

COUNCIL OF EUROPE CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE

Strasbourg, 17th January 1957

Restricted
AS/SM (8) 20

CONSULTATIVE ASSEMBLY

SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON
MUNICIPAL AND REGIONAL AFFAIRS

(Fifth Session)



EUROPEAN CONFERENCE OF LOCAL AUTHORITIES

Official Report of Debates
of the

European Conference of Local Authorities

(Second Sitting)

Submitted by

M. Santero, General Rapporteur

A 32.487

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The Sitting was opened at 15.20 p.m. with the President, M. Chaban-Delmas, in the Chair.

1. ADOPTION OF THE MINUTES

THE PRESIDENT (Translation).- The Sitting is open.

Ladies and Gentlemen, I must begin by apologising to you for an alteration in the time-table due to some administrative duties entailed in organising of the Conference. We shall be all the more careful to keep to our time-table this afternoon.

In accordance with Rule 23 of the Rules of Procedure, the Minutes of the previous Sitting have been distributed.

I call Mr. Shields to speak on the Minutes.

MR. SHIELDS (United Kingdom).- Mr. President, I am not aware that I had requested permission to make a statement on the Minutes. What I did wish was to point out to the Assembly, after the remarks made this morning concerning the British representatives, that although we are here with no official backing from the local authority associations in Great Britain, nevertheless we are here as representatives of local authorities in that country and wish to express our deep interest in the affairs of this Conference. (Applause) We should not have come here were we not so interested, and, as individuals and collectively, we wish this Conference every success. (Applause)

THE PRESIDENT (Translation).- I have taken formal note of Mr. Shields' statement.

Are there any other comments?

The Minutes are adopted.

2. NOTICE OF SUBSTITUTES

THE PRESIDENT (Translation).- I should like to make a statement concerning notice of substitutions. Substitutes replacing delegates during a public Sitting of the Conference are asked to send written notice before the Sitting to the Conference Secretariat in room A.92.

3. MUNICIPAL CREDIT (Resumed Debate)

THE PRESIDENT (Translation).-- The next item on the Orders of the Day is resumption of the Debate on the Report requesting an Opinion on Municipal Credit.

I call M. Benedikter as next speaker in the debate.

M. BENEDIKTER (Italy) (Interpretation from German).-- I should like to take this opportunity to speak on behalf of the region which I represent and on behalf of the 300 municipalities in the region, which are linked in two associations. The region as such and also the municipalities strongly favour the very close unification of Europe, the sweeping away of all the political and economic barriers and obstacles; and we see in the political unification of Europe the possibility of overcoming nationality difficulties in Europe.

In M. Janssens's Report on Municipal Credit there is, in page 4, paragraph C, an invitation addressed to all the Governments to promote the setting up of national credit institutes. Italy's municipalities have had some experience of a totalitarian régime. Fascism modified institutions and organisations, and there was a certain restriction and limitation imposed on local autonomy and freedom. Nevertheless, the municipalities had further burdens imposed on them in regard to the general and public services of the municipalities without in any way being granted supplementary financial assistance. Accordingly, we consider it particularly desirable to extend the financial autonomy of the municipalities.

We have also had experience of a State fund which was to be at the disposal more particularly of certain associations and bodies. We saw that such a centralised credit fund was not always able to meet the needs and requirements of the municipalities in a satisfactory way.

The proposal for the establishment of national institutes for municipal credit as a first step towards the establishment of a European Institute for Credit seems to me to be akin to what would have happened had the Swiss Cantons first decided to set up foreign ministries for each region and only then envisaged unification. In my view, the setting up of a European credit institute is the first basic condition for achieving the objective at which we are aiming.

On the other hand, if it seems desirable to have certain institutes which will centralise the credit requirements of the municipalities, I believe that for big countries, such as Italy, France and Germany, it would be wrong. I believe that we would fall back into the mistakes of centralisation. It would be wrong to envisage the establishment of national institutes for municipal credit, although conditions are slightly different in smaller countries, such as Belgium, Denmark and the Netherlands, where these intermediary banks, or whatever we like to call them, could be set up on a regional basis. In facing this problem, I believe that stress should be laid on the establishment of regional institutes.

THE PRESIDENT (Translation).- Does M. Janssens wish to reply to the speakers or will he keep his explanations for the committees?

M. JANSSENS (Rapporteur) (Belgium) (Translation).- I think, Mr. president, that apart from a few matters of detail which can be examined in committee, agreement has been reached.

THE PRESIDENT (Translation).- In that case, the Debate is now closed.

The Conference will probably wish to refer the Report to the competent committee, which will certainly bear in mind not only M. Janssens' Report but also the remarks made by the various speakers and will submit to us by Monday one of the draft Opinions on which the Conference will give its views.

Are there any objections?

Then that is agreed.

4. COMMITTEE ON LOCAL EFFECTS OF THE EUROPEAN COAL AND STEEL COMMUNITY

THE PRESIDENT (Translation).- The next item in the Orders of the Day is the Debate on the Report requesting an Opinion on the local authorities arising out of the institution of the E.C.S.C.

Ladies and Gentlemen, we will, if you are agreeable, adopt the same procedure as we did for the first item.

I therefore call M. Radius, the Rapporteur, on behalf of the Committee on Municipal and Regional Affairs.

M. RADIUS (Rapporteur) (France) (Translation): Mr. President, Ladies and Gentlemen, the problem which has led the Committee on Municipal and Regional Affairs to undertake the study for which I have been appointed Rapporteur is one which concerns us very much at the present time.

For local autonomy to be preserved it must be safeguarded against the encroachment on its powers to which it has long been subjected.

Local authorities have for a long time been concerned about the management of municipal funds, the way in which towns and municipalities have been neglected in the drive for international unity and their subjection to a central administrative authority.

A further pressing problem has suddenly arisen in the local repercussions of E.C.S.C. and has revealed the glaring need to attend to the interests of our towns and municipalities.

Since the E.C.S.C. has power over the six Governments of that Community, it is more than ever the duty of towns and municipalities to make themselves heard.

How difficult this task is at national level is well known. What the position will be on an international plane remains to be seen; but it was precisely here that the Committee on Municipal and Regional Affairs saw how much it could do to help. Today it is encouraged and spurred on in its aim to make the voice of local authorities heard by E.C.S.C. by the presence and valuable support of the European Conference of Local Authorities.

In pursuing this aim the Committee has already taken advantage of contact with members of the High Authority. The Sub-Committee on Local Effects of E.C.S.C. has held a joint meeting with a number of members of the Investments Committee and the Committee on Social Questions of the Common Assembly. Tomorrow the Council of Europe committee plans to meet members of the High Authority.

The Committee is already helped in all this by a recommendation adopted at its proposal by the Consultative Assembly on 9th July, 1955. This recommendation is addressed to the Governments of States which are Members of both the Council of Europe and the European Coal and Steel Community. It contains a number of measures to enable local authorities to deal with the new tasks devolving upon them as a result of the implementation of E.C.S.C.

Serious problems have indeed arisen in local affairs in member countries of E.C.S.C. As a result of the opening of the Common Market for coal and steel, whole municipalities, whole areas even, like the Cévennes, Sardinia and the Borinage are faced with new problems. These areas are threatened with the disappearance of a great number of their activities and by the emigration of large sections of their populations. Other areas, however, are faced with a continual influx of workers who have to be housed, assisted and re-adapted. Broadly speaking, people in the majority of the coal and steel producing areas of the Six countries of Little Europe are at grips with serious difficulties over two of the essentials of everyday life: work and accommodation.

These problems fall into two main groups: those affecting localities where the immediate result of the Common Market for coal and steel has been a decline in their activities, and those facing localities where a rapid expansion of activities has taken place as a result of that Market.

Let us take first the case of those local administrative areas in which activity has declined.

The introduction of technical innovations in some sectors of the Community, the reorganisation or transfer of production centres and the closing down of factories or pits of low productivity, as a result of the institution of the Common Market, have raised serious problems of re-employment in a number of areas. In some cases the whole economy of an area is at stake.

With prospects such as these before them local authorities can hardly stand by idle.

Whilst it is true that under the provisions of Article 56 of the Treaty constituting the E.C.S.C. workers must be paid temporary unemployment assistance by the High Authority, and whilst a number of workers have agreed to be transferred, as envisaged, to other areas of the Community, local authorities are none the less faced with a number of tasks, such as the vocational retraining of workers who, deprived of their employment, refuse to leave their homeland, and the creation of new activities capable of assuring not only the re-employment of those workers but the economic survival of the area.

A vital task of local authorities in districts where the mining or steel industry is closing down, dwindling or being largely converted by the High Authority is to organise and provide incentive and guidance for new activities in their areas.

These must be, in the terms of Article 56 of the Treaty and Section 23 of the Convention, "new and economically sound activities", capable not only of assuring the productive re-employment of released workers but in some cases the economic survival of the region.

On this question Article 56 of the Treaty provides that: "if the introduction of technical processes or new equipment within the framework of the general programs of the High Authority, should lead to an exceptional reduction in labour requirements in the coal or steel industries, creating special difficulties in one or more areas for the re-employment of the workers released, the High Authority, on the request of the interested governments:

(a) will consult the Consultative Committee;

(b) may facilitate, in accordance with the methods provided for in Article 54, the financing of such programmes as it may approve for the creation, either in the industries subject to its jurisdiction or, with the concurrence of the Council, in any other industry, of new and economically sound activities capable of assuring productive employment to the workers thus released."

Although under Section 23, paragraph 3 of the Convention, these programmes must be submitted by the Governments concerned, the Consultative Assembly expressed in its Recommendation the view that it was none the less for the competent central authorities to consult the local authorities concerned when drawing them up. It is indeed essential that plans for the re-organisation or the creation of new activities should be drawn up in close co-operation with the local authorities concerned.

In order to regularise this collaboration, "regional planning committees" should be formed, under the aegis of the appropriate local authorities, from representatives of trade unions, chambers of commerce and agriculture, employers' associations and of every field of local thought and activity generally. They would have a dual task: first, that of drawing up draft programmes for the creation of new activities in the areas for which they were responsible; and later, that of supervising the execution of programmes drawn up in agreement with the interested government concerned and approved by the High Authority.

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In view of the inaction and delays only too frequent on the part of the central administrative authorities whose responsibility it is to appeal for the help of the High Authority in cases of unemployment or reconversion, the Committee on Municipal and Regional Affairs of the Consultative Assembly came to the conclusion that the Treaty setting up E.C.S.C. and the Convention should be altered to enable local authorities to apply direct to the High Authority for assistance.

This right would, of course, be shared with the competent ministers who at present hold it exclusively and would be in keeping with the clause contained in Article 56 (b), which provides for the submission to the High Authority of programmes for the creation of new activities capable of assuring the re-employment of workers. The next step would be to consider whether these programmes drawn up by local authorities, e.g. regional councils, regional planning committees or municipalities organised in associations, might not be submitted to the High Authority without the previous consent of the government concerned.

These are points on which the Committee on Municipal and Regional Affairs is particularly anxious to have the opinion of the European Conference of Local Authorities.

The second task would be that of organising vocational re-training.

Section 23 of the Convention containing the transitional provisions lays down that the High Authority may contribute in conjunction with and at the request of interested governments towards the financing of technical retraining of coal and steel workers required to change their employment. Such re-training must bear close relation to local conditions and in particular to available employment and regional industries where there is room for development.

In Recommendation No. 76 the Consultative Assembly expressed the view that it would be wiser in the circumstances to put technical retraining in the hands of local authorities who are naturally anxious to undertake the task.

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"Vocational training centres" run once more by "associations of municipalities" in collaboration with representatives of employers' associations and local trade unions could be set up with financial aid from the High Authority and the interested government to provide for the retraining of local workers obliged to change their employment. Governments would apply to the High Authority for financial aid for these training centres in conformity with Article 56 of the Treaty and Section 23 of the Convention containing the transitional provisions and in the circumstances specified therein.

Let us turn now to the new tasks which fall to local authorities in areas where the coal and steel industries are expanding.

In contrast to others, a number of areas, such as the Ruhr, Lorraine, Campine and the Limbourg district of the Netherlands, are faced with a new labour influx coming partly from depressed areas (the Cevennes) and partly from over-populated areas (Italy). This influx raises difficult problems of housing and assimilation which are causing the local authorities all the more concern, since in many cases they serve to aggravate an already serious situation.

First there is the problem of building.

On 29th January, 1954, M. Finet, a member of the High Authority, addressing the Committee on Social Questions of the Consultative Assembly in Luxembourg said: "If we are shortly faced with initiative by local authorities intended to ease the housing shortage and provide accommodation for the manpower in the coal and steel industries we might, assuming the Council of Ministers are unanimously in favour, guarantee loans contracted by local authorities, or even grant loans to them direct. There is nothing in the Treaty to rule out this possibility, but it is formally laid down that the unanimous consent of the Council of Ministers is required."

In its Recommendation 76 the Consultative Assembly requested the governments concerned to empower those local authorities (municipalities, regional councils) desirous of doing so, to approach the High Authority in order with the concurrence and financial assistance of the High Authority as laid down in paragraph 2 of Article 54, of the Treaty, to undertake the building of houses for coal and steel workers.

The governments were also asked to request the High Authority to allow local authorities the same terms as those applied to similar projects by coal and steel enterprises and even priority over the latter and to grant them the loans or loan guarantees necessary to finance their building plans.

The Consultative Assembly thought that there was much to be gained from the building of workers' houses by municipalities: it would make it possible for workers to get away from their work surroundings after working hours, since they did not wish to remain under the thumb of the "boss" after leaving the factory or mine; it would mean accommodation for temporary workers, for whom enterprises provide none, and an opportunity to settle down. It would also give workers the feeling of being, if not the owners, at least part-owners of their homes, in so far as they were citizens of the municipality to which they belonged.

Secondly, there are the serious psychological problems raised by the transfer of workers.

Authoritative voices have repeatedly drawn the attention of governments and the High Authority to the human aspect of the problem of workers moved to other areas where their surroundings are new and different customs and habits prevail.

In outlining Recommendation 76 a general policy to help workers over the psychological problems raised by their transfer the Consultative Assembly urged that this policy should be based on action by local authorities. To this end it suggested that permanent relations, indeed a system of "pairings", should be established, with the help of the governments and the High Authority, between the areas where workers formerly lived and those to which they have moved. Exchange visits, sports meetings and periodical exchanges of school children on holiday within the framework of these friendly relations or "pairings" would prevent a too sudden break with home and might contribute to the happiness of these people in their new surroundings.

Joint local committees were also proposed, to be made up of representatives from the two municipalities concerned, who would plan and supervise the transfer of workers and their household removal to the new district, arrange for them to be welcomed on arrival and help them to adapt themselves to their new surroundings.

I should now like to say a few words about the new tasks which, generally speaking, fall upon all local authorities in coal and steel producing areas.

The Consultative Assembly has taken the view that any circumstances affecting the everyday life and economic activities of their districts are the concern of the competent local authorities wherever such circumstances are liable to affect the life of the community as a whole by giving rise, for example, to the cessation or re-organisation of important activities in the economic life of the area, unemployment or movement of part of the population, inadequate housing conditions affecting certain sections of the population, and the existence of uprooted "minorities" unadapted to their new surroundings. Similarly, an essential task of local authorities is to interpret, implement and adapt to local conditions the decisions of a more or less remote central administrative body, act as mediator between the individual worker and central authorities, while ensuring that the worker is integrated in and adapts himself to the social life of the community and, at the same time, watch over the life and welfare of the community as a whole.

On the principle that no measures affecting the future of an area should be taken by any central authority without first consulting the local authorities concerned, the Consultative Assembly asked the Member Governments of E.C.S.C. to take the necessary steps to ensure that no measure likely to involve the major interests of the local community, municipality, department or region should be instituted by the High Authority or by themselves without prior consultation with the appropriate local authority.

This is an important point.

On the basis of this principle the Governments were also requested to institute a study of the measures necessary to secure the representation or participation, as the case might be, of local authorities affected by the activities of the E.C.S.C. in the latter's Consultative Committee or, failing that, in the consultations for which provision is made under Article 46 of the Treaty.

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It might, however, be well to consider other ways and means of co-operating with local authorities. It was with this in mind that at its meeting in Frankfurt in October, 1956, the third States-General of European Municipalities planned the creation of a permanent conference of mayors from the six countries of the E.C.S.C. "to inform and advise the E.C.S.C. on the effects of its activity at a municipal level".

The Committee on Municipal and Regional Affairs thought that it would be advisable, pending the setting up of such an institution, to arrange for a special committee to be formed within the European Conference of Local Authorities for the purpose of dealing with all matters relating to the local effects of the E.C.S.C.; it was proposed that the special committee should, in the main though not necessarily exclusively, consist of representatives of local authorities of the ECSC countries. We are, indeed, at the moment faced with the prospect of an extension of these problems through the setting up of a Common Market and possibly of Euratom. The Committee would like to have the opinion of the Conference on this subject.

Another suggestion by the Committee, of interest to all local authorities affected by the activities of E.C.S.C., on which the Committee would also like to have the opinion of the Conference, concerns the financial assistance which local authorities may expect to receive from the High Authority.

I have already said that it might be both possible and desirable to entrust local authorities with a number of tasks, subject to the provision of the requisite financial aid, such as the organisation of new activities capable of ensuring the re-employment of workers, vocational re-training, construction of workers' houses or assistance to transferred workers.

Articles 54 and 56 of the Treaty setting up the E.C.S.C. and section 23 of the Convention containing the transitional provisions provide for the grant of loans or loan guarantees by the High Authority to enable these measures to be carried out.

Should local authorities, as requested by the Consultative Assembly in Recommendation 76, be empowered to carry out these tasks and to receive this financial aid, the Committee thought

that a general system likely to prove both valuable and flexible, might be adopted. It would suffice for the High Authority to agree to contribute to a general guarantee fund as and when the need arose; the fund would be set up either for the entire Community or for each member country for the purpose of guaranteeing loans contracted by local authorities empowered by the High Authority to draw upon the fund. This fund, set up in the currencies of all the member countries and possibly even in foreign currencies obtained by loans raised by the High Authority, would, by providing protection against currency devaluation and guaranteeing transferability, enable local authorities to contract loans on foreign capital markets.

The Committee is particularly anxious to draw the attention of the Conference to the advantages of this scheme and its value at the present time.

Mr. President, I should like to conclude by quoting a remark made by a French Minister of the Interior. I make a point of mentioning his title as it adds pith to his words.

THE PRESIDENT (Translation) - With your permission and in order that your quotation may be fully appreciated, I should just like to mention that the present French Minister for municipal and regional affairs, M. Pic, is here today as a delegate to this conference.

M. RADIUS (Rapporteur)(France) (Translation) -
Mr. President, I am sure that he will agree wholeheartedly with these words of one of his predecessors: "Totalitarianism begins when a civil servant in his office in a distant capital decides the fate of a village unknown to him."
(Applause).

It has already been said in the preamble of Recommendation 76 how disastrous it would be for the whole Western community if this first experiment in European integration were to have the effect of encouraging modern trends towards centralisation and concentration, running strongly counter as they do to the essential characteristics of our society.

The Committee on Municipal and Regional Affairs intends to urge the Consultative Assembly to protest against the regrettable indifference and lack of understanding displayed by the governments and to renew its Recommendation to them.

The Committee asks the European Conference of Local Authorities:

- to lend it the weight of its authoritative support;
- to give its views on how the Recommendation may usefully be amplified;
- to make suggestions concerning "measures to be recommended to enable local authorities to accomplish the new tasks devolving upon them as a result of the establishment of the European Coal and Steel Community".

Important work has already been done in all these fields by departments of the High Authority of E.C.S.C. Thorough study of the technical aspects has been carried out.

We, who are aware of the rôle which local authorities should play, are anxious that they shall do all in their power to fulfil it, while placing constant emphasis on the human aspect of these problems. (Applause.)

THE PRESIDENT (Translation) - After M. Radius' substantial report we still have four speakers in the debate; namely, MM. Heiland, Antonioli, Mondon and Rougeron.

I would ask them to be brief and to limit themselves to the main points and ideas they wish to put forward.

I call M. Antonioli.

M. ANTONIOLI (Italy) (Interpretation from Italian): The Report presented by M. Radius deals with the problems of loss of population in certain areas, the impoverishment of those regions and the necessity to create new activities which will ensure the absorption of the unemployed; and also with the problem of the influx of manpower into other areas, necessitating the provision of housing and other services for them. As the Rapporteur said, local organisations must make a contribution to the solution of these problems, especially the municipalities.

The local authority is the basis of the State, and the inhabitants of its area are always in contact with the local authority administrators far more than they are with those of the central Government. It is quite useless, however, to discuss the possibility of direct intervention by the local authority associations in the problems raised by the opening of the Common Market in the Coal and Steel Community area. What should be examined is the question of how to make the solution of these problems efficient by studying the possibility of giving to the local authority associations real and effective representation in the framework of the Assembly of the Coal and Steel Community and, if possible, within the framework of the Committee on Municipal and Regional Affairs of the Consultative Assembly of the Council of Europe.

The direct relationship between local authorities and the Coal and Steel Community should be based not only on the necessity of finding a solution to the problems mentioned in relation to the Common Market but also to the human problems to which they give rise. Secondly, the possibility should be considered of local authorities receiving loans or guarantees from the Coal and Steel Community in order to provide for the workers' housing, hospitals, playgrounds, etc., evening courses for their cultural and social needs, and schools for professional and vocational training. There should also be left in the hands of the local authorities the question of moral and spiritual assistance to the workers which must take into account respect for the human being, the family nucleus, and the habits of particular countries.

The Treaty instituting the Coal and Steel Community has laid down such possibilities but relates to action by the national Governments. As these problems must be solved by the local authorities, the local authorities could enter into direct contact with the High Authority. The procedure to be followed in giving representation to the local authorities within the framework of the Coal and Steel Community and the Consultative Assembly might be something similar to the appointment of trade representative. Every local

administrator would be happier if he could have a vote, but two things must be taken into consideration: first, not all are parliamentarians; secondly, even if we had a vote, we would achieve nothing more than a possibility of being able to express a wish. The Committee and the Consultative Assembly of the Council of Europe have only consultative powers. Our force would be greater if we could have a decisive vote, because we hope that that would lead to the concrete reality of bringing to Europe order and peace.

THE PRESIDENT (Translation) - I call M. Mondon.

M. MONDON (France) (Translation) - Ladies and Gentlemen, at the conclusion of his speech M. Radius dwelt on the new tasks to which the creation of the European Coal and Steel Community has given rise in areas where the coal and steel industries predominate.

As a representative of Lorraine, one of the expanding areas mentioned by M. Radius just now, I should like in illustration to give my views - very briefly, Mr. President, as you request - on the situations to which our Italian colleague has just alluded.

The problems raised are of both a social and a material order.

You were right, M. Antonioli, to lay stress on the human and psychological problems. In my Department, or administrative area, we have had some difficulty over people transferred from the pleasant and sunny regions of the South of France to the pleasant maybe, but less sunny, regions of Eastern France.

There are the problems, too, of customs and traditions. That is why, like both you and M. Radius, I am convinced that it is absolutely essential that permanent relations should be established between the High Authority of the European Coal and Steel Community and the municipalities concerned, that is, the workers' native and adoptive municipalities, if we are to avoid serious incidents arising out of misunderstandings, errors and incomprehension. I could cite cases which would clearly illustrate my point.

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Of the material problems I shall deal more closely with that of housing. I know that in some areas collieries and the High Authority have arranged to provide not only financial assistance for transferred families but new houses as well. At the same time, however, there are families living in these expanding areas, to which population is being transferred, who have been waiting for somewhere to live for two, three, four or even five years; they see these newcomers given new and proper accommodation while they, who have been working in the mines or steel works for several years, are still housed in squalid or overcrowded buildings.

We and the mayors must face up to this vital problem if we are to avoid clashes - and here I return to the human and psychological aspects - between the local populace and the transferred families; for at this point the human problem is bound up with the material problem.

I am aware that the President of the High Authority, M. René Mayer and his colleagues from the six countries of Little Europe have given much thought to this problem. I know, too, and a number of my French colleagues will bear me out in this, that in 1955 a delegation of French mayors was invited to Luxembourg to discuss the question.

It would be a welcome move if delegations of mayors from other member countries of E.C.S.C. were also invited; if permanent relations were established between the mayors from different countries, especially those from coal and steel producing areas, and the High Authority; and if such collaboration were also to exist among the mayors of the municipalities concerned and the directors of steel works and coal and iron mines.

I would go further - and here, not only, of course, for reasons of courtesy, but because I think it would be well to do so, I should like to please M. Abel-Durand, who is here as the French representative of regional local government areas, and our colleagues representing provincial local government areas - and say that it is essential that these problems should also be put in the hands of the General Councils (conseils généraux) and the Provincial Councils (conseils provinciaux); for they are matters of concern not only to the municipality but to the wider, regional area.

Lastly, when transfers of population take place, we must also avoid concentrating the newcomers in the same towns and villages. As M. Berrurier rightly said, we must avoid the growth of giant dormitory towns where people live on top of one another.

We ought rather to try to spread out transferred families over these industrial areas so that they may mix in more easily with the local inhabitants. We have much to gain from such a permanent system of co-operation in dealing with both the human and material aspects of the problems of transfer and, above all, of housing.

It is my belief that in this task this Conference can play an important rôle; for it is a rôle for the local elected representatives and not for the experts; the experts may have a soul and a conscience like the rest of us but they are not in permanent contact with all the material and human problems with which municipal and regional representatives like ourselves are familiar. (Applause).

THE PRESIDENT (Translation) - I call M. Rougeron.

M. ROUGERON (France) (Translation) - Mr. President. Ladies and Gentlemen, the report presented by M. Radius seems to me to call for a number of comments; I shall try to put them briefly and I think they are likely to contribute usefully to the debate which has just begun and will continue on Monday, on the local and regional effects of the problems raised by the European Coal and Steel Community and the social and economic results of the development of the Community.

I should like to draw attention to the likely state of mind of the representatives of regions now hit by depression who, whether out of conviction or obedience, defended the idea of the Common Market, even before the latter was set up, and put out the theory - which they themselves had been given to believe - that the Common Market would in no way affect the economic life and standard of living in these areas; who later on continued to explain to their fellow citizens that the Common Market had nothing to do with the difficulties which had befallen them and who today are trying to persuade people that the continuing results of these difficulties are in no way an outcome of the Common Market.

Our Rapporteur pointed out in his introduction that serious local problems have indeed arisen in the member countries of E.C.S.C. as a result of the setting-up of the Common Market. Further he tells us that the immediate effect of the establishment

of this market has been to reduce industry. He also speaks of the closing down, brought about by the opening of the Common Market, of factories and mines of low productivity.

I hope we shall keep this information to ourselves as it might well be used as a weapon against those who have steadfastly supported the idea of the Common Market.

This is a point which we should do well to bear in mind.

I should also like to draw attention to the responsibilities of local and regional authorities. Responsibility can only be assumed when an effective part is taken in the decision. Up to the present, however, all the economic set-backs experienced in Common Market areas have resulted from decisions taken without the local and regional authorities being consulted and without the slightest account being taken of the advice they thought useful to proffer.

Therefore, when speaking of the responsibility of local authorities, whether for action taken or consequences or for future measures, we should be extremely careful; for the prime responsibility rests with those who have taken decisions in which the local authorities played no part whatsoever, since those decisions were taken independently of us and, for the most part, against our will.

I would also stress that, whilst the local and regional authorities are far from willing to contribute proposals for measures which might be adopted to repair the harm caused by their present economic setbacks, they must also be allowed to discuss them with qualified representatives and be given suitable assistance in carrying them out.

My own experience of this question over the past three years has shown that, although we in local administrative bodies have apparent responsibilities, we have no means whatsoever of fulfilling them, for the central authorities have never provided us with the assistance essential to enable us to make good the harm that has been done.

Finally, in the extremely complex situation confronting us as a result of the extensive development of the Common Coal and Steel Market, we should bear in mind a number of essentials and above all consider the order of priority in which measures should be taken.

It seems paradoxical that the first of the measures taken up to now should have been to do away with existing

activities without previously considering how to replace them, thereby causing initial harm which will have to be made good later, though by what means it is not yet known for we have been given none; indeed the government authorities themselves do not possess those means, nor do they appear to be prepared to provide us with them; still less, of course, do local authorities have such means at their disposal.

So long as new economic organisations are set up and continue to grow, and enterprises are free to determine their own final structure, no other authority will be in a position to so direct the execution of the plan that its development aids primarily those areas hit by economic depression.

Thus, whilst the measures advocated by M. Radius are as a whole certainly of interest, they can be of practical value only on the condition that, instead of being merely asked to express opinions, we should be given the means to direct and co-ordinate and, if necessary, impose substitute activities in areas hit by the closing-down of mines and iron or steel works, and to see to it that no enterprise is closed down before another industrial activity has been introduced to replace it.

The present position in the stricken areas is that work is first withdrawn and the workers themselves then have to look for other employment. As you know, workers are, as a rule, averse to accepting other kinds of employment or that which entails moving to other districts, whereas by first of all setting up new industries and only then doing away with activities rendered superfluous by the Common Market or understandable technical progress which, indeed, we have no wish to oppose, we could avoid many human difficulties and much unrest, distress, and sometimes, even street disturbances.

These, Ladies and Gentlemen, are the few points I wished to make. Let me again emphasise that at present local and regional authorities have neither the means to make their views heard to any purpose before measures affecting them are passed nor the means to provide effective substitutes for industry which has had to close down, and that as a result they are in a position neither to re-employ their workers nor to create substitute economic activities.

If therefore the idea of the responsibility of local and regional authorities is to have any foundation, we must insist that they be allowed to participate in making the relevant decisions; in the latter event we shall willingly fulfil whatever duties may fall upon us.

It is my belief that M. Radius has put forward a number of proposals which could provide satisfactory solutions to our problems; unfortunately, however, it looks as though it will be some time before we can hope for their adoption. (Applause).

THE PRESIDENT (Translation) - I call M. Escande.

M. ESCANDE (France) (Translation) - Mr. President, Ladies and Gentlemen, I myself am very glad that this study of the problems arising out of the establishment of the European Coal and Steel Community should have raised the problem of European economic expansion.

I think that through the Council of Europe and in the light of local government problems, we can face up to the real problem which we have at heart.

The reason for my rising to speak is that I have recently observed the achievement here and there of a highly desirable degree of prosperity in regions dear to us.

Frankly, since we now talk about canalising the Moselle, why should we not in the very near future talk just as fervently about canalising the Rhine to the Saône and the Mediterranean?

Indeed the problems are linked and if we bring prosperity to a particular area - and Heaven knows we are anxious enough to do so - we ought also to study its effects in order to try by means of an overall plan to bring prosperity to all areas.

That is why, Mr. President, I should personally welcome a general study by the Council of Europe of an overall plan for economic expansion in all the member countries, taking into account the needs and potentialities of the various areas in both power and labour and, of course, the effects of such a plan which are very important on the social and human plane; for we cannot allow the prosperity of one area to bring poverty to another.

I know that there has already been talk of the deconcentration of industry but this brings with it the great and extremely important problem for the municipalities of re-training local workers, to which there is unfortunately no speedy solution.

It is true that there have been plans for the transfer of workers but we, who are in permanent contact with the social strata in our municipalities, are aware of the human problems arising in this connection. Moreover deconcentration brings with it the difficult question of interim unemployment.

I therefore suggest that a general idea be formulated within the Committee, where M. Radius' report will serve as a basis for discussion, and that the Council of Europe be requested to undertake a precise and concrete study of a plan for general economic expansion embracing all our respective regions and countries. All this would be in the defence not only of man, the individual human being, but also of the municipality, the social and economic unit of the nation with, as its crowning achievement, the Europe we all wish to build. (Applause).

THE PRESIDENT (Translation) - We have now come to the end of the list of speakers on the question of the local effects of the E.C.S.C.

I take it that M. Radius does not wish to reply for the moment but will reserve his observations for the Committee?

In that case the Conference will no doubt wish to refer M. Radius' report to the Committee together with the various comments that have been passed on it. Are there any objections?

It is settled accordingly.

5. PARTICIPATION OF THE LOCAL AUTHORITIES IN THE BUILDING OF EUROPE

THE PRESIDENT (Translation) - The next item on the Agenda is the debate on the two reports on the participation of local authorities in the building of Europe.

One of these reports requests an opinion on the participation of Local Authorities in European institutions and will be presented by Mr. Jones on behalf of the Special Committee on Municipal and Regional Affairs.

The other calls for an opinion on the participation of Local Authorities in the propagation of the European idea and will be presented on behalf of the Special Committee by M. Altmaier.

I shall first call Mr. Jones and then the speakers who are down to speak on his report, so that the debate will immediately succeed the presentation of the report.

As the list of speakers is rather long - and I think the Conference will agree that no further names should be added, particularly as those who have no opportunity of speaking today may do so on Monday - I would ask speakers to emulate the brevity of their predecessors, since this is only a preliminary debate in preparation for Committee work.

I call on Mr. Jones to present his report.

MR. JONES (United Kingdom): The subject that I want to introduce to the Conference this afternoon is the first part of perhaps the most contentious matter before the Conference. It is the participation of local authorities in European development.

I should like to begin, however, by saying a word or two about the United Kingdom delegation which is present at this Conference. It is perfectly true, as our friend from the Netherlands said this morning, that not one of the national associations of local authorities in Britain is officially represented; but that does not mean that the thirteen people who are present from the United Kingdom at this Conference do not speak with the authority of every type of local authority that there is in the United Kingdom.

Some of you may be aware of the fact that there are probably more types of local authorities in the United Kingdom than there are in any other country represented at this Conference. Among the thirteen people who are present there are both officials and members from county councils, county borough councils and urban district councils, and they speak, one assumes, for the authorities which they represent.

Nobody regrets more than I do that the national associations in the United Kingdom are not present at this Conference today. I believe there is a good deal of misunderstanding in the United Kingdom about the purpose and aim of this Conference. The idea that local authorities should participate in European institutions met with a considerable reaction immediately it was suggested. That is not surprising. Every new idea meets with that fate in the beginning. But the more one looked at the matter the more one became convinced that the spreading of this European idea was something which concerned not only the national Parliaments but every man, woman and child in every country in Western Europe. The need for the participation of municipalities is very important.

There were two basic principles in the minds of the originators of this idea. The first concerned the question how this new source of propaganda could be used to disseminate information about the European idea, and how the enthusiasm which this idea would bring about could be harnessed to a furthering of the European idea. The second principle was that there was a responsibility upon the promoters of the European idea to see that, in the process of unifying and solidifying Europe, municipalities were given their proper place in the scheme of things.

I think it was my friend M. Radius who said, a few moments ago, that when we centralise too much we tend to go further and further away from the common man and woman. Therefore, the more we develop the municipal idea, the more we take into consultation members of municipalities and officials of municipal authorities spreading right across Europe, the more likely we are to build upon a permanent basis this European idea which is at the back of the mind of every one of us.

I am quite sure that none of the people who have opposed the convening of this Conference have any objection in principle to the development of the European idea. What we are all concerned about - perhaps more so today than ever before - is the question how we can develop this idea upon a democratic basis. These were the two principles which animated the minds of the promoters of this participation of municipalities in a variety of ways in the development of the European idea.

I can claim no credit for the idea, which was the result of consideration by a number of people after the establishment of the Council of Europe - those people including the present President of this Conference and some of his colleagues. I have shown, however, what was the basic principle in the minds of the people who conceived this idea, and who sought to establish, and succeeded in establishing, the Committee on Municipal and Regional Affairs of the Council of Europe. It is not without interest to record that after the Special Committee on Municipal and Regional Affairs was set up, Recommendation 53 was finally adopted - it was one of the earliest Recommendations of the Committee - and it contained these significant words:

"The Committee of Ministers should adopt a favourable attitude in regard to pro-European activities of local authorities - 'pairings', inter-municipal meetings, youth exchanges, organisation of exhibitions....."

and a number of other things.

I do not propose to dwell upon those developments, because my good friend M. Altmaier will deal in some detail with the results which have been achieved up to date by these developments. It is rather interesting to spend a second or two in reading out what the Committee of Ministers had to say in reply to Recommendation 53. I believe that the words of the Committee of Ministers put into language far better than I can do the whole European idea. The Committee said:

"The Committee of Ministers believe that local authorities, being placed in close contact with the population, are in an advantageous position to inform and enlighten public opinion in the member countries about the Council of Europe."

That is precisely the stand we take. We believe that the municipalities of the several countries are far better equipped and far nearer the ordinary people of their countries; they have methods by which they can get virtually into the homes of the ordinary men and women in order to develop this European idea.

At the beginning of the present week, when the Assembly was coming to the last part of its Session for 1956-57, it had before it a report from its Committee on Cultural Affairs, dealing with a joint meeting which had taken place in Paris between members of the Committee on Cultural Affairs and a committee of professors of universities in Western Europe.

They said in that document that in their view there was less than 5 per cent. of the population of any country within the Council of Europe who knew and understood quite clearly what the Council of Europe was, what it was doing, and where it wanted to go. If those words are true, then there is laid upon every one of us a responsibility to see that this European idea is expanded and developed as quickly as possible.

It is because we believe that the municipalities have a dual task in this regard that I am particularly delighted that this Conference has been so successful. There are two tasks which they have to undertake. We who are members of the Committee on Municipal and Regional Affairs want from them their ideas, their views of what we should do, how we should do it, and their criticism of any actions which we have taken, in order that we may pursue this ideal with the greatest possible measure of agreement.

When this idea was conceived - and here I am quite sure that I speak for every member of the Committee on Municipal and Regional Affairs and certainly for the Secretariat of the Council of Europe - nobody imagined how big a task it would be. Those of you who care to spend a few moments when you return to your homes in examining the set-up of local government in the fifteen countries which comprise the Council of Europe will not be surprised to find that there is a tremendous diversity of types of local authorities in those countries. Perhaps an Englishman ought not to say that, because there are more types of local authorities in the United Kingdom, so far as I know, than there are in any one of the other countries.

Accordingly the first task which had to be accomplished was to endeavour to catalogue and make a list of the kind of authorities with which contact could be made. One is bound to say that the co-operation which the Committee on Municipal and Regional Affairs received from both the international organisations was all that could be desired. We received all the information which they could possibly give us. We had a good deal of help and co-operation both from the International Union of Local Authorities and the Council of European Municipalities. It would be correct to say that without their assistance we could not have catalogued the municipalities in the way in which that has been done.

Then a questionnaire was submitted to those national associations in all the member countries. A series of questions was put to them asking whether they would assist. I do not wish to delay the Conference by reading out the questions, but any member of the Conference who wishes to do so can find the questions in page 2 of the document which has been circulated. The response to that inquiry was greater than one dared to hope for, and gave a good deal of encouragement to the members of the Committee to go ahead with the task.

Over the months, indeed over the years, since the questionnaire was sent out, since an attempt has been made to develop this idea, quite a number of tasks have been embarked upon. I do not want to deal with them in detail, because they will be dealt with in detail subsequently by my good friend M. Altmaier. One suggestion which was made in the early stages of the questionnaire, and in Recommendation 53, was made to the Committee of Ministers; in fact several suggestions were made. It was suggested that a booklet on pairings should be prepared and distributed among the European municipalities; that a European Prize should be awarded by the Committee on Municipal and Regional Affairs to the town judged to have best served the cause of European unity; and finally it was suggested that periodical meetings should be held of a permanent working party, including delegates from the national associations of local authorities.

The working party would bring these associations of local authorities into the closest possible contact with the activities of the Committee, the Assembly and Europe in general. There might have been more than one conception of what that working party should comprise. I believe that the Committee on Municipal and Regional Affairs would have been content with a smaller working party, but for reasons which the Committee of Ministers had - and one has no right to question its decision - that Committee decided not to agree in the initial stage to the working party suggested in Recommendation 53.

It was not until October, 1954, that the Committee on Municipal and Regional Affairs, viewing the reply of the Committee of Ministers, decided on the new Recommendation that this Conference should be convened.

It is not without interest to re-read one sentence from the letter which was sent by the British Section to the President of this Conference:

"The International Union would have no objection to the calling of a small conference of experts to assist the Special Committee on Municipal and Regional Affairs on specific subjects"

I put it to this Conference that the members of the municipal authorities of the fifteen countries represented here, which is a very small proportion of the total number, could be regarded as a small body of experts and that there are four specific subjects on our Agenda. I therefore suggest, with all due respect, that on the two points to which the International Union makes an objection we have kept within both the conditions which the Union has laid down.

I am aware that there are advantages and disadvantages in this type of conference. I was, for my sins, a member of a municipality for fifteen years, but because the town clerk of that municipality is present here today I think that the less said about those fifteen years the better it will be for me. I can appreciate that the International Union of Local Authorities, in particular, may feel that the field in which it is a specialist, and is doing a very good job of work indeed, might be impinged upon by this Conference, but may I assure the Union, on behalf of the Committee on Municipal and Regional Affairs that we have enough work to do, in trying to devise means of spreading the European idea, without attempting in any way whatever to impinge upon its activities.

I should like to remind the Conference of something which was said by an eminent European politician, seven years ago, when the Council of Europe was being created. One of the distinguished Representatives of the United Kingdom at that time, Sir Winston Churchill, said: "We are not making a machine; we are creating a living plant." Those words are as true today as they were in August, 1950, when they were uttered. But if we are building a living plant we must remember that that plant must be nurtured. I am one of those

who believe that if the Council of Europe is to expand and improve it must meet with the growing appreciation of the people whom it represents. It cannot remain static; it must either progress or stagnate and perish. For the machine which has been created with the object of developing the European idea to go out of existence today would, indeed, be a tragedy for the whole world.

In November of last year, as some of my English colleagues will remember, I tried to put these views into an article in the The Municipal Journal, and in commending this Report to you I should like to conclude by reading the last paragraph of that article:

"If this living plant, created in 1950, is to grow and expand it must have fresh encouragement and enthusiasm. This can only come from the peoples of the member countries. I believe that the municipalities of the fifteen member countries have an important part to play in expanding this idea and that the Conference of National Associations of Local Authorities is a step in that direction."

THE PRESIDENT (Translation). - I am very glad that Mr. Jones's excellent report has been so enthusiastically applauded. You will understand why this report is so outstanding when I tell you that, in addition to possessing the brilliant personal qualities that you will have recognised, Mr. Jones is Vice-Chairman of the Committee on Municipal and Regional Affairs and in this capacity has for many years made an invaluable contribution to the Committee's work in preparing for this Conference. I would take this opportunity of thanking him on behalf of us all (Loud applause).

I shall now call those who wish to speak on Mr. Jones's Report and would ask them to confine themselves to essentials in view of the range of material under discussion and the limited time at our disposal. We shall doubtless have to draw a lesson from this and allot more time to our future debates.

I call M. Keref.

M. KOREF (Austria): As the Chairman of the European Affairs Committee of the International Union of Local Authorities I am very glad to have this opportunity of making some general remarks. Resolution 76 of 1955, which is the origin of this Conference, is not the first of its kind. It was preceded, as M. Wytema said this morning, by a Recommendation and a Resolution of 1953, recommending that representatives of European municipalities should meet regularly in the Assembly Hall of the House of Europe to discuss problems of common concern. This Recommendation and Resolution were strongly opposed in municipal circles and, as a result of this opposition, could not, so far as I am informed, find approval by the Committee of Ministers.

This attempt was then abandoned and a new Resolution No. 76 of 1955, was introduced by its author, our President, M. Chaban-Delmas, as one which could meet the objections raised against its predecessor. At the Rome meeting of the Special Committee on Municipal and Regional Affairs, in September, 1955, our President introduced his draft Resolution as a proposal to consult experts. As such, it met with no opposition from the I.U.L.A. observers. Since then that Resolution has been used to create something basically different and, consequently, has been opposed by the International Union.

The I.U.L.A.'s attitude towards this Conference was defined by a working party at a meeting of its European Affairs Committee on 16th March, 1956. It was laid down in a Memorandum sent to the Council of Europe on 12th April, 1956. This Memorandum was distributed to all members of the Special Committee. The French member union of the I.U.L.A. declared itself in disagreement with the policy pursued by the largest possible majority of the I.U.L.A. European member unions in this matter.

The I.U.L.A. and its member unions attach such importance to their co-operation with the Council of Europe that in general they have not refused to participate in a Conference organised by the Council, although, with the one exception already mentioned, they are all in disagreement with the Council on the set-up of this Conference.

As we have already heard this morning, some unions have not sent delegates or observers at all. Others preferred to send a reduced number. Others sent all the delegates to which they were entitled. All, however, with the exception of France, share the same views as to the aims and principles of this Conference.

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This opposition to the set-up of the present Conference finds its origin in no way in any opposition to the aims and principles of the Council of Europe, nor to European co-operation or integration in general. On the contrary, the I.U.L.A. is strongly in favour of all tendencies and measures serving the ideal of European unity.

I frankly confess that I was deeply impressed, for instance, by Mr. Jones' words, just now. The I.U.L.A., through its European Affairs Committee and its consultative status with the Council of Europe, under which it has an observer in the Special Committee on Municipal and Regional Affairs, has especially been most active in promoting European activities, in particular those sponsored by the Council of Europe, like the Smithers Plan, the European Prize Contest, and so on. Member unions and member authorities of the I.U.L.A. have equally been engaged in a wide variety of European activities. The many offers of hospitality provided by them under the Smithers Plan and the large number of serious candidatures from I.U.L.A. - affiliated authorities for the European Prize reflect, I venture to say, this keen interest. One I.U.L.A. member-union, the Association of Netherlands Municipalities, which groups all municipalities of the Netherlands without any exception, has even established its own European Affairs Committee to promote and stimulate the European activities of Dutch municipalities.

I fully agree with M. Merlot's statement this morning. The principal things, the most important things, are freedom of the individual and freedom of the local authorities. We will build, we have to build, a united Europe. In this we all agree. There is not the slightest difference between us.

But the opposition to the present Conference is based on the conviction that its set-up is not only unpractical but even contrary to the very co-operation between Strasbourg and the municipal world which it intends to promote. It is, therefore, its struggle for local autonomy and its readiness to promote European co-operation which provide the fundamental basis of the opposition of the I.U.L.A. and its members to the present Conference.

The objections to the Conference set-up, as listed in the I.U.L.A. Memorandum of 12th April, 1956, may be summarised as follows: first, the I.U.L.A. agrees with the consultation, as experts, of a limited number of representatives of

organisations of local authorities on precise problems. It considers such a consultation to be a useful complement and extension of the practice of consultation of international organisations of local authorities which have obtained consultative status, a consultation which manifests itself essentially in the sending of observers of these organisations to the meetings of the Special Committee on Municipal and Regional Affairs.

Secondly, the I.U.L.A. and most of its members, however, oppose the attempt to create, as a result of Resolution 76 of 1955, an organism like the present Conference which, by its large size - I repeat, by its large size - its composition and its working methods risks becoming another Congress of Local Authorities.

This is the fundamental and decisive point of our meeting. The present Conference set-up has no resemblance whatever to a consultation of experts as an extension of consultative status arrangements, for various reasons. Its size is far too big for such a consultation. The exact problems to be treated were unknown to the organisations invited when they were called upon to nominate their delegates, and its agenda was fixed; I am sorry to state, without any consultation of the I.U.L.A., though the Chairman of the Special Committee had explicitly promised that such consultation would take place.

The Conference, as it is organised now, is, in its most innocent form, just another congress of local authorities. The I.U.L.A. and its members must therefore oppose this on principle on the basis of their fundamental position, resulting from the very principle of local autonomy, that no activity which can be undertaken by organisations of local authorities should be included in the programme of the Council of Europe and its organs.

The present Conference, moreover, is quoted in many quarters as being a first step towards a political European Senate, based on local government representation.

Against these attempts to use Resolution 76 as a means of creating by indirect means a sort of preliminary body to a European Senate, the I.U.L.A. must equally take a firm stand. The I.U.L.A. believes that the problem of local government representation in European institutions is of vital importance; it devoted a special working session to this problem during its Rome Congress, as some of you remember. At this working session this problem was debated on the basis of papers submitted by M. Wigny and M. von Merkatz. Both these eminent experts concluded

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that no representation of local authorities in European institutions on a political level was desirable, but that arrangements should be made, as a matter of urgency and of vital importance, to provide for consultation of local government representatives. This thorough study of a vital problem is completely ignored in the setting up of this Conference and the drafting of its documents. Up to now it has never been discussed in the Special Committee to which it was presented.

Before precise and definite solutions of this complicated problem can be recommended, or even machinery set in motion by indirect means to force upon the municipal world one specific solution of it, a careful study and full examination of this matter will be necessary. No such study has as yet been undertaken by the Special Committee. The I.U.L.A. feels that the consultation of experts mentioned in Resolution 76 should be established upon a non-political, practical and ad hoc basis. Any conference which, like the present one, is organised to be attended by a hundred or more delegates will inevitably either become a more or less political meeting or a congress like those regularly held by local government organisations themselves. A smaller conference of real experts, invited on the basis of the problems to be treated, and with a limited agenda covering only those items on which the work of the Special Committee has progressed sufficiently to ask for expert advice on its preliminary findings, could have had some use and some sense. But none of the reports submitted to this Conference about two weeks ago gives the opportunity of thoroughly studying the problems concerned or consulting experts at this stage. In addition, it would have been possible to finance such a limited conference out of the funds made available by the Committee of Ministers, which based its budgetary allowance on this very concept. The Special Committee has preferred to keep to its original project, thus forcing delegates, especially those from distant countries, to pay the major part of their expenses themselves.

The I.U.L.A. is therefore of the opinion that, for the same reasons, the composition of the experts' conference provided for in Resolution 76 should not be determined by the same methods as that of a political and Parliamentary body like the Consultative Assembly. If effective use is to be made of the experience of the local government associations, this question ought to be decided not by political or demographic considerations but by the realities of the municipal system, such as the existence of various types of local authority, the number and importance of local government organisations in the various countries and, moreover, by the nature of the questions to be discussed.

These are the remarks I am submitting to this Conference on behalf of organisations of local authorities in Norway, Sweden, Denmark, Germany, the Netherlands, Great Britain, Iceland, Austria, Switzerland and Finland - organisations which cover either a large part of, or, as in Scandinavia, Great Britain and the Netherlands, all local authorities without exception. That is why I have the honour to present the following Resolution, which has already been put into your hands, Mr. President:

"The Conference,

stressing the essential importance for both parties concerned of a further strengthening and broadening of the consultation and co-operation of the Council of Europe with local authorities of the member countries,

emphasising the primordial rôle which the international associations of local authorities and their members have to play in these contacts for which they are the most qualified intermediaries,

desirous to base these contacts on the consultative status conferred by the Council of Europe on these associations,

wanting to rule out every risk of this consultation developing into either a large congress or conference of local authorities, which would duplicate activities of the international associations of local authorities, or into a large international gathering of a more or less political character, as a result of its composition being based on political and demographical considerations, and not on the local government situation in the various countries,

calls upon the Special Committee on Municipal and Regional Affairs of the Consultative Assembly of the Council of Europe to:

1. ask the Consultative Assembly to renew its Resolution 76 (1955), adding to it a Recommendation proposing that the Council of Europe makes annual budgetary provisions for the holding of one limited meeting of local government experts, qualified representatives of the international and national associations of local authorities, invited through the intermediary of the international associations of local authorities having consultative status with the Council of Europe

to give their opinion on one specific item of municipal and European interest on which the Special Committee on Municipal and Regional Affairs, having heard the advice of the international associations considers its work to have progressed sufficiently to make such a consultation desirable and possible;

2. ask the Consultative Assembly to recommend that the budgetary provisions involved would enable this Assembly to convene annually such a meeting of up to 25 local government experts, paying full allowances for travel and accommodation in order to ensure that the attendance would only depend on considerations of competence, and not on those of distance or on the financial position of the associations concerned."

I am a passionate propagandist of the European idea and ideal, yet I beg to draw to your attention this well-meant Resolution and ask you to accept it. As M. Merlot himself said this morning, we do not want words; we want activity - real practical work.

THE PRESIDENT (Translation) - Ladies and Gentlemen, I have been roundly, though most courteously, taken to task by M. Koref, not as an individual - for that would be of little importance - but in my capacity as Chairman of the Committee on Municipal and Regional Affairs. Therefore, before calling on the next speakers I feel I must, without departing from my presidential impartiality, make one or two points quite clear.

M. Koref was probably right to speak his mind so openly, for it enables me to do likewise. I sincerely hope that this thorough airing of our different views will help to clear up what I still prefer to regard as a misunderstanding.

I would begin by pointing out to M. Koref that there has been no alteration in the text or attempt to twist the purpose of Resolution 76. If he cares to refer to the text of the Resolution, which dates from 1955, he will see that the conference mentioned in it, the principle of which was adopted by the Consultative Assembly and approved by the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe, is intended to be an annual one for representatives of all the qualified national associations of the local authorities of member countries, the list of such associations being prepared by the Special Committee on Municipal and Regional Affairs after consultation with the two major international organisations of local authorities, namely, the International Union of Local Authorities and the

Council of European Municipalities. There is no mention of "experts" in this basic text, although it does contain an invitation to the International Union of Local Authorities to play a part in choosing representatives.

This proves that the Committee on Municipal and Regional Affairs has never had the slightest designs against the International Union of Local Authorities, or against the Council of European Municipalities, for that matter.

The International Union of Local Authorities has, contrary to M. Koref's assertion, been kept fully informed of the items on the Agenda of the Conference, since more than a year ago we invited an observer from the Union to take part in all the meetings of the Municipal Committee of the Consultative Assembly. (Hear, Hear!) In view of this invitation and the regular transmission of documents to the Union, the latter can hardly allege that it was in the dark about any aspect of the agenda. Furthermore we received no comments on or protests against this agenda.

For this reason I was at a loss to understand why the Union has for several weeks been trying to dissuade national associations from sending delegates to our Conference. (Hear, Hear!)

The reason is now clear to me and I intend to explain it, for I think it is only right that all members of the Conference should also understand it. (Applause).

Through the eloquence of M. Koref, the International Union of Local Authorities has declared itself to be in favour of Europe. We are very ready to believe this, and have welcomed the interest which the Union has shown in European questions in the last year or two. We hope that this interest will continue but will not take the form of dissuading national associations from sending delegates to conferences such as this. (Loud applause).

The reason for this behaviour was stated by M. Koref with such frankness that I wonder whether he realises its full implications. M. Koref declared that the Union could not accept a Conference of this type for one fundamental reason: the fear of seeing another congress set up on the lines of those already in existence, such as the Congress of the International Union of Local Authorities, and, he added, congresses of a political nature.

For one thing, I was unaware that the International Union of Local Authorities was a political organisation. So far as I know it has always pursued non-political aims. For another, my inaugural address and other speeches this morning made it clear that we had no intention whatsoever of becoming involved in political struggles. I therefore fail to see how this Conference can be competing in any way with the International Union of Local Authorities.

I might add that, if such were the case, there would be no reason for concern, for rivalry between different organisations can be a healthy thing. (Hear, hear!) Furthermore, I recognise no exclusive rights in any field whatever. (Applause).

However, there is in fact no question of competition and I think that the proceedings of this Conference and its conclusions on Monday will show that there is actually no similarity and therefore no question of rivalry between this Conference and the congresses held by either the International Union of Local Authorities or the Council of European Municipalities.

It is my earnest hope that M. Koref and those who share his anxiety will be ready to admit that their fears were unfounded. I also trust that in future the Union, basing its attitude on reality instead of on imaginary fears, will adopt the neat and practical solution just put forward by Mr. Jones, which will enable us to work together in perfect co-operation as I ventured to hope we should this morning.

Since the Union is in favour of a conference of experts, the solution offered us is to regard those here present as the experts. Personally I cannot think of any better qualified than they. (Hear, hear!)

As to whether they are qualified to deal with specific problems, what problems could be more specific than those now before us, to which we bring a serious European outlook, unclouded by political disputes?

At this point I wish to make a serious pronouncement: for years now, and particularly since the International Union of Local Authorities has been invited to send an observer to every meeting of the Committee on Municipal and Regional Affairs, whether here in Strasbourg in the House of Europe or elsewhere in our continent, we have repeatedly appealed to the Union for its co-operation. I emphasise the word "repeatedly", for it is not our usual practice to make repeated appeals for co-operation. We have done this out of respect for the representative character of the Union and because we consider it to be an important association, with a fine record of achievement to its credit, which has every reason to prosper and to which we wish every success.

Since this morning we have again been renewing our appeals. I now wish to make one further appeal in the hope that it will be heard before it is too late, that is before the Union, by persistently - I was going to say "obstinately" - refusing to accept realities as they stand and as they are being created before our eyes in this hall, brings us to a point where further collaboration is impossible. This would certainly not be in the interests of the Union or the Conference - though this may not be of ultimate and vital importance in either case - but what is really important, Ladies and Gentlemen, is that it would not be in the interests of Europe.

That is all I have to say and I trust that my appeal will be heard. (Prolonged applause).

I call M. Dardel.

M. DARDÉL (France) (Translation) - Ladies and Gentlemen, I think that the time has come for me, as a member of the International Union of Local Authorities and as President of the French Union, to try and dispel the uneasiness which has been deliberately created here. I realise that M. Koréf's speech was prepared the day before yesterday, and has now come at much too late a stage, but I would remind my colleagues of the International Union, who are here in number, in fact in greater number than those who signed the resolution distributed to you earlier on, that at our meeting yesterday we of the Union were practically unanimous in adopting a resolution containing a formula which we all accepted, namely that there should be no attempt to "sabotage" the spirit of this conference. (Hear,hear!)

It is my impression that we are faced with a dispute between secretariats rather than between organisations, and still less between Europeans. (Loud applause).

How extraordinary to find a representative of the local authorities interpreting one of the decisions of the Committee of Ministers, who represent central authorities, in a manner most calculated to hamper the cause of local autonomy and local freedoms!

How extraordinary to hear what amounts to a plea for still greater supervision and fewer prerogatives for the representatives, technicians and experts that we are!
(Hear, hear!)

Ladies and Gentlemen, we have been given a list of members of the International Union of Local Authorities who are opposed to a conference such as this on the ground that it is not a conference of experts. I really wonder what this word "experts" is intended to suggest.

I think it would be useful at this juncture to clear up a number of points for the benefit of those who are not members of the International Union of Local Authorities.

At a meeting yesterday, attended not only by the four or five signatories of the Resolution before you but also by about thirty of the delegates here present, we found that the delegates of the International Union of Local Authorities from France, Germany, Italy and Belgium were agreed that this Conference should take place with the Agenda as it stands and should be allowed to make its full impact on the outside world.

We now find that, instead of getting down to the serious work on the Agenda, we are returning to a discussion which has already occupied our morning and is completely at variance with the spirit of the meeting attended by all delegates who are members of the International Union of Local Authorities.

It is my impression - for I must speak frankly - that this meeting, to which only a certain number of countries were invited, was followed by another much smaller meeting and that M. Koref's report reflects the outlook of a Secretariat with which we are in complete disagreement.

It has been said that there is opposition to the creation of a European Senate. I feel that a certain organisation in Northern Europe would be glad to have this Senate replaced by a small central authority whose members would be the sole spokesman for the municipalities of Europe. (Hear, hear!) That is the conclusion we must draw from what we have just heard.

It is our right to protest in the name of the national delegations - since an appeal has been made to the Union of

Local Authorities - and I protest in the name of the entire French delegation, of which I am the head, against such a step, for it is inconsistent with the democratic standards to which we are accustomed in our organisations.

I dislike having to speak in this way and my speech yesterday at the private meeting of the International Union of Local Authorities - a conciliatory speech prompted by my desire for complete agreement among all the delegates - is in sharp contrast to what I am saying now.

I should be extremely sorry if it were thought that you were in favour of a conference of experts instead of a meeting of delegates duly appointed by their municipalities just because five or six delegates have tabled a resolution and scheming has taken place which did not even originate in the International Union of Local Authorities - for I am convinced that, if the members of this Union had been consulted on this specific point, 99% of them would have refused their consent. If this question were put to them direct, I repeat: 99% of municipalities would be in agreement with us within the organisation which now disputes the validity of our acceptance.

My friends, I think we should avoid dramatising the situation for I am sure that the overwhelming agreement prevailing here is shared by all mayors, to whatever organisation they belong. Those who assert that we are trying to transform our organisation into a congress are simply proving that it is they who wish to do so, since they bring this dispute to the platform and protract discussion on subjects which are quite extraneous to the purpose of this meeting, being more closely connected with secretarial and organisational matters than with a conference such as ours which is trying to surmount all obstacles including any that the International Union of Local Authorities may erect.

I think you will agree that it would be very dangerous if we, who have surmounted so many barriers in order to assemble here - barriers of nationality, party and often of tradition - were to stumble over still more artificial barriers created by international organisations.

An appeal has been made here to the mayors because they are the basic unit of all civilisation and organised society. We are simple men concerned with fundamentals and have no wish to indulge in speechifying.

Ladies and Gentlemen, let us forget these exchanges and the term "sabotage" which I used just now. Let us try to show

good will towards each other for the sake of the Europe of tomorrow. (Prolonged applause)

THE PRESIDENT (Translation) - I call M. Wytéma.

M. WYTEMA (Netherlands): The question of the participation of local authorities in European institutions is, without doubt, very important. A growing European community could mean, although it need not be, fortification of the trend towards centralisation which has already been so pronounced during the last decade. Further, apart from the relations between the local authorities and specialised institutions like the Coal and Steel Community, which is concerned with specific authorities, there is the question of the relations between the local authorities and the growing European community in general.

The problem is very complicated. It was studied by the European Affairs Committee of the International Union of Local Authorities, for instance, at its Congress in Rome, in 1955. There discussions were based on reports written by a former Belgian Minister and Member of Parliament, M. Pierre Wigny, and by M. H.J. von Merkatz, German Federal Minister. The reports and the discussion upon them were published under the title of "Local Authorities in Europe", and this publication contains, so far as I know, the most thorough study of the problem which has so far been made.

There are two questions: first, ought provision to be made for the participation of local authorities in working out the decisions taken by European authorities? secondly, ought local authorities to be entrusted with the execution of these decisions? On the first question there are, again, two possibilities. First, the institution of a chamber or special assembly composed of municipal delegates; secondly, an arrangement whereby a certain number of seats in the existing chambers would not be occupied by members elected by universal franchise, but would be reserved for municipal representatives.

It seems to me that I should ask you to pay attention to the danger that in this way the municipalities would be competent to deal with national and international affairs, and would no longer be responsible solely for the administration of local affairs.

This holds true for the creation of a Special Assembly composed of municipal delegates, as well as for an arrangement whereby a certain number of seats in the ordinary Chambers would be occupied by people not elected by universal suffrage but would be reserved for municipal representatives.

There is another idea. According to this, the local authorities are not represented directly as constituent parts of the States and of Europe, but they provide in the technical organisation of the general elections either the electoral constituency, the electoral college or the list of candidates. This idea is also to be rejected, in my opinion, because it tends to modify the results of general suffrage, which is a purely political matter, rather than to represent the municipalities.

The only thing the report of the Belgian statesman deems possible and desirable, as far as the participation in the making of decisions is concerned, is a consultation of a small group of municipal representatives in the form either of a working party or of special seats in an existing consultative committee. This representation should be assured by the international associations of local authorities, which include all the various tendencies; thus the complications of a special election could be avoided. You will not be astonished, Mr. President, after my general remarks this morning, that I agree only with this idea.

As to the second question, the execution of decisions of European institutions, the situation is quite different. It is here that the collaboration of local authorities can be of great value. Some time ago M. Radius presented to the Council of Europe's Consultative Assembly a Report concerning the application of the Treaty which inaugurated the Coal and Steel Community. Another Report was presented by him personally at this meeting today.

The Treaty, as we all know, as it is one of the subjects on the agenda of this Conference, will give rise to problems of unemployment, to the setting up of new enterprises, to technical re-training, and so on; and in these fields local authorities are concerned, are even the first to be concerned, and should be consulted when and where it is possible. I doubt, however, whether a mass conference, as M. Radius suggested today, is the most appropriate form for such a consultation.

What are the conclusions which we have to draw on these matters? How do we have to ensure effective de-centralisation? In the first place, the European Assemblies ought, to a greater degree even than the national legislative authorities, to keep to the principles of legislation and to leave a certain margin of freedom to the executive. In the second place - and this is of direct practical importance for us - I will give a quotation from M. Wigny's report:

"The presence of municipal representatives is desirable to guarantee a decentralisation that shall be a thing of fact and not merely one of theory. If they participate in the consultative committees, as has been suggested (in the foregoing section), and if these committees are charged with the task of rendering advice on projected measures and not merely with passing judgment on measures already taken, the municipal representatives will have an opportunity of insisting in definite terms on the services which the local authorities could render in each particular case, if it is desired to make an appeal to them."

It will not be a great surprise to you, Mr. President, to hear from me, as representative of the Netherlands Association of Local Authorities, that we in the Netherlands reject the introduction into municipal circles of issues of national or even international politics. We appreciate and esteem the creating and fostering of international bonds, of international understanding, but in the very technical matter of municipal government we prefer first to make sufficient studies of the sometimes very complex problems and only afterwards to consider which steps are to be taken.

It will be evident from these words that I support the Motion tabled by M. Koref, but I ask your permission to add a few words because, like you, I want to avoid misunderstandings in this Conference.

Although I speak only on behalf of the Association which I have the honour to represent, as you know we have certain contacts with the International Union. I can tell you that M. Koref has spoken for only a part of the International Union of Local Authorities, but it was on the basis of a generally approved memoire of 12th April. Only the French delegation protested against the memoire. Up to that date we in the Netherlands, who have our seats in this Committee, had known that all the other members agreed with that memoire. I make that point because there might be some misunderstanding.

Secondly, I have been asking for papers for this Conference from the very moment that I was invited to come to Strasbourg. I wanted to know what would be dealt with in this Conference. I asked whether I could be told what we should deal with. I was told by the Secretariat, however, that the agenda for this Conference had been fixed at the Bureau meeting of the Special Committee, to which no observers had been invited. The International Union received the circular concerned, as did its member unions, without knowing anything about the Conference Agenda. Not until we had received the letter of either the 27th or 29th November did we know which subjects would be dealt with.

Finally, M. Dardel said that a suggestion had been made to member unions of the I.U.L.A. that they should not attend this Conference. I am fully entitled to tell you, on behalf of the Netherlands Association, that the associations were left entirely free to decide whether they would send one or more representatives or not. It was a free decision of the associations, and there was no suggestion whatever. If some associations have taken a decision which in your opinion is wrong, then I hope you will not blame me for saying openly that I do not wish you any harm, but if our national associations had been better informed perhaps these misunderstandings could have been avoided.

There are people who think that I can speak only as a living voice of a bureau. I know that I am the only Representative of the Netherlands Association here, but I can tell the Conference that all matters connected with European Affairs are always thoroughly studied in our European Affairs Committee. We need time to call together the members of that Committee. Matters of more importance are put before the Annual Conference. I can speak only on behalf of the Netherlands Association, but it is conducted in a purely democratic way, and when I express an opinion I am sure that I am speaking in the name of more than 1,000 Netherlands municipalities.

THE PRESIDENT (Translation) - I should just like to put M. Wytéma right on one point.

The Agenda for the Conference was adopted by the Committee and not by its Bureau. If you were told that it was the Bureau who arranged it, then the secretariat made a mistake. To be exact, the Agenda was adopted at a meeting of the Committee at Coventry, and that is some months ago.

I forget whether the observer from the International Union of Local Authorities was present at the time, but he was certainly invited.

M. WYTEMA (Netherlands) (Translation) - I am not sure, Mr. President.

THE PRESIDENT (Translation) - I am certain of it, for observers are always invited to committee meetings, and that applies to the International Union of Local Authorities as well as to the Council of European Municipalities.

However let us not dwell on the past.

What is most important and encouraging in M. Wytema's statement is that it seems we are only faced with a misunderstanding, inasmuch as a failure to transmit information is at the roots of the lack of information of the Netherlands local authorities and the International Union of Local Authorities.

I hope that this Conference will give those among us who were concerned in this affair, in particular men like MM. Koref and Wytema whose honesty is beyond question, the opportunity of ascertaining everybody's intentions, so that we may put an end to this misunderstanding and to everything which has hitherto seemed to divide us. For it is vital that we should dispel these clouds if we are to work together in the best possible spirit for the European cause, as it is my earnest hope we shall. (Applause).

I therefore thank M. Wytema for what he has said.

THE PRESIDENT (Translation) - I call M. Ronse.

M. RONSE (Belgium) (Translation) - Mr. President, I had intended to deal more or less technically with the questions before us, but the discussion which has just taken place, your own outstanding speech and that of M. Dardel have put the problem in a different light.

The impression I derived from the speeches of M. Koref and M. Wytema was that these speakers were ignoring the views of half the members of the Strasbourg Conference. The first point I must emphasise is that the Council of European Municipalities is in complete agreement with both the holding and the scope of this Conference.

My second point arises out of the lack of information shown by M. Koref and M. Wytema. I was surprised, to say the least, at M. Koref's speech. He maintained that the principles now under discussion were adopted only by a minority of the member nations of the International Union of Local Authorities or other international unions. In this he was much mistaken.

As was stated at a meeting which, though private, was attended by delegates of the International Union of Local Authorities and the Council of European Municipalities, many nations represented in these two bodies expressed their approval of the system and programme of work which are the subject of our debate. An overwhelming majority in this Assembly is therefore in favour of this programme, but it is a surprising but frequently observed feature of public assemblies that a very small minority of dissidents defending a certain idea tends to give the outside world the impression that a happy solution, such as the one we all applauded this morning, would not have the desired effect.

This, Gentlemen, is the true position. When I listened to MM. Koref and Wytema I had the feeling that we were like spoilt children prepared to look a gift horse in the mouth. Fifteen nations are in favour of creating Europe. Every thinking person in these fifteen nations is aware of the danger of over-centralisation, of the possibility that the executive authorities and central legislature may become too divorced from the nation.

It is the municipalities that make up the nation. You will excuse me if I laugh when I hear MM. Wytema and Koref calling for a conference of municipal experts when we, who meet here, are the people most versed in municipal affairs and accustomed to dealing with these problems. We have no need to call for technical assistance for we ourselves are the experts and technicians. (Loud applause).

I have nearly finished. Let me apologise for speaking with such feeling, but I feel we are about to take a great step forward towards the creation of that Europe which is vital. As I said yesterday at a private meeting, I have had the opportunity of spending a few months in the United States. When the time came for my departure, the Belga Agency asked me what I thought of the United States. I replied: "What a wonderful nation both economically and socially!" When the reporter asked "Have you any further comments?", I replied that Europe was doomed if it failed to achieve complete social, economic and cultural unity.

That, Gentlemen, is only possible if we all fully realise that it is the municipalities which are in daily touch with the majority of the nation and know and understand it. We must realise that if we are to build Europe, we must accept certain national and other sacrifices, but that our gain - peace and prosperity for our peoples - will be well worth the price we pay for it. (Loud applause).

THE PRESIDENT (Translation) - I call M. Le Bon.

M. LE BON (Belgium) (Translation) - Mr. President, Ladies and Gentlemen, I do not wish to prolong this debate indefinitely, but I should like to say a few words as President of the Belgian Union of Local Authorities.

Like everyone else, I deplore the difference of opinion which came to light this morning. We thought the incident was closed, but it has now been re-opened and I therefore feel it my duty to make quite clear the attitude of the Belgian delegation.

When the Consultative Assembly of the Council of Europe appeals to the local authorities for the close co-operation in the achievement of European unity and invites them to help the Council of Europe in restoring enthusiasm for the European idea, we consider the matter closed: we are at the service of Europe. (Applause).

How can we hope to stir up public opinion and persuade the nations to take greater interest in the European idea if all we do is to hold a meeting of a few experts, say twenty-five in number, whose proceedings are only known to a select few? (Applause).

No, Ladies and Gentlemen, if we really wish to further the European idea which means so much to us; if we are to throw ourselves heart and soul into this movement on which our very welfare depends, we must reason logically and draw the conclusion that only a spectacular conference, fully representative of opinion in our various countries, could hope to achieve the desired results.

Belgium has fully grasped this point and supports this way of thinking.

At a preliminary meeting held in Brussels, delegates of both the Belgian Union of Local Authorities and the Belgian Council of European Municipalities decided to give their full and unconditional support to the complete success of this conference.

Moreover we consider it right and proper that this Conference should be held annually, for only by repeating these conferences shall we succeed in winning over all sections of our population to this great European idea; and if the Assembly proves to be too big and too cumbersome to provide speedy solutions for what are often complex problems, the situation can always be remedied by the setting-up of working parties. But the aim of those who organised this conference can only be achieved on the generous scale which they had in mind.

In the name of Belgium I wish to congratulate the President and the organisers of this Conference on their initiative and the efforts they have expended in this cause. They have achieved results of which we may be proud.

Our final word to you, Ladies and Gentlemen, is that we should rally round our President and the organisers of this Conference and wish them every success, for their success is ours and our success is that of Europe. (Loud applause).

THE PRESIDENT (Translation) - Ladies and Gentlemen, time is passing and local representatives, both regional and municipal, must keep their eye on the clock.

I think it fitting that I should now call on the last three speakers on the list, MM. Zoli, Lücke and Roser, and then close the debate.

This will mean - and I am sure it is due to the depth of our discussions - that on its first day this conference will have to assume the airs of a major conference and resort to what I believe is the hall-mark of such conferences, namely a night session. (Laughter).

After we have heard these three speakers, thus concluding the debate on Mr. Jones's excellent report, we shall adjourn the Sitting until 9.30 p.m. when we shall hear M. Altmaier's report and the speakers on it followed by M. Dickson's report and the speakers on that also.

As you see, Ladies and Gentlemen, there are drawbacks to our work, but they are the drawbacks of success and those are preferable to the drawbacks of failure, for they can always be faced with a smile (Laughter).

I call M. Zoli.

M. ZOLI (Italy) (Translation) - Mr. President, Ladies and Gentlemen, I too must admit to strong feelings, like my Belgian colleague who has just spoken.

This is due to the fact that I am the first representative of the City of Florence to be heard in this hall and in this Palace which bears the name of Europe.

I am also very conscious that Florence stands out as a symbol of a great European culture and I know what Europe is going to mean to Florence, as to all other municipalities of this continent, both large and small. My thoughts turn to our next meeting at a congress which is to be held in Florence. This will be a congress of a very different kind. I refer to the Congress of Christian Peace and Civilisation which will be held in the Palazzo Vecchio in June, thanks to the efforts of our Mayor, M. Georges Lapira, with whom I have the honour to work.

Its theme will be unity in diversity, the ideal on which we as Europeans and administrators found our hopes.

This brings me to the subject of our present debate. Although this plenary debate is only a preliminary to our discussions in committee, we cannot ignore the speeches and recommendations relating to our problems heard in the Assembly of the Council of Europe which concluded its work yesterday.

We cannot speak of the participation of local authorities in European institutions unless we attach a precise meaning to the words "European institutions".

The Council of Europe recommended that no new assembly should be created in addition to the Council of Europe, the E.C.S.C., W.E.U. and O.E.E.C.; it further recommended that the Ministers submit proposals for establishing the political institutions of the European Community.

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I do not see how we can ignore these two proposals.

If therefore any of us here were to call for a new permanent institution for the local authorities - not that anyone would contemplate such an idea - they would obviously be going against the wishes of the Council of Europe, which is rightly opposed to any further assemblies with merely advisory powers.

The second recommendation was that the Ministers should propose political institutions for the European Community; we ought therefore to consider what part the municipalities and local authorities are to play in these political institutions. For a system of this kind will determine the future not merely of Europe but also of our local freedoms. It is essential that our views should be heard on this question, and now is the time to make them known. Delay might have serious consequences and there is a danger - not as a result of any ill will, but because events sometimes move forward in an unwelcome direction by the sheer force of circumstances - that we might see a centralised Europe set up which would not be a Europe of the municipalities but simply a Europe of nations. And here I am borrowing the words used by President Dehousse in his eloquent speech this morning. A Europe of municipalities is closely bound up with a Parliamentary Europe and - to quote once more the words of M. Dehousse which I heard and noted with enthusiasm - the idea of European unity must not result in an abstract creation bearing no trace of originality. It must also respect the present structural relationship between the State and the citizen.

It is our duty to give expression to these views and to take all necessary precautions at a time when the Council of Europe and all Europeans trust that the Ministers are about to work out the political institutions of European unity.

Hitherto we have spent most of our time discussing our relations as local representatives with existing Assemblies; indeed, we have discussed little else, I am sorry to say. But we should also consider our relations with the future European political assembly, for this is a still more interesting subject.

We must insist that the future political assembly, whose powers will, of course, be limited but real, should recognise the existence of local realities, over and above national realities. It is in committee that we shall have to find a means of reconciling the powers of the universally elected Chamber with those of the Chamber

of States representing the local authorities, but I wish to point out in this Assembly now that we must work hard and work fast if we want to see our hopes fulfilled in the near future. We cannot afford to lag behind.

The new Europe must also be built in the interests of the municipalities. The creation of Europe will be the consecration of the ideal of federation, the immediate result of which is greater autonomy. It will be a victory over the egoism of certain central administrations as well as over certain crucial economic situations.

The creation of Europe will of course result in improved standards of living, thus making possible, or at any rate simpler, the financial autonomy of the municipalities, which is their real promise of independence.

The Governments must create a Europe of tomorrow in close touch with the people; not a remote system impervious to human realities. I would like to remind you - though I have no time to read it to you - of the very important letter in which M. Hamilius replied to your enquiry; I would also remind you of the decisions of the States-General of Versailles and Venice, which in my view should form the basis of all our discussions in committee.

A united Europe must be as close as possible to the man in the street. We have the right therefore to call upon the Ministers to build the new Europe on popular elections. By this method alone can the necessary powers be vested first in the constituent Assembly and then the legislative Assembly; by this method alone can we ensure a precise definition of the prerogatives of the State and the prerogatives of Europe. Finally - and here we have the basis of the federal idea - this is the only means of delimiting the free and sovereign rights of each of these parties.

In this way we shall arrive at true authority and true unification.

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Ladies and Gentlemen, let us make our contribution to the building of Europe. Once we have created a United States of Europe our consciences will be less troubled by those who now shame us by their presence. I am thinking of the disabled servicemen, of the unemployed and of the Hungarian refugees - all victims of our disunity and our prevarications. (Applause).

THE PRESIDENT (Translation) - Ladies and Gentlemen, we have listened with great attention to M. Zoli's comprehensive speech. The voice of Florence is always heard with delight.

M. Zoli's speech gives me an opportunity as your President, to comment on a point of order, or method, concerning the nature of our work and the opinions we express.

M. Zoli was quite right to recall the recent recommendations of the Council of Europe. It is indeed important that each of us should be fully aware of the stage reached by Parliaments and Governments in the effort to build Europe. This is most important.

He is also right when he says - and I believe many of our colleagues agree with him - that one of the aims of the Conference is to discover how the local authorities can be represented in future institutions - or for that matter in existing institutions, for I do not see, for instance, why we should not also include retrospectively the European Coal and Steel Community.

But I should like to take this opportunity of drawing a clear distinction between our Conference, which is not concerned with political disputes, and such bodies as the Council of Europe, which is a political organisation. It is for the Council of Europe to propose whether or not there should be one assembly more or less and whether or not there should be such and such a future political institution. It is not our business to lay down the law on these matters. But it does fall within our province to study every constructive proposal and to consider how the local authorities may be fitted into the proposed system.

I venture to raise this point in the hope that it will be borne in mind in our committee work, in the drafting of opinions, in the debate next Monday and lastly in the texts you adopt, so that our Conference cannot be accused of indulging in political controversy, for, if it did, the fears of those who said we were taking the wrong path would be justified.

That was what I wished to say. I think my observation will be approved by all Europeans here present - and all of us here are Europeans - for, by adopting this prudent approach, we may avoid the perils which have caused some of us to adopt an attitude of, let us say, reserve towards this Conference.

I call M. Lücke.

M. LÜCKE (Federal Republic of Germany): In the German Delegation are four federal associations. The German Delegation does not know that M. Koref has the right to express an opinion about our Associations. I think he must have been misled. I should like to correct what he said in order not to endanger the success of our Conference. What I now say is on behalf of the German Delegation.

The very interesting Report of Mr. Jones indicates the objective which we should like to see aimed at. If Europe is to be built from the bottom to the top, the relationship of local authorities is more than ever necessary. What has happened today in this Assembly Hall should have taken place a long time ago. Our delegation is, therefore, very pleased at the convening of this Conference and expects considerable success from it which will be for the benefit of our municipalities and Europe.

I think we should continue with the work; Europe needs the work of the municipalities and is expecting us to return to our countries with great results. Europe will only be satisfied if the Conference takes a step forward. We should pursue our work according to the Order of the Day and continue to discuss the Report put forward by Mr. Jones.

I wish to repudiate the view put forward by M. Koref.

THE PRESIDENT (Translation) - M. Koref has asked to speak for a minute in order to clarify a point.

In view of the importance of the subject and of his previous speech, I think the Conference will agree that his wish should be granted.

I call M. Koref.

M. KOREF (Austria): I should like to say a few words to clear up a misunderstanding. I feel a most solemn obligation to state that we support any endeavour to further the idea of European unity. That is self-evident and it really is not necessary to stress the fact. I spoke in the name of the European Affairs Committee of the I.U.L.A., and was entrusted to do so by that Committee. I did not speak for any special Delegation present here, but I learn that as a result of translation difficulties I was misunderstood in some passages.

I dealt with certain problems in relation to the structure of this Conference but I was by no means against the aims of the Conference, which the various organisations in I.U.L.A., though their views may differ in certain respects, all support.

I state firmly that I did not speak in the name of the German Delegation. I entreat M. Lücke to read by speech and he will find that I did not speak in the name of the German organisation. I quoted from what was laid down in the I.U.L.A. Memorandum of 12th April, 1955.

I was moved only by faithfulness to the old I.U.L.A. organisation.

I can assure the Conference that I by no means intended to aggravate the situation. The decision will lie with the Council of Europe to summon either a conference or a Committee of experts. Let us go on with our agenda as unanimously as possible. I end with a German proverb: "Ende gut, alles gut."

SEVERAL DELEGATES (Translation) - Then withdraw your motion!

THE PRESIDENT (Translation) - Monsieur Koref, does that mean that you withdraw the motion?

M. KOREF (Austria) (Translation) - I will tell you on Monday morning.

M. BRACOPS (Belgium) (Translation) - I protest!

M. BERRURIER (France) (Translation) - Then let the motion be put to the vote at once!

THE PRESIDENT (Translation) - I think we shall have to ask M. Koref to wait until tomorrow morning, that is to say, until the committee meeting, so that the Committee may know at the start of its meeting whether or not it is to discuss this draft.

While I gladly acknowledge M. Koref's words, I will not hide the fact that the Conference seems to feel he would be giving an admirable illustration of the German proverb by consenting to withdraw his motion before tomorrow morning.
(Laughter and applause)

I call M. Roser, who is the last speaker down to speak in this debate.

M. ROSER (Germany): (Interpretation from German). I should like to take up the thread of the discussion at the point where we left it, before the controversy between the viewpoints of the initiators of the Conference and I.U.L.A. arose - although this controversy was not without interest. It goes without saying that the Conference must be quite clear as to the form in which it wishes to organise its future co-operation with European institutions after the end of the Conference, particularly in regard to the Council of Europe.

I should like to continue to deal with what was decided in Venice in the autumn of 1954, and I want to address my remarks in particular to the Council of Europe. A series of wishes have been fulfilled in the meantime. The Special Committee on Municipal and Regional Affairs - the President of which is our eminent President - has been transformed into a normal standing committee of the Council of Europe. Various local institutions have been granted consultative status. Finally, this European Conference of local authorities has been convened for the first time.

A series of other proposals remain to be dealt with, and we must devote our further attention to them. They will comprise the activities of Committee No. 3 tomorrow and on Monday. In Venice we expected that it might not be sufficient to convene a European conference of local authorities each year in this Hemicycle but that it might be desirable that in the interval between own Conferences of local authorities there should be certain meetings or sittings of expert committees.

At that time we in the Committee on Municipal and Regional Affairs were of the opinion that from time to time

representatives of I.U.L.A. and International organisations should be called upon to examine certain specific questions. In the light of the present Conference such a Committee could very well assume the functions of a standing committee. It would receive a mandate to help the Committee on Municipal and Regional Affairs and to advise that Committee about its activities and work whenever it was called upon to do so.

It is most desirable to decide from the beginning the most desirable alternative, that is to say, either a broader conference of this kind or smaller working groups. On the local level one cannot make a difference between experts and local representatives; we all insist upon the fact that we should be both. Also, in regard to the questions which are put to us, or the proposals we wish to submit to the Council of Europe, we have to decide whether we should convene a smaller working party or a broader Conference such as this.

Committee No. 3 should discuss which form of organisation should be set up, but it must be remembered that such an organisation would have the double task of a standing collaborator with the Committee on Municipal and Regional Affairs of the Council of Europe and a kind of standing bureau of this Conference until it was next convened. We should then be able to see at what time and with what agenda this broader Conference could be convened in the most appropriate manner.

In Venice we asked that the International organisations Local Authorities should also envisage closer co-operation with the Coal and Steel Community - both with the High Authority and the Common Assembly of the Community, and the Consultative Committee. We asked that the High Authority should call upon representatives of the International Organisations of Local Authorities as experts. We proposed that we should be able to take part in the activities of the Consultative Committee of the Coal and Steel Community.

According to Article 18 of the Treaty, the Consultative Committee is composed of representatives of producers, workers and consumers. At present, the consumers are represented exclusively by commercial interests, and we believe that it would be desirable for the Common Assembly of the Coal and Steel Community to examine the financial aspect of the agreements and also discuss questions of powers with the assistance of local authorities.

It would be one of the most important tasks of such a

conference to see what functions could be assumed by the international associations of local authorities through their co-operation with future European institutions. We all hope that next month the Treaties on EURATOM and the Common Market will be signed. As participants in the production of power as well as authorities responsible for the security of the civil population against radio activity, we shall have to fulfil a very important task in EURATOM, and we hope that the EURATOM authority will approach local authorities for an examination of the effects of their work on the civil population, its safety and its health.

We should also examine the possible co-operation of local authorities in the work of the Common Market. In the first place, we should have consumers' representatives. M. Radius' Report on the Coal and Steel Community has shown the effects on European municipalities of the establishment of the Common Market for coal and steel. Equally the establishment of a General Common Market will have considerable financial repercussions on European local authorities. Local authorities and local politicians, as well as their professional advisers, have every right to take part in the examination of these repercussions on local populations, for they can give the best practical advice to help to avoid unnecessary difficulties and dislocations.

I suggest that Committee No. 3, which is to discuss this matter, should appoint two Rapporteurs, one to deal with the relationship with the European Community and its organisations, both existing and future, and one to deal with the questions raised in M. Altmaier's Report concerning the dissemination of the European idea. The tasks of the two Rapporteurs will be interconnected, because European institutions can be brought about only by the use of active European propaganda, and such active European propaganda is possible only if our co-operation is ensured.

THE PRESIDENT (Translation) - None of us can doubt that M. Roser's observations at the close of this afternoon's sitting will be a source of profitable discussion for the competent committee.

That brings us to the end of the list of speakers in this debate. I take it that our Rapporteur, Mr. Jones, would prefer to reserve his replies and comments for the Committee.

I therefore propose that the Conference refer the report, and the observations made this afternoon, to the committee which, like all the other committees, will meet on Sunday morning at 11 a.m.

I must explain in this connection that the Committee of Regional Authorities, whose meeting was to have been held tomorrow noon, will now meet at 11.30 a.m., for at noon we are invited to a reception in honour to this Conference at the Town Hall of Strasbourg, and we must not keep our hosts waiting.

6. ANNOUNCEMENTS BY THE PRESIDENT

THE PRESIDENT (Translation) - I have two announcements to make to the Conference.

First, I would ask members of the Bureau to be kind enough to assemble in the President's office immediately after the sitting.

Secondly, I would remind members of the Conference that delegates who are members of the present French Government, that is to say my colleagues MM. Defferre, Pic and myself, are happy to confirm the invitation, which should now have been received by you all, to attend a reception from 7 p.m. onwards which we are giving at the Prefecture Building.

I assume that the Conference would now like to adjourn until 9.30 p.m. when we shall hear M. Altmaier's report.
(Agreement)

The Sitting is adjourned.

(The Sitting was adjourned at 6.45 p.m.)

The Sitting was resumed at 9.40 p.m., with M. CHABAN-DELMAS, President of the Conference, in the Chair.

THE PRESIDENT (Translation) - The Sitting is resumed.

Before the Sitting was adjourned, the Conference concluded its discussion of Mr. Jones' report on the participation of local authorities in European institutions.

This leaves us with two important questions. The first is the participation of local authorities in the spreading of the European idea, on which we shall hear a report by M. Altmaier; the second is the protection and development of local autonomy, on which M. Dickson has prepared a report.

As hitherto, I shall call the speakers on each report immediately after the report itself; there will be two speakers on M. Altmaier's report and six on M. Dickson's.

If every speaker avoids long perorations, we should be able to close this evening's proceedings at a reasonable hour and you will be able to have a well-earned rest after such a hard day's work. I must apologise as your President for being such a hard taskmaster but I think that it was the best course to take.

7. PARTICIPATION BY LOCAL AUTHORITIES IN EUROPEAN DEVELOPMENT

THE PRESIDENT (Translation) - The next item on the Agenda is the debate on M. Altmaier's report on the participation of local authorities in the spreading of the European idea.

I call M. Altmaier.

M. ALTMAIER (Germany) (Interpretation from German) - The Report which I have the honour to present this evening is different from that which I should have presented this afternoon. There are two reasons for that. The first is the remarkable Report presented by my colleague and friend, Mr. Jones, this afternoon. The second reason why I have modified my text is the topic which rather concerned us towards the end of this afternoon's Debate.

That is why what I have now to present has been divided into a supplement of the Report which Mr. Jones presented and a certain number of observations.

I have no right to deal with this afternoon's Debate. However, as Rapporteur I consider it appropriate to make a few remarks.

When it is asked, what are the reasons for this Conference, I am reminded that the same question was posed some years ago here in the Council of Europe and the same sort of misunderstanding was encountered when we asked for the setting

up of the Committee on Municipal and Regional Affairs. At that time it was said, "These are secondary questions. Have we not already got the Council of Europe, numerous international and local associations, the Committee of Ministers, various Committees and experts?"

I remember the enthusiasm of 1951 and 1952, when the German youth came over the border from Kehl and barriers were torn down in the enthusiasm they showed for the building up of Europe. But enthusiasm is not sufficient. Today, unfortunately, this enthusiasm has disappeared to a considerable extent. Yesterday, as a Representative of the Council of Europe, I received a 21-page Report dealing with a Convention in respect of the liability of hotel and inn-keepers for damages. That Report was drawn up by an eminent legal member of the United Kingdom Parliament, Mr. Paget. It is easy to talk about damages in respect of lost umbrellas while countries disappear behind the Iron Curtain. The European idea has been ironed out, so to speak.

The dignity of the Council of Europe has been reduced because it has only consultative power. When we envisaged the setting up of the Committee on Municipal and Regional Affairs, we believed that if Europe was to live it must be built up again from the beginning. This is the first European Conference of Local Authorities, the real representatives of the European people, and it is up to us to be worthy of the trust put in us. The Committee on Municipal and Regional Affairs has met in Rome, Paris and Coventry, it has visited Venice and Frankfurt. Everywhere we were received with honour. But that was not the most important lesson of our visits. The important lesson was that everywhere we saw the same needs, the same sufferings, the same problems, such as the need for houses and hospitals. We saw war memorials in all these towns, but the lesson was not how to build war memorials but how to build schools.

We must rebuild our communities through youth; this is the lesson we draw from our visits and this is the idea underlying our Conference. We do not want a conference of experts. Our national Parliaments are dying because they always work through experts. We do not want experts to teach us how we should build schools according to their concepts; we need human beings who will organise a society in which those schools are used. This feeling, this information, should be disseminated among the people of the towns and villages. It was because of the lack of this knowledge that Europe went from one catastrophe to another. In thirty minutes a town was destroyed in the last war. Hundreds of towns were destroyed in the last war. We know how many years and how many sacrifices it takes to rebuild them.

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My report deals, among other things, with the pairing of municipalities. You are familiar with these matters and I need not go into detail.

My former colleague, Mr. Smithers, a Member of the British House of Commons, who carried out a great deal of work in this connection, has sent me a letter bringing to my attention the fact that he is at the head of a Committee handling the Smithers Plan - a plan which he himself developed. Under that plan it is possible to arrange an exchange of municipal officials. They visit each other's country for a time to exchange experiences with their opposite numbers. Mr. Smithers has asked me to give you his best wishes and to wish you success in your activities. A small booklet on the plan will be published in 1957. He asks for as many addresses as possible, and states that those who wish to spend their holidays in France, Britain and Italy can be received by colleagues in Venice, Rome, Paris or London.

The second point concerns the European Prize. The Committee of Ministers granted certain sums to be used for an exchange of young people, enabling them to visit foreign countries in order to get to know other people. Two years ago the prize was given to Coventry because it was the most damaged town in England. Then, although Berlin did not enter the competition, we decided to grant it this distinction. The Committee on Municipal and Regional Affairs went to Berlin for the first time, and we know the success it achieved there. We could not do much more for the European idea than we did then.

Then we granted the prize to the twin towns of Puteaux and Offenbach. Between these two towns there is an exchange of young people, professors and students, and also an exchange of culture. We should like all representatives in their own countries and towns to appeal to the Press to support the European idea so that the people will know that we are struggling for Europe and trying to build it up anew.

I express my thanks to you, Mr. President, my colleagues, the Secretariat and the Bureau of the Council of Europe, for your patience and enthusiasm. Whatever our differences of opinion, they should not stop us from fulfilling our task, for the dangers are too great. The Suez situation showed that Europe is at the mercy of two big Powers, and the case of Hungary showed that the struggle for freedom of a courageous people was stifled by one enormous Power. Besides our responsibility for Western Europe we are responsible for the people of Eastern Europe, who are still living in slavery on the other side of the Iron Curtain.

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The youth of Europe is looking to us. We know that there is still the will to win peace and to live in social justice and fairness. There were times when the town of Constantinople was more powerful than all Europe put together. There were then no national States. There was only slavery, and the only hope was the towns. There were no countries or States. There was no Germany and no Italy; there was hardly a France. But what there was, and what remains, were the towns - Milan, Lyons, Prague, Venice, Frankfurt, Nuremberg, Hamburg and Cologne. They alone saved European culture and civilisation.

My own country experienced a similar situation after 1945. There was no State, but there were towns and municipalities and, without Berlin and without State order, they maintained the culture, rebuilt it and gave work once again to a whole people. This fact should serve as an example. We should build our countries up out of the strength of our towns and municipalities. In this town of Strasbourg which has seen so many struggles, you can walk through the streets and see a house which bears a plate saying that in it stayed the man who wrote the Marseillaise - this high story of equality, freedom and peace. Who would wish to reject such a task as this? Who is going to stop us carrying out this work within the framework of the Council of Europe?

THE PRESIDENT (Translation) - Ladies and Gentlemen, we in the Committee on Municipal and Regional Affairs of the Consultative Assembly were aware of M. Altmaier's merits both as a friend and a distinguished fellow worker; but you may not have realised until now that M. Altmaier is also a man of great sensibility. The speech which he has just given comes as a cry of anguish from the human heart and conscience.

I am convinced that his appeal will awaken a response in us all and that any minor disagreements we may have over the means to our ends will vanish in the face of this heartfelt utterance, which truly reflects our times and is most relevant to the task before us.

M. Altmaier also discussed the technical aspects of his report, so it only remains for us to hear the speakers who are down to comment on it, namely M. Brügger and Mr. Maclean.

I call M. Brügger.

M. BRÜGNER (Italy) (Translation) -- Mr. President, I have three points to make.

M. Altmaier pointed out that the system of "pairing" is one of the most effective methods of European propaganda, and I quite agree with him, provided that it goes beyond mere ceremonial. There should also be a strengthening of economic and cultural relations, and for this reason we ought to adopt what I called in the Assembly of European Municipalities a "pairing policy", that is to say a set of principles for choosing sister towns. We should pair off municipalities with similar or complementary economies so that they may join together in studying and, if possible, solving their common economic and town-planning problems.

My second point is that, in my view, a description of the municipalities to be paired and an account of the results obtained from such pairings should be publicised with comments.

M. Altmaier spoke in his report of the effects of europeanisation upon the areas concerned; indeed this was the main theme of his speech. I would add to this the comparative study of the different systems of administration, the limits of autonomy, the openings for new enterprise in the municipality or region, territorial development, etc.

We should also remember the reports of local government officials who visit their colleagues under the inter-municipal exchange system.

My third and last point is also concerned with the question of publicity.

I have read the proposals of MM. Koref and Wytema and I cannot accept their way of thinking. We wish to launch a widespread campaign in support of the European idea and I am doubtful, though I am open to correction, whether this is a political idea.

I have no misgivings whatever about the serious risk alleged in the motion for an opinion. I can see absolutely no danger in holding "a large international gathering of a more or less political character" -- to use the phraseology of its preamble. (Applause).

THE PRESIDENT (Translation). - I call Mr. Maclean.

MR. MACLEAN (United Kingdom) - I have nothing dramatic to say, and in fact I would rather not have spoken today but for the fact that I am one of the representatives here from Great Britain. I am a member of the London County Council, and I am also a member of various voluntary organisations which try to assist the interchange of people throughout Europe. So I do not want to leave this Conference without stating quite clearly that any remarks which might have been made today suggesting that there are not hundreds of thousands of British people interested in the European idea should be dismissed. I feel that one should say that throughout Britain today hundreds of thousands of ordinary British people have the same idea as is present throughout the whole of Europe.

It has been suggested that some people would not come from Britain because this Conference might be a political one. I am a very simple sort of individual; I do not know very much about politics; I have a simple idea, which may not be that of this Conference, that the politicians are the people who cause the wars and that we in this Conference are representative of the people who have to fight the wars. Because of that, I feel absolutely certain that our concern here is with the sort of people who, as our good friend M. Altmaier said, build and maintain the hospitals and roads and to whom a river is not a national boundary but a means of transportation.

Because of that, I support absolutely everything which M. Altmaier said - with, in passing, the proviso that I might mention to him that a little culture did come from Great Britain as well as from the other towns and cities which he mentioned. There are, however, and I think we must recognise this, certain national psychological differences which sometimes separate us or prevent us from getting as close together as we should like to be. I am speaking now of the simple ordinary people in the street who wish to speak one to the other and not through the mouths of national politicians. They have their national prejudices and their parochial prejudices. Believe me, when Arsenal plays Tottenham Hotspur at football the enmity between the people of one part of North London and another is worse than any enmity which has existed in Europe since the Wars of the Roses.

Despite all these things, having recognised that these differences do exist, it remains true that this method of interchange of personalities - ordinary folk doing the job of running our local government - is the best way of preserving the peace of the future, because every one of us knows that we have to live in the world of the future as Europeans and not as national entities.

The day is gone when we can say that we belong to a large or small nation in Europe; we belong to Europe. It is no use saying that we are the people of a great nation. Let us perhaps say that we belong to a nation of great people, whichever nation we belong to.

This interchange between personalities should be broadened over the widest possible basis but, practically, it must be handled by the local authorities. Voluntary organisations are all very well in their way. Many people give of their time and money to such organisations and the exchange of visits between students, sportsmen and musicians, but, let us be quite frank, voluntary organisations are often unreliable. It sometimes happens that when a visit has been arranged for people from one city to another they arrive at their destination only to find that no proper arrangements have been made for their reception. This causes more trouble than if no arrangements for the visit had been made in the first place. If these arrangements for exchange are to be made, they must be made under the authority of, and by, the local authority. They should be responsible for all organisation, whether they are responsible for finance or not. It is difficult to talk here about finance. I represent a large municipal body in which it would be easy for us to say that £1,000 does not mean very much, but I am quite sure that 1,000 francs means a lot to some people in some parts of France.

I believe that every county, city and borough throughout Europe should have contacts with its counterpart in every other nation in Europe and that this is best done on the basis of some similarity in economic development. For instance, Coventry, as an industrial centre, is better linked with another industrial centre; and an agricultural centre is better linked with another agricultural centre. But linked they must be, because I believe that the ordinary people of this Europe of ours wish to live in peace one with another in the future. They do not want to quarrel; they want to make friends irrespective of nationality. If the ordinary people of the different nationalities make friends with each other, then the peace, prosperity and social advancement which we all desire will be a possibility in Europe.

THE PRESIDENT (Translation). - After this speech by a London representative, I should like to take the opportunity of reminding the Conference of the services rendered by a former colleague in the Committee on Municipal and Regional Affairs. I refer to Mr. Smithers, who was mentioned just now by M. Altmaier and who continues to work unceasingly for European understanding, particularly in the field of inter-municipal exchanges.

I am happy to be able to tell the Conference that Mr. Smithers' work is still an important factor in the pursuit of our aims. It is only right that I should put the fact on record.

Does anyone else wish to speak?...

The debate is closed.

The Conference will no doubt wish to refer M. Altmaier's report to the Committee on the Participation of Local Authorities in European Development, which will prepare its final text tomorrow and submit it to the Assembly on Monday.

Are there any objections?...

It is settled accordingly.

I am sure that the Committee will bear in mind the constructive comments made by both M. Brügger and Mr. Maclean.

M. Koref has asked to speak for a moment and I give him leave to do so.

M. KOREF (Austria) (Interpretation from German) -
With your permission, Mr. President, I should like to go back to what we discussed earlier and, with the agreement of my colleagues who signed the motion for an opinion on the participation of Local Authorities in European Institutions, ask that our decision be recorded in the Minutes. I should like the Conference to know that, personally, I have always done my very best to further the European idea. Indeed, the town of Linz, whose mayor I am, went in for the European Prize and, although we did not obtain the prize, we did receive some very much appreciated encouragement. Those who have signed the Motion have the utmost good will towards the common objective of this Conference, with which technical problems and similar questions have hardly anything to do at all.

THE PRESIDENT (Translation). - I should like to ask M. Koref a question. Does his statement relate to the motion for an opinion which has been submitted to the Assembly? Does this motion still stand or is M. Koref telling us that he wishes to withdraw it?

M. KOREF (Austria) (Translation). - I withdraw the motion Mr. President and should be glad if you would order my statement to be recorded in the Minutes. (Loud applause).

THE PRESIDENT (Translation). - The applause with which your statement was received justifies not only its inclusion in the Minutes but also the thanks and congratulations of the President and the entire Conference. (Renewed applause)

M. Kaminker, Head of the Interpretation Section, then explained the arrangements made for interpretation at committee meetings/

8. PROTECTION AND DEVELOPMENT OF LOCAL AUTONOMY

THE PRESIDENT (Translation) - The next item on the Agenda is the debate on the Report and Request for an Opinion on the Protection and Development of Local Autonomy.

I call on M. Dickson to present this report on behalf of the Committee on Municipal and Regional Affairs.

7. M. DICKSON (Sweden): With this audience before me, or rather behind me, consisting of personalities with great administrative training and experience, well accustomed to papers, I venture to assume that the contents of the Report before us are known to everybody.

You have a heavy day behind you and I will not go into detail on what stands in the Report. I want only to make a few remarks on municipal philosophy, if I may put it that way, in presenting the Report, but I will be quite brief.

We all feel that the world is rather upside down in many ways. This derives from an upside-down conception which we mostly have of the whole structure of society. We are accustomed to imagine the State to be above the municipality and the municipality above the individual; and this is true in many technical matters. But far above the technical considerations are the spiritual and human ones, and if we look at the world from the spiritual point of view, as indeed we ought, we get an entirely different picture and we see the dominating importance of the individual.

Such as the individuals are, such are the municipalities and such are the States. This is interesting from the point of view of local autonomy, because laws and restrictions are there for the bad boys, not for the good ones. Autonomy presupposes reliability and trustworthiness. Without these qualities characterising the municipalities - that is, their leading women and men - local autonomy is bound to shrink more and more. This proves how great in a democracy is the responsibility of those who elect or nominate the leading men for the municipalities, so that these leading men will be found to be persons of a high moral standard - as I suppose is the case with not a few of those assembled here - well worthy of being entrusted with the exercising of more and more autonomy in municipal life.

After having said this, I am ready to give over this document, CPL (1) 4, to the appropriate Committee which has to consider its shortcomings and possible merits.

I met outside a friend to whom I said that I should take four minutes and forty seconds for this Report. I think I have kept my promise. Mr. President, I am ready.

THE PRESIDENT (Translation). - Our colleague M. Dickson, who has always preferred action to words, is also one of the mainstays of our Committee. I am happy today, after so many years of work together, to be able to pay him the tribute he deserves and record my gratitude to him before this whole Assembly. (Applause).

Since M. Koref has withdrawn his request to speak and M. Soggin is to reserve his remarks for the committee meeting, I now call M. Mendon.

M. MONDON (France) (Translation) - Ladies and Gentlemen, it would be most ungracious of me, after M. Dickson's full, detailed, yet at the same time concise report, to attempt to say more than a few words. I should merely like to make a few suggestions, not on the report itself, but with the aim of facilitating tomorrow's discussion of it in committee.

M. Dickson said in his report that the municipality is freedom's bulwark against the totalitarian State and I think we are all agreed on this point.

There is one thing in particular which I feel should be stressed in this debate, namely the importance of substituting the principle of legal control for that of administrative supervision. This is essential, whatever country we may belong to. Indeed we have too often seen decisions of municipal councils temporarily or permanently set aside, not because they are contrary to the law of the country, but because they are considered inexpedient by the authorities.

This is why I believe it essential that we should work for the replacement of the principle of administrative supervision by that of legal control in the Constitutions of the countries we represent at this Conference. Indeed a special effort should be made in this direction.

I should like, however, to add a qualification to the wish I have just expressed. If we want the supervisory authorities at the departmental, provincial or regional level to be able to exercise effective control, it is most important that the representative of the State - whether he be a Prefect, Governor or other dignitary - should be able to ask the local council to reconsider any question having secured a majority at a first hearing, in circumstances which were, if not abnormal, at any rate ambiguous.

I am therefore strongly in favour of restricting control to ensure conformity with the law, with the proviso that the controlling authority should be able to request a local council to think a little longer and rediscuss a question. It seems to me that such a procedure would be perfectly proper and logical, and would not be inconsistent with municipal autonomy and freedoms.

My second remark is not intended to evoke the rivalry, now, I believe a thing of the past, between small and medium-sized or large municipalities. It may be observed, however, that small and medium-sized towns often have highly qualified technical services responsible for highways, architecture or town-planning. Such services, headed by engineers or architects, are under the supervision of the rural works department, a director of town planning or a chief engineer of the Highways Department. In many cases, the implementation of decisions by municipal councils is delayed because they must first be technically approved by a central, prefectorial or provincial department, which may modify them in certain respects.

Municipalities which have competent technical services of their own, should be able, in the purely technical sphere, to dispense with these irksome formalities which may cause serious delays in such urgent undertakings as land development, town-planning and architectural or housing schemes. Files are bandied from one office to another, from the local, to the regional and finally to the central authorities, when they could have been given quite adequate consideration in their place of origin.

I trust you will pardon me if I take France as an example. In this country no house may be built without a building licence. In an average-sized town, with a department of architecture or town planning there are facilities for considering the question of a licence to build a block of flats or a private house. Yet the file must be submitted to the appropriate services of the Ministry of Housing and Reconstruction and one, two or even three months may elapse before the building licence finally arrives, having been approved by an architect or engineer with the same qualifications as the municipal official with whom it originated.

My third and last remark is on a subject well known to you all: there can be no municipal freedom or autonomy, as M. Dickson so rightly insists in his report, without healthy local finance. This is a most important point. A great French administrator once said that, even under a system of State supervision, a mayor or municipal council with funds at his disposal could often escape the attention of the higher authorities.

In our various countries we frequently find ourselves subject to administrative supervision not because it is legally imposed, but because we are obliged, for lack of funds, to apply to the State for such and such a subsidy. On the few occasions when the State grants us a meagre subsidy, it takes the opportunity of imposing certain distasteful regulations which we are obliged to accept because we need the money to build houses, schools or other public amenities.

Consequently, in discussing M. Dickson's excellent report, which will be submitted tomorrow to Committee No. 4, we should stress the fact that local taxation should be distinct from State taxation, that it should be commensurate with the economic activity of the commune, region or town concerned and that it should be levied on a local basis.

Those are the three remarks I wished to make, which should add weight to the conclusions reached by M. Dickson. Thus, the mayors of Europe represented here at the Conference of European Local Authorities will, each in their local or regional sphere, have contributed to the building of Europe, since they will have recognised and enforced recognition of the freedom without which there can be no true Europe.
(Applause).

THE PRESIDENT (Translation): I call M. Lugger.

M. LUGGER (Austria) (Interpretation from German): The attainment of local autonomy is our right and duty. We should thank the Rapporteur for the fact that, in his Report, he took into account only the natural structure of society. At the end of the war the municipalities were the only institutions remaining in the damaged countries, and they maintained the real administration. Municipalities have not merely been set up; they have grown up, because they are a natural organisation.

In our struggle for local autonomy we must be prepared to assume new responsibilities. The first European Conference of Local Authorities has decided that, as a basic condition of its Charter, municipalities must realise that they are the basis of the State. They must persuade the citizen to cooperate with them and ask him to bear part of their responsibilities. The interests as well as the rights of the citizen, vis-à-vis his own local authority, must be safeguarded.

The Report has set out two groups of municipalities. When the Committee goes into certain questions, it will be appropriate to see to what extent the rights of local authorities and municipalities are laid down in national constitutions. It will also be interesting to know to what extent, in the national legal circles, the sovereignty of local authorities is ensured in financial matters. We are convinced that Europe can only be a Europe of free human beings. Therefore, the road towards the unity of this Continent can only be through free local authorities and municipalities.

THE PRESIDENT (Translation): I call M. Abel-Durand.

M. ABEL-DURAND (France) (Translation): I shall be extremely brief in my remarks, which could equally well apply to all the reports we have heard since this morning. The Committee of the Consultative Assembly which organised this Conference is known as the Committee on Municipal and Regional Affairs, yet there has been scarcely any mention of regions.

I am here as the President of the National Association of Présidents de Conseils Généraux of France and am proud to be able to say that I represent virtually the whole of France, since the Association of which I am President boasts the voluntary membership of all but one of the Conseils Généraux of France.

I should like on their behalf to subscribe wholeheartedly to all that has been said from the municipal standpoint in this Assembly.

All the problems which have been discussed here appear to us in a slightly different light but the problems themselves are essentially all the same, as I have had occasion to observe with each new question which has arisen.

My reason for wishing to speak on the subject of municipal autonomy - it so happens that it is at the end of the day - is that I should like to let it be known that the Presidents of the Conseils Généraux of France - and the same applies, I think to the representatives of provincial associations in other countries - are deeply attached to the idea of autonomy and will stand by you in the defence of our common cause.

The contribution we can make to the European cause is no mean one, for representing as we do a wider section of society than the commune, our contacts may possibly be wider. We have to cater for essentially the same needs as municipalities, namely for human needs. When the problem of water supply was mentioned a short time ago I thought to myself that, in our French départements, this question is the responsibility of the Conseils Généraux, and I could give innumerable other examples of a similar nature.

That is why, having been invited to this Conference, I would ask you to set aside a place for those who, like myself, represent provincial units whatever name they bear: provinces, départements, counties or districts. They represent a half-way stage between the municipality and the State and what, I wonder, would be your position without a unit of this type? How could you answer the needs of your fellow citizens? How indeed could you protect yourselves against the State?

Allow me, as the appointed spokesman of provincial representatives all over the country, to ally myself with your cause; and since a number of the representatives of these authorities standing midway between the municipality and the State are due to meet in committee tomorrow, may I ask as many of you as possible to attend, so that - as I myself have advocated - we may bring about these vital exchanges of ideas between provincial councils which were mentioned in the conclusions to M. Altmaier's Report. In this way, by comparing our experiences and pooling our technical knowledge, we may make our own contribution - I am sure with your full support - to the building of a Europe founded on the same democratic principles and the same desire to satisfy human needs. (Applause)

THE PRESIDENT (Translation): I ought to explain to the Conference that M. Abel-Durand was the originator of the proposal to set up the Committee of Regional Authorities, which was adopted by the Conference at the instigation first of the Bureau of the Committee on Municipal and Regional Affairs of the Consultative Assembly and then of the Bureau of the Conference.

I am now free to say how glad I am that this proposal was favourably received by the Conference this morning, for I am sure that the Committee will do excellent work.

I now call M. Radius.

M. RADIUS (France) (Translation): Mr. President, I should like, with your permission and with the friendliest of intentions, to correct my fellow senator M. Abel-Durand on one small point. He complained that our reports all dealt exclusively with municipalities. So far as my report this afternoon is concerned, its very title proves that it was not restricted to the municipalities. It discusses the rôle of the local authorities, and in the course of my speech I frequently pointed out that this term was intended to cover both municipalities and regional councils. I used the term "regional councils" because the word "département" is peculiar to France. To us the term "region" has an economic connotation which, I might add, is becoming more and more widely accepted.

That was the only point I wished to make.

M. ABEL-DURAND (France): Thank you.

THE PRESIDENT (Translation): I call M. Roser.

M. ROSER (Federal Republic of Germany) (Interpretation from German): A few weeks ago the Bundestag passed almost unanimously a law which brings about certain constitutional modifications. It instructed the Länder to guarantee to the local authorities certain taxation. A very important basis of local autonomy is the financial freedom of the municipalities, and the example I have quoted of what the Federal Republic has done is an example to Europe.

We hope that it will be possible for the individual European States to give certain rights and responsibilities to their municipalities in the financial field, thus enabling them to fulfil their task on behalf of their inhabitants.

Two years ago, when we were in Venice, we requested the Council of Europe to draw up a European Convention on municipal rights and to see that it was ratified by the greatest possible number of European countries and put into effect. I believe that our Committee will take up this idea again tomorrow and, through the Special Committee of the Council of Europe, will resume these studies.

THE PRESIDENT (Translation): I call M. Dickson.

M. DICKSON (Sweden): I should like to emphasise what has been said by the Lord Mayor of Metz. It sometimes happens that when a decision is taken by a local authority, confirmation is needed from a higher authority and it is, therefore, important to note that there may be an illusion of autonomy where such autonomy does not, in fact, exist.

THE PRESIDENT (Translation): M. Dickson's remarks bring this debate to a close.

The Conference will no doubt wish to refer the report to the Committee on Local Autonomy, so that it may draft an opinion for discussion by the Conference on Monday.

Are there any objections?

It is settled accordingly.

9. ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE PRESIDENT

THE PRESIDENT (Translation): I remind you, Ladies and Gentlemen, that tomorrow will be devoted to Committee meetings and to a meeting of the Working Party of Regional Authorities.

Naturally, we greatly regret the need to meet on Sunday, but it was unfortunately quite unavoidable.

As a result of a conversation which I had with him today, M. Dehousse spontaneously offered to arrange in future that the Session of the Consultative Assembly should end in the middle of the week, to enable this Conference to meet for three consecutive days, not including a Sunday. That is a most thoughtful and valuable offer on the part of M. Dehousse, and one which I am sure you will all appreciate.

10. EXPRESSION OF GOODWILL TOWARDS PROFESSOR GASSER

THE PRESIDENT (Translation): I should like to point out, Ladies and Gentlemen, that we have with us a distinguished professor; a man whom I first met in Geneva - how time flies - almost seven years ago. He was one of the few who, at that time, already believed in our venture and without whom we should not be here today. I must mention him, although I am well aware that his modesty will suffer. He is a man of such repute and has accomplished so much that I cannot refrain from speaking of him when I see him sitting in this Conference Hall. His name, Ladies and Gentlemen, is Professor Gasser. (Applause)

11. COMMITTEE MEETINGS AND AGENDA FOR THE NEXT SITTING

THE PRESIDENT (Translation): Tomorrow then, Ladies and Gentlemen, will be a day of Committee meetings. The four Committees will meet at 11 a.m. and the Working Party of Regional Authorities at 11.30, so as to enable members of the Committees to attend this latter meeting. Since at noon there is to be a reception in honour of the Conference at the Strasbourg Town Hall, I hardly think the Committees will have time to do more than appoint their Bureaux and Rapporteurs, and, I hope, decide on their methods of work. For this reason, a further meeting of the Committees has been arranged for 3 p.m. The Working Party of Regional Authorities may arrange with the Committees to meet again at some convenient time during the afternoon.

I must insist very strongly - and I am sure you will understand, Ladies and Gentlemen, that I do so solely in the interests of the success of our work - that the Committees should ensure that their opinions are drafted and adopted in time for them to be printed and distributed before the first plenary Sitting on Monday morning.

This Sitting will open at 10 a.m. on Monday 14th January. The Agenda will include a debate and vote on the draft Opinions prepared by the Committees.

Are there any objections?

It is settled accordingly.

I should like to add that, in order to save most of their time for meetings of the Bureau of the Conference, the Vice-Presidents of the Conference have not been appointed to Committees, but it is naturally assumed that, in accordance with usual practice, they will have free access to the various Committee meetings.

12. ANNOUNCEMENT

THE PRESIDENT (Translation): Ladies and Gentlemen, I have an announcement to make on behalf of our colleague, M. Radius:

The municipality of Strasbourg, which is taking such care of our comfort, giving us facilities for our work and, in this case arranging for our transport, has had the foresight to commission a bus of the Strasbourg Tramway Company which at the end of this meeting will take members of the Conference either to the Place Kléber or to the station square.

Ladies and Gentlemen, I should not like to close this third Sitting on the first day of the first Conference of European Local Authorities, without saying that, from the place of honour which you have given me, I have been able to observe that the progress made in this Hall since this morning may rank as one of the most important single day's work in the interests of Europe carried out at any Conference in many years.

Allow me, I was going to say "as an old veteran", but let us say "as a pioneer of our movement" to thank you from the bottom of my heart. I will not congratulate you since there is no need to congratulate those who carry out their self-appointed task, and, since you have carried out yours to the full, congratulations would indeed be superfluous. I ask you merely to accept my gratitude.

In closing this Sitting, I feel I am granting you a well-deserved rest after all that you have accomplished. Once again, Ladies and Gentlemen, I thank you. (Loud applause)

Does anyone else wish to speak?

The Sitting is closed.

(The Sitting rose at 11.15 p.m.)