

NOTE FOR THE RECORD

cc Mr Butler

EUROPEAN COMMISSIONERS

The Prime Minister had some further discussion on this with the Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary and the Chief Whip on 24 July. Mr Alison was also present for part of the time.

Sir G Howe said that other members of the Community rated Commissioner posts highly and this was reflected in the quality of those whom they sent to fill them. The French were the best example of this. We should look for the best available candidates even if this meant drawing someone from the Government ranks in the House of Commons. The Prime Minister commented that the French appeared exceptional: few of the Commissioners from the other States were of the same calibre. In any event she was firmly resolved not to select a candidate from the House of Commons.

In subsequent discussion a number of names were mentioned but rejected either because it was felt that their qualities were needed in the Government or that their abilities did not match the requirements of the job. The latter category included Lords Windlesham, Thomas, Limerick, Avon and Aberdare. It was suggested that the net should be cast wider, for example the City and industry.

The Prime Minister concluded that the candidate whom she proposed still appeared to be the strongest contender. But it was clear that a further trawl of possible names was needed. She would like to see some suggestions.

C D P.

C D POWELL

25 July 1984