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STATEMENT ON THE COMMON MARKET

FROM THE ADDRESS OF FRENCH PREMIER GEORGES POMPIDOU

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We have already stated, I believe, the reasons for which we had to take note last June 30th of our partners' refusal to honor the commitments entered into and several times reaffirmed. But I am well aware that since that date a few people or organizations have been seized with some concern and that we are sometimes urgently requested to resume the negotiations at once.

But first of all, is that useful and possible right now, when the new German Government to be formed after the elections has not yet been installed and when, in the immediate future, we ourselves are going to enter the Presidential election campaign? In any event, we are prepared--and only yesterday General de Gaulle reiterated this quite clearly at his last press conference--we are prepared to entertain any suggestions and proposals made to us by the Governments of the other five countries. But I would not like to see this state of concern that has arisen from the crisis be an occasion for public opinion to form the idea that the Common Market is the solution to all our problems. There are healers, quacks, who recommend a wonder salve to all who go to consult them--whether they have a broken leg or a head cold, it's always the same salve.

Well, it seems to me that the Common Market as pictured by some resembles that salve a little. Like it, it cures everything, which means that it probably cures nothing, but merely builds an illusion. The Common Market alone will be of no help to our industry--on the contrary, it will set it in direct competition with the powerful German industry. It will bring our farmers only partial and momentary relief, primarily because of the rise in grain prices. But if our industry, our agriculture do not make a great effort to renovate themselves, their prosperity will be short-lived and they will have no prospect of a real future. Our industry must concentrate and rationalize itself so as to keep abreast of the competition. Consequently our agriculture, which produces more than France needs, must adapt its output

to external demand and, for example, produce more meat, fruits, vegetables, butter and cheese, and on condition that their quality and prices are competitive. From this standpoint, the grain price increase decided on in Brussels would be rather deceptive, and even dangerous if it caused a further production increase in this already surplus crop, although the Common Market must see that the substantial--and moreover increased--burden of wheat exports is shouldered by the six countries, and no longer by France alone, on condition, naturally, that we have a suitable financial regulation, which is exactly what was denied us on June 30th. And on further condition that this regulation cannot be held up to question again by our partners against our will. So, you see, it is not so simple.

All things considered, and in any event, our economic future lies firstly in the transformation of our industry and our agriculture. The Common Market can only make this transformation more necessary. And, indeed, one of its principal virtues is to make us realize the urgency of the problem and the importance of the stake. But whether it is completed or not, the effort will be the same and will have to be accepted.

There is, it is true, another merit in the Common Market that is unique to it and that lets us hope that it will be possible to overcome this crisis: it is to make the European countries, starting with the Six, grow accustomed to living together. And, let us hope, to make them grow aware--slowly, alas--that it is in their basic interest to join together for the greatest benefit of world equilibrium and peace.

This is what I can say to you about the Common Market.