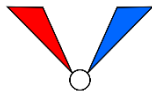


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<p><951/c></p>  <p>Key: Footprint ConEn1 Footprint ConEn2 Footprint ConEn3</p>	<p>The Commission's proposals on beef are absolute nonsense. They do nothing to solve the problem. Indeed, they do not begin to face the problem. They only make the problem worse in certain areas, not least in Scotland. I do not understand how we are supposed to have a system which deals best with the most difficult parts of the Community but which makes matters worse in Scotland and Wales, but that is what the scheme does. It does not work because it does not meet the problems of intervention. We must reduce the degree to which intervention plays a part and increase that to which the premium plays a part, and I am negotiating along those lines. I hope that we can find an answer. The spokesman for the Liberal Democrats will probably agree that to go into further detail could make it less easy to get the type of consensus that we want. It will not be perfect, it will not be what I should like, but it will be better than what is before us - better in terms of our particular problem - and I hope that it will deal entirely with the discrimination. It is unacceptable to have headage limits for sheep - I do not mean new headage limits, but the present ones - because they do not deal with the problem. It is not the number of ewes that a particular unit has which causes the problem; it is the increase in the production of ewes generally. That is a wholly different argument and it is therefore important to concentrate on it. My priority is to get rid of discrimination and we shall have to find out which of the various possibilities will be the best alternative to that which is now proposed. I should not like to commit myself too closely to any one of them because my priority - in negotiating one must be clear about one's priority - is to get rid of discrimination. That is the one thing that really matters in the House and we must not undermine it in our negotiations. On the cost to the European Community budget, I do not believe that it is sensible to have a system that costs more. We must have a system that uses what we spend more effectively. If, for example, we reduce the share of the system taken up by intervention in beef, we should be able to get that money more directly to the farmer. Locking beef up in a cold store, paying the storage man to look after it and then paying more to export it is not a sensible use of Community money and it does not reach the farmer. That type of change would enable one to say honestly that a redirection of the money already spent</p> <p>could do a great deal to improve the situation of farmers. Mr. Eric Martlew (Carlisle) rose Mr. Gummer I am sorry, but I shall not give way. I must end because other hon. Members wish to speak. We are determined to ensure that - Mr. Martlew It is important. Mr. Gummer There is a great deal that is important, but the hon. Gentleman may catch your eye later, Mr. Deputy Speaker. In trying to negotiate we must give considerable credence to the particular problem of the most difficult areas. Therefore, I commit myself in the negotiations to support the special financial help for farming in the less-favoured areas. Even though hon. Members disagree on many issues, I believe that the House will agree that I have tried to make that a priority within the narrow band of the 17 or so per cent. of my budget which I control directly. I have tried to do that year in, year out because I believe that in environmental terms - if in no others - keeping people, their sheep and their cattle in</p>
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	<p>the hillsides is essential if the hillsides are to be kept as they should be. I am sure that hon. Members will have noticed that in the recent announcement of environmentally sensitive areas - especially those in the Lake district, Exmoor and Dartmoor - I have clearly taken that view, with regard to not only hillsides but moorland areas. I shall continue to do that. I also believe that the common agricultural policy must be much more centred on the environment. It is not satisfactory to change a policy such as that which we have at the moment, and to have add-ons for the environment. That is not sensible and I seek to move the Community in the appropriate direction. In the negotiations, as in so many other matters, the British attitude is in advance of others. We are the most environmentally friendly Agriculture Ministry in Europe and we continue to bring others behind us. They are copying our proposals and schemes. I hope that we shall be increasingly successful. It would be possible and proper to provide aid for people who are especially disadvantaged by the changes - for example, the very small farmer in Portugal who wants to get out and to join his land to that of his neighbour. I want to help him to do that. I see no reason why we should not have a pension scheme connected to restructuring, but the aid is supposed to affect the very small farms directly. It would obtain to the person who had gone out and not to his heirs and successors and it would involve his going out and someone else taking on his land. That</p>
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