

Madrid, 27 June 1990

Prime Minister Jan P. Syse

LUNCHEON SPEECH AT INI

Minister, Ladies and Gentlemen,

I was told during the preparations for my visit that there was no need for any speech at this luncheon. But I am sorry, Minister, no real Norwegian would ever miss an opportunity to make a speech! And particularly not an opportunity like this one, at the end of an excellent and enjoyable meal.

I promise to be brief, though. Let me start by telling you about one of my colleagues, who during an election campaign had paid a visit to an institution. At luncheon, he was seated next to a gentleman who had a somewhat distorted view of his own role. In fact he thought he was the Creator. Slightly confused about how to get a meaningful conversation going my colleague finally decided that if you can't beat him, join him. So he asked his neighbour politely about the Apostles, and about how things were going in general in his part of the Universe. The reply came quickly: - I have made it a principle never to talk business during luncheon.

It is important to have principles, but that one could hardly be absolute. I am sure that you will forgive a

Prime Minister if he touches upon both business and politics. In fact, they are my favourite subjects, and the reason why I am here!

We are all impressed, Mr. Minister, by the tremendous developments Spain has undergone over the last 10-15 years. In this short span of time, Spain has become a major political and economic force on the European and international scene. Politically, Spain is one of the leaders in the European integration process.

Economically, you have had the strongest growth in the entire OECD area.

Spain is a priority area in our export strategy. Norwegian business and industry are becoming increasingly aware of the great potential for cooperation with Spanish partners. Our bilateral trade is showing a very positive development. Norwegian investments in Spain are growing. And the positive experiences of Norwegian companies doing business in Spain are our best guarantee for a continued expansion of our economic relations.

In a number of sectors the potential for cooperation is promising. The maritime sector, aquaculture, automotive parts, telecommunication and information technology are important examples. I am very pleased, Mr. Minister, that members of my delegation have had the opportunity to discuss these questions in some detail with their Spanish

counterparts earlier today. There is an interesting complementarity between our economies. This should now be fully exploited.

More generally, it is important that the North and the South of our continent are not considered as opposites, but rather as complementing each other within a wider framework. In fact we do, in many fields: You will organize the Summer Olympics in Barcelona in 1992. We will certainly join you there. We will host the Winter Olympics in Lillehammer in 1994. You will indeed be welcome! Not only as participants - but also as numerous and enthusiastic spectators.

The economic integration of Europe is speeding up. Norway intends to take part in that process. I am convinced that the creation of a European Economic Space between the European Community and the EFTA countries will be an important contribution. Formal negotiations have just started in Brussels. We must make sure they are successful. A European Economic Space will bring the economies of 19 countries closer together. It will bring the economies of Spain and Norway closer together. As partners in this European Economic Space, we shall both contribute to making it a dynamic framework where competition as well as cooperation will release resources, stimulate creativity and generate new growth.

2000 years ago, the great Cesar said he preferred to be number one in Spain rather than being number two in Rome. So far, no one has actually offered me either of those positions. But I already know something about what it is like to be your guest in Spain. And I certainly enjoy it. Thank you for receiving us. Thank you for this delicious luncheon, - and for your attention.