

of the EEC should be commercially unimportant and should become even less so as the years go by. The flaw in this argument is that it overlooks the difficulties of making radical changes in the pattern of industry within a comparatively small country. Understandably, and sometimes with good reason, governments seek to resist the forces of industrial change when it seems that the consequences may include the running down of an important industry or even its disappearance. Even without tariff barriers, there are easily recognized ways in which governments can bolster up their domestic manufacturers. In Europe, one obvious result has been that the continent's productive capacity has not grown in the ways and at the places that would be most economic. Another is that similar and neighbouring European governments have so often followed similar policies that their efforts are often slavishly duplicated.

To the extent that the question of how to respond to the EEC requires that British electors should take a view about the development of industry in the next few decades, there are valuable lessons to be learned from recent industrial history. The most striking of all is the way in which, only a few years ago, Europe was preoccupied with what was then called the "technology gap"—the supposed disparity between the United States and the rest of the industrialized world in the capacity to exploit advanced technology. The outward symptoms of this disease were such things as the markedly inferior prosperity of Western Europe and the way in which European companies were apparently less capable than their counterparts in the United States of exploiting advanced technology, electronic computers, for example. It is highly significant that this obsession has not quite disappeared. European prosperity still leaves much to be desired, while European companies are still unsuccessful in their attempts to manufacture large workable computers. The chief difference seems to be that European industry has become very much more efficient than a few years ago at performing all kinds of conventional tasks, from the manufacture of steel to the farming of agricultural land. The result is that the people engaged in these enterprises have a pleasant sense of knowing that their lot is steadily improving, and this is eminently a field in which it is better to travel than to arrive. Moreover, there is now every prospect of further gains from the continuing improvement of the efficiency of European industry. Heroic innovation is plainly much less necessary than it used to seem. The moral in this for common marketeers, on or off the mainland, is that there is no intrinsic impediment to the continuing growth of European prosperity. The practical question is to know how to make the process as easy and as painless as possible.

Short though the time may be between now and the point at which the British Government will have to take its courage in both hands later in the year, there are a number of constructive steps which could be taken to persuade the doubters that there is useful work to do. One of the most important is to demonstrate explicitly the nature of the demands which the EEC is likely to make on countries such as the United Kingdom. A good deal of the implicit resistance to the idea of membership springs from fear that extraordinary feats of innovation will be needed if industry in the member nations is to remain competitive. To many people, it should be something of a reassurance that the most immediate need is

for more of the kind of patient attention to the techniques of management that British industry has been trying to teach itself for several years. There is, moreover, the further prospect that present arrangements in Britain for the improvement of industrial efficiency will turn out to be valuable assets in a European connexion. Diffident British taxpayers have only to reflect on the benefits which there may be from such things as the service laboratories which abound in the support of British industry—institutions for such things as the design of hydraulic works or the improvement of industrial standards—to know that they may quickly be able to play a useful (and profitable) part in the further development of the European economy.

But how are these benefits to be obtained? This is the point on which the British Government should concentrate in the months ahead. No harm would come of an attempt to show, in detail not in outline, just how the facilities which at present abound in Britain for the support of industry would be deployed if Britain (and its other northern associates) were to belong to the EEC. Would the organizations and research laboratories at present dedicated to the support of British industry be able to operate on a wider canvas? Evidently there is a strong case for some closer integration of the publicly supported industrial research organizations of the several European nations, and it is not too soon to know just how this would be accomplished. But there are also useful ways in which universities might be persuaded to collaborate on a European basis, and here again there is much to be said for working out in advance ways of pooling these common resources. No doubt, similar steps could be taken in other fields to show that European integration does not necessarily spell disaster. In short, the breathing space between now and the point at which the British Government will be in a position to decide on the European question can be fully and constructively occupied. Indeed, unless there is a serious attempt to anticipate as fully as possible the consequences of membership, the doubters are likely to gain too much in influence.

100 Years Ago



PARIS

Academie des Sciences, June 19.—M. Claude Bernard in the chair. M. Claude Bernard read a letter from Mr. Alexander Herschel, noticing the death of his father on behalf of himself and of his eldest brother now in India. The lamented Sir John Herschel was the senior foreign associate member of the Institute. The foreign associate members are only five in number; it is considered the highest honour the Academy can offer to a foreigner. The President noticed also the death of the celebrated General Probert, who was an academicien of long standing, and had devoted his whole life to the study of projectiles. His memoirs are numerous in the *Comptes Rendus*, but more numerous at the War Office. He was of opinion that the Prussian steel gun should be adopted by the French artillery, but his Imperial Majesty being a great artillerist, his opinion was totally disregarded.

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