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EEC: The language problem

Intereconomics

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conceivable—would, unless countered, have highly negative consequences for the Common Agricultural Market and the further extension of the economic and monetary union. The Commission has therefore proposed introduction of a narrower “intra-Community band”, with a total margin of 2 p.c. against a jointly fixed medium dollar rate, for EEC members’ currencies.

In relation to outside currencies, the internationally permitted 4.5 p.c. margin is to be retained. This can be done by shifting the “common medium dollar rate”, which implies a shift of the common band, within the upper and lower intervention points. At a first glance the idea of a narrower movable EEC band inside the wider international band for exchange rate fluctuations is very attractive. But whether this system is technically practicable must yet be examined. Besides, a band width of 2 p.c., it must not be overlooked, is still larger than the one which prevailed between member states before the monetary crisis. The present proposal of the Commission furthermore contravenes the mutual obligations entered into by EEC States in February 1971 that no relaxation of the international exchange rate system is to be applied to their interior rates. In practice this means that a 2 p.c. band is a retrograde step rather than one forward to economic and monetary union.

China

Spokesman of the “Third World”

Contrary to the most important donor country, the USA, whose public aid to the Third World has continuously declined since 1963 and meanwhile fallen back to the level of 1961, China can now show a proud record: in 1970, with development aid to the tune of US\$ 1,327 mn, the People’s Republic ranked among the big donor countries.

According to a study by the US Foreign Department the Chinese have given the developing countries more aid in 1970 than any other socialist country. The Soviet Union considerably stepped up military aid but its non-military aid performance amounted to only 28 p.c. of that of China. Next to the USA the People’s Republic of China is therefore now the most important donor country. Based on their own experience the Chinese extend their aid on the maxim that the peoples of the Third World have to support themselves by their own strength in the first place and to rely on international aid only as a secondary line. This principle is also applied to the projects aided by the People’s Republic. The Chinese aid projects which, except for example the very important Tansam railway, are in the main smaller and medium ones,

are interlinked with a development level already achieved and largely worked into national development plans initiated.

Because of this apparent restraint and the success of the majority of projects carried out, China can be sure of the developing countries’ sympathy. This became quite clear to everyone, for instance, in the course of the events accompanying China’s UN entry, and it will further show itself in the form of intensified conflicts between the industrialised and developing countries at Santiago. jvb.

EEC

The Language Problem

After General de Gaulle vetoed the UK’s accession to the EEC, one of the men well in the know said that the French president had adduced a number of reasons for his step but had kept silent on a number of others. As it could already then be foreseen that, through the British and the Scandinavian becoming EEC members, the French language would lose its preferential position, this had been sufficient reason to give a nugatory answer to the British request. Since the great man has died, it has become evident that, among all the questions, which overshadow life and evolution of the European Community, the problem of languages is certainly not one of the least. President Pompidou has made no bones about this to his German partners, and the British have attentively registered this kind of dialogue among their neighbours. The Education Committee in Hertfordshire discussed extensively the effect which Britain’s EEC membership will have on its schools. The Committee’s Report came to the conclusion “that there is no reason why, within the next ten years, most primary school children should not have the chance to start French”.

The Department of Education and Science will see to the fulfilment of this requirement by a new programme of exchanges of teachers. During the scholastic year of 1972/73 it is intended to send 200 exchange teachers to Germany and France; the number is to rise to 500 during 1973/74, and later about 1,000 teachers are to become involved annually. Those who still believe that the British, as linguistic isolationists, are not really prepared to integrate with Europe, will now have to be somewhat cautious with such sweeping statements. To see in the multiplicity of languages a common and joint inheritance of all EEC members, and to treat them as such, will make integration less difficult. This will obviate unnecessary conflicts within the Common Market, conflicts which may easily arise from questions of prestige. Ja.