

Interview with Jean François Poncet: the stance taken in French industrial and agricultural circles (Paris, 16 March 2007)

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[Étienne Deschamps] Can you recall the attitude that was prevalent at that time among French industrialists and employers towards the future common market?

[Jean François-Poncet] Reticent. French industry had reservations whilst the agricultural sector was very favourable; which is quite understandable, for one should not forget that at that point German industry had already built up its strength. In a very short time Germany had again become... — I remember it was the period of the German economic miracle — so German industry had already become powerful once more, and French industry felt that it was having to bear heavier social security contributions than those levied in Germany, and would therefore be in a position of inferiority. This was not the case for industry as a whole. It was the case for the textile industry, which mobilised and carried out a veritable campaign against the Treaty. It should, however, be said that at the time agricultural circles were more influential than industrial circles. This was because in agricultural circles the advantages that French agriculture could gain from a European agricultural policy were well understood and, in Parliament, this weighed heavily in support of the Treaty.