

already some signs that the Germans would be willing to help Britain if need be.

That raises the fascinating question as to why the Community was willing to go through the whole procedure in order to keep a partner widely regarded on the continent as inefficient, unreliable and a potential liability. Two reasons come to mind. The French, no longer as sure of dominating Bonn as they were under General de Gaulle, wanted another partner of something like comparable weight within the Community — though it is improbable that the British will go along with the new-found French enthusiasm for a common monetary policy.

The Germans, contemptuous though they tend to be of British industrial achievement, retain their regard for Britain as an element of democratic stability — and for the British military contribution to their own security. Partly with regard to that, the Wilson Government proposes to give priority to NATO at a time when it is planning to reduce defence expenditure from 5½ per cent of gross national product to 4½ per cent by 1983-84.

One of the most thoughtful contributions to the entire debate was made by a Labour M. P., Mr. Raymond Fletcher, in

an article in *The Times*. He argued that regardless of the outcome, the referendum would place great powers in the hands of Mr. Wilson: "The people, having willed the end, will allow him virtually to dictate the means. However drastic the measures needed to build up industrial muscle and drain away the inflation that is killing our society, they will be accepted. If, that is, they are powerfully presented as essential and inevitable consequences of the decision (taken in the referendum)..."

Mrs. Shirley Williams, one of Mr. Wilson's ministers and a devoted campaigner for the EEC, came very close to the truth when dealing with a reporter who wondered whether the pro-Market faction was not living in a fools' paradise. If Britons were living in a fools' paradise, she said, it was not because they were in the Common Market, but because they were living in a fools' paradise.

Only time will show whether the majority of June 5 agrees with that, or whether Mr. Wilson can seize upon the opportunities foreseen by Mr. Fletcher. But, in spite of Marathon or the Plains of Abraham, turning-points in the fates of nations are not usually recognized until after the event.

Canada-ECC relations

The Canada-Community dialogue is continuing on a number of fronts, and moving at an increasing tempo. The proposal by the Commission of the European Communities that they be authorized to negotiate a framework agreement for economic and commercial co-operation with Canada has now had a first consideration by the Council of Ministers. In this consideration, the Council was "generally in favour of the approach proposed by the Commission... and instructed the Permanent Representatives Committee to examine the Commission communication in this positive light so that the Council might be able to take a decision on the opening of negotiations as soon as possible".

A further important element in strengthening communication between Canada and the Community will be the opening this autumn of a full-scale Community delegation in Ottawa. Eventually to be headed by a head of delegation, the Commission office will, in the first instance, be under the direction of a chargé d'affaires, who is expected to arrive in Ottawa in early October. This Community office will be the counterpart in Ottawa of the

Canadian mission to the European Communities in Brussels and will carry out a wide range of functions similar to those performed by an embassy. The Community delegation in Ottawa will be the third such delegation that the Community has opened, the other two being in Washington and Tokyo. The Canadian Government has welcomed this step as a further indication of the importance both Canada and the Community attach to the development of closer relations.

In the area of industrial co-operation the Community will be sending to Ottawa in September 1975 a mission composed of Commission officials and European industrialists and industrial association representatives concerned with the non-ferrous metals sector. This information mission, which follows two highly successful earlier missions, in the forestry and uranium sectors, will provide "in-depth exposure for its participants to Canadian economic and industrial policies (both federal and provincial), to Canadian industry, and to the potential for co-operation in the sector. These missions are part of an expected continuing exchange in both directions.