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The Mansholt plan: With closed eyes into the future

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COMMENTS

EURATOM

Unity Falls to Pieces

The fantastic precision and breathtaking exactitude with which Apollo 8 has achieved the circumnavigation of the moon must have convinced even the last doubting Thomas that, at least in the field of space research, Europe and the United States are separated not only by a technological gap but by a chasm.

Within the most important European research community—Euratom—joint efforts and joint research have never been accorded sufficient priority. Of the member governments, hardly any one was ever willing to act for the Community without receiving an immediate quid pro quo, and this is more so now than ever. This attitude has had a particularly unfortunate effect in the field of energy production. Basic policy was determined by an erroneous forecast of a future shortage of natural fuels, and construction of nuclear reactors was therefore artificially boosted. The faulty prognosis did not lead to a growth in members' interest in Euratom. Especially France, hitherto in the lead in atomic research on the continent of Europe and heavily in debt on this and other accounts, now therefore tries to withdraw from Euratom. In spite of all the warnings against the dangers for European integration arising from this policy, only 50 per cent of Euratom's 1969 budget will consist of community projects, the balance being financed by Italy, Belgium, the Netherlands, Luxembourg, and the Federal Republic of Germany in the form of "complementary tasks". Thus, France can today be classified as some type of half-member only. Optimists still cherish hopes that President de Gaulle may again share "fully" in joint work if and when increased technical cooperation, which is being sought within the so-called Maréchal Group, is written into Euratom's future programme. But was there no earlier opportunity for thinking of such an expedient? ke.

The Mansholt Plan

With Closed Eyes Into the Future

To pronounce platitudes about agriculture in Europe may still make a noise that is listened to, since farmers in the Common Market countries seem to be congenitally incapable of believing that their production, too, as that of so many other branches of the economy, must meet with the requirements of the market, and that, similarly as in industry, production units will never pay their way and make a profit unless they are of a certain minimum size. Once more, this experience was made by the Vice President of the EEC, Sicco Mansholt, when he demanded that farm production be guided by the size of demand, and that farms ought to be larger units, capable of operating efficiently. That it did not impress the farmers that such developments might reduce the payments made to the Community's Agricultural Support Fund could have been anticipated without difficulty, for these payments must, of course, be borne by the entire economy. What offended the farmers' ears was the requirement cited by Mansholt that the total number of independent farm units must be cut down. The farming interest believes it to be impossible to create 2.5 million new places of employment for redundant farmers within ten years. Even the many types of transition pay, redundancy bonuses, and other forms of aid, as suggested by Mansholt, will not, in their view, sweeten the bitter pill or lay the spectre of mass unemployment.

This means that the "Green Front" has remained rigid and unyielding. But it would be frivolous to pass judgment in a hurry on the future victims of a new structural policy for European farming, because people who are going to lose their old-established way of earning a living suffer from genuine misery. But will such misery be mitigated by closing the eyes and ears permanently against the impact of reality, refusing to read the signs of the time? rd.

Peru

A Long, Hard Slog through Austerity

Early in October, 1968, a military junta seized power in Peru, justifying its action by the economic crisis, in the middle of which the republic then was. The new masters promised to improve the economic situation of the country speedily, but to this day, nothing of the kind has been achieved. Nor does it appear very likely that the government could free the country from its enormous burden of foreign debts in the foreseeable future. In September, 1968, Peru owed foreign creditors about $ 757 million. The members of the junta are busy negotiating the postponement of the dates when foreign credits are falling due for repayment. Talks are being held with private lenders in North America and in Europe for