

## Interview with Hans-August Lücker: Sicco Mansholt (Bonn, 15 May 2006)

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[François Klein] During that time you worked closely with Sicco Mansholt, the Agriculture Commissioner. What were his methods?

[Hans-August Lücker] He was a workaholic. A workaholic and ... well, yes, as much of one as I was, certainly. After finishing his studies in agriculture he went to Indonesia, to farm in the Dutch colonies, and there he had — how can one put it — a nice little business. Then when they started draining the Zuiderzee, the Dutch Government promised that everyone who got stuck in with pick and shovel to help with the drainage work would be given a piece of land in return. Free! So he went home and helped reclaim the Zuiderzee. And afterwards he got a nice farm on the banks of the Zuiderzee as a reward for his efforts. And then he worked the farm. Fine!

Like every great and cultivated man he respected others, even when they didn't share his views. That's the first thing. Secondly, he was someone who wanted justice as a result of his efforts. He wasn't someone for the great and the rich. But he had no time for lazy people. He wanted to see effort and responsibility properly rewarded. In a nutshell, he wasn't a capitalist and he wasn't a socialist. He was a fair-minded man. And he was fair in discussions too. Truly, we had such tough and unrelenting discussions that you felt like saying, along with Mrs Strobel 'Give them a knife: they can kill one another and then we'll be rid of them!', but he was never offensive to me, nor I to him. When the others went off for a cosy dinner in the evening he would say to me 'Hans-August, let's go and eat, we've a bit more talking to do.' We would then talk *à deux*. And I think these chats, where we came together on a human level, explain how it was that we were subsequently able to reach agreement.