

PA

Mrs
1. MR ALEXANDER

2. MR WHITMORE

To see + return

MJS

MR SANDERS

SUNDAY NEWSPAPERS ON THE EURO-BUDGET

You will have seen that the Sunday newspapers uniformly took a tough line on our approach to the Budget meeting in Dublin. Since some of it may be played back to the Prime Minister tomorrow, you should have a note of it.

2. The Sundays had a briefing from me on Friday afternoon at which I did nothing to suggest we were other than firm in our demand for justice. I did not, however, canvass options post-Dublin though I was pushed into admitting that, if we did not get what we want, "we could, I suppose, be awkward to the Nth degree" as the French had been.

3. I am, however, concerned at the use of the word "fleece" in both the 'Observer' (which directly attributes the word to the Prime Minister) and the 'Sunday Telegraph'.

4. This arises from the fact that at the end of the briefing, having taken them fairly carefully through our case, I said conversationally that at one of my briefings earlier in the week I had been asked whether I was anti-Common Market.

5. I replied like this:

"I know all this makes me sound anti-Market. But the truth is that the Government wants to play a full part in Europe and is committed to it. I personally voted to go in, admittedly more for political than economic reasons. But, I am sure like millions of others, I did not vote to go in to be fleeced".

6. Some reporting in the Sundays of this remark is without principle and I shall be talking to Adam Raphael.

7. The 'Observer' also quotes someone as saying the German idea that we should not be in such a rush to follow the Market price for our oil as "confounded cheek". These are my exact words, but again it is a bit much to have remarks attributed to officials giving an unattributable briefing.

B

B INGHAM

26 November 1979