of pigs, eggs and broiler chickens, the Irish farmer will do well. It is British policy to provide for their industrial workers by having low food costs; they pay a subsidy to the British farmers, who constitute 2½ per cent of the population, and pay a lesser price to suppliers from abroad. It is true that the Anglo-Irish Free Trade Area Agreement changed this a little. In fact, the payment of subsidy on 25,000 tons of beef and a comparable amount on smaller quantities of mutton and lamb has meant that we have been able to pay the extra subsidy ourselves and there has been an advantage here in the encouragement and expansion of our meat factories.

However, the British policy of low food prices will not be permitted in the Common Market. I understand that in the EEC there is the system of target and intervention prices and, following that, the system of common external tariffs. The Irish farmer knows more than most people about common external tariffs. It is not so long since our highly valuable beef exports to Germany were cut off in a matter of one week when the common external tariff was applied on the basis that our exports of beef to Germany were affecting the German farmer. They were not, of course, affecting the German farmer; the German farmer is small and he is highly subsidised. The whole operation, in my view, and in the view of those close to it, was quite improper. However, they were allowed to do it and the common external tariff was applied. If we were within the Common Market the system of intervention price would apply and that would mean that the ordinary trade from country to country, farm to farm, man to man, would be close to the target price but, when the goods would drop to the point at which the Commission decided there should be an intervention price, that would immediately come into operation and these goods would be taken up by the Common Market authorities and the cost would be spread all over the countries involved.

In this context it is quite true that Ireland will derive advantage in her fiscal and budgetary situation. An example is provided by milk products. The cost of subsidising milk for butter last year was £31,500,000. The estimate of what it would cost as a subscription towards the Common Market to gain us a far higher price for our milk would be in the order of £10 million. Not only would we gain on the agricultural front as far as farmers' prices are concerned, because we would be on higher prices for all foods, but we would also have a lower budgetary responsibility in relation to budgeting for the intervention when prices would go too low. If you take the Common Market as constituting some 360,000,000 people and spread the cost of subsidisation taken up on intervention price over all these, then our share of the subscription would be far less than it is at the moment and we are still basically an agricultural country. The price of milk and milk products will increase and the intervention system guarantees that they will be taken up. Our contribution will be less.

With regard to beef, I regard the common external tariff raised against us by Germany at that particular point of time as quite improper and quite incorrect but, when one is outside and one has nowhere else to go, there is very little one can do about it. That is why one is better inside the club than outside. Be that as it may, all the figures I can get seem to indicate that as the standard of living rises in Europe, as it is rising everywhere, there is a heavier consumption of beef and there is a solid market for our very excellent beef at a higher price. The average figure quoted is £16 per cwt live for beef whereas our price at the moment averages about £9 15s or £10. Bearing in mind the cost of transport, and various other costs, it appears as if beef would be a very good thing within the Common Market. That is something that should be stressed in our beef breeds. I know the Department are doing some work in this field.

There has been some anxiety about the price of grain. There has been some worry that grain prices may not be satisfactory and we might become again the country of the stick, the dog and the bullock. Modern methods of producing beef do not allow for that kind of economy. Grain, however, is another matter. We will not be in any trouble. We have again the system of target and intervention prices. When wheat is dumped, it is dumped outside the Common Market and we are getting it at a price lower than that actually paid to the French farmer. The price of barley will go up. The price of wheat will go down. On balance,

things will be satisfactory. I have no doubt that there will be a continuance of a high volume of grain farming here. I am quite certain there is a very good market in Europe for Irish malting barley. Last year Irish malting barley was exported to Europe; it was sold to Europe at a lower price because of the common external tariff. The quality of our barley is among the highest in Europe. There is in the traditional malting barley areas a tremendous opportunity for expansion. What we will probably see is an increase in the acreage under barley and a decrease in the acreage under wheat but, so long as the farmer gets his cheque at the end of the season, nobody cares. Barley is a sounder crop to grow than wheat. It is a crop with less risk in it.

We shall be up against very strong competition in horticulture. The Dutch and others will send fruit and vegetables in here. The position will be highly competitive. There is one aspect of horticulture which is very promising. To the credit of the Department of Agriculture and Fisheries, let it be said that they have concentrated on a very high quality tomato. Exports to Britain are on the basis of quality. All one need do the next time one is on the Continent is to eat a tomato and one will immediately note the difference. On the Continent they go in for quantity, not quality. We may hold our own in horticulture.

The position as far as agriculture is concerned is satisfactory. We must regard the system of common external tariff against Argentinian beef with satisfaction. Anyone who farms has had the experience of finding the beef market quite good; one feeds one's cattle during the winter and the next moment down goes the price of beef by £1 a cwt. because of the arrival of Argentinian beef. While there are exceptions made in respect of countries which would be economically destroyed if the Common Market acted strongly against them, Argentina will hardly be one of the exceptions. There have been concessions given to New Zealand in the case of butter because she would be economically wiped out without her milk products.

I view the advent of the Common Market as satisfactory as far as agriculture is concerned. I do not hold the same view with regard to industry. Where industry is concerned we are in a different sphere altogether. The sort of agriculture I have been talking about is the non-factory farming type of agriculture. The continentals are limited in their production just as we are limited in our production. They have their acreages; so have we. They have their skills; so have we. When we come to industry we have to take into account the fact that we are entering a capitalised society with an excellent social welfare code, a very good educational code and services far superior to those we have here. If one checks in the Treaty of Rome one will find there is actual discrimination against state-operated industries. It is, as I say, a capitalist society. We may as well face that this is so.

[...]

If we can preserve our own free enterprise society, if we can compete and not find ourselves with massive unemployment, if we can integrate ourselves within Europe while holding our own cultural attributes and our own capital in our own country, holding ownership of our lands, factories, institutions, then that is our project and that is the challenge before us. I do not think there was any objection in the Rome Treaty or in any of the rules laid down in Brussels to institutions such as Aer Lingus, ESB, CIE, Irish Steel Holdings and so on. I think there is an objection, as far as the spirit of the Rome Treaty is concerned, to entry by the State into trade and commerce and the ordinary things such as the production of beer, tobacco or bread.

On page 27 of the Government's White Paper, the first sentence at paragraph 4.39 is:

Not every Irish farm can expect to survive in free trade.

I am quite certain that not every Irish farm can expect to survive in free trade conditions within the Common Market and this is a very sad thing to face. My objection to the Government's performance to date is that they have not indicated the sectors that may be in difficulty. They have set out in an appendix to this White Paper the aids they are giving to industry. I shall discuss later in this speech whether we shall be permitted to continue these aids. Largely, they have been global aids. There have been certain disqualifications. At one

time, bakeries could not get a grant because it was felt they would be in very serious competition and might fade out as units within the Common Market. Apart from that, there has been no difference in State aid. A grant of 25 per cent was given all along the line. The Government shirked their duty and did not indicate sectors that might have difficulty lest they should lose a few seats at election time.

[...]

If we accept that we must go in, we can now decide what should be done, what should have been done, what blame should be apportioned, what praise should be apportioned, what are the steps and where are the difficulties. These are all the things to which we should address ourselves as ordinary pragmatic politicians. There is no point in saying that we can stay outside. People used to talk about every ship being at the bottom of the sea, wearing a hair shirt, keeping Egyptian bees and living on light beer. That day is gone. I freely admit that I do not want to do any of them and I do not think the other 143 Deputies want to either.

[...]

Mr. Carter: This debate has proceeded for some time and unfortunately at various points we are inclined to get our lines crossed somewhat.

[...]

It has been said that the Government did not provide sufficient information and one gathers from that that Deputies are speaking in the dark. I have not got much time either to read or to assimilate what is handed out from the Department of External Affairs or from the Taoiseach's Office but I happen to know that there is no end to the documentation advising not merely the Members of this House but the community as well, and stating the facts in support of Ireland's aim of entering the Common Market. It is hardly fair, therefore, following three White Papers, following a number of discussions in this House on this subject, following numerous questions on the Order Paper every week, to charge the Minister for External Affairs or the Government with not supplying sufficient information.

As a Member of this House and as one who had the pleasure of being on a delegation to France recently I submit there is a welcome for us in the Community if we achieve membership and that there is a genuine welcome not only from France but from a number of other members of the Community. At this stage of our development, in the year 1970, we should make up our minds that even though it may be a step into the future and into the unknown it is better to take that step and take it now and that if we are accepted into the EEC it is up to us to make our own future there.

The Minister pointed out in the course of numerous papers that he had consultations with the president of the Commission of European Committees. He had discussions with them as far back as April last and in those discussions our Minister made clear Ireland's aim in seeking membership of the Community. He has told us that at that meeting there was a full exchange of views on the general question of the enlargement of the Community and that there was frank discussion on the forthcoming negotiations. The Minister has told us also that he emphasised the importance of the Irish point of view, namely, that there should be simultaneous opening of negotiations and simultaneous entry with Britain. Therefore, if one dwells on this point for a moment, one cannot see why we in this House should suffer from any inferiority complex about our aims in negotiating for entry to the EEC.

[...]