

PRIME MINISTER

JIM SCOTT-HOPKINS

1. Jim Scott-Hopkins dined with me last evening. He is one of the most boring men in England.

2. He is a Candidate for the Presidency of the European Assembly, when Madame Veil's 2½ year term expires in December. The new President will hold office until the new Assembly is elected in June 1984. The other Candidate is Tindemans. (If I had a vote, it would go to Tindemans).

3. However, Jim Scott-Hopkins seems fairly confident that he will be elected because it is "our turn". If he is elected (in December) you will have to appoint a new Leader of the Conservative Group. In the view of Scott-Hopkins, the leading Candidates, and in this order, would be:-

- Henry Plumb
- Jack Stewart-Clarke
- Diana Elles

4. He had two moans:-

(a) When he sees you, he does not like having Ian Gilmour and an Official present. When he does come to see you, he would prefer to see you on your own with just me there. (The meetings with Scott-Hopkins are usually fairly pointless and a waste of your time anyway).

(b) At the Dinner of the Executive Committee on Wednesday evening, you made no mention of Europe or of him! He was sitting at the top table. The other two representatives in the European Assembly who were present, Jim Spicer and John de Courcy Ling (the Chief Whip) equally received no mention. This is a ludicrous complaint by a small-minded man.

5. Jim Scott-Hopkins said that he was strongly in favour of you retaining the right to appoint the Leader of the Conservative Group in the European Assembly, and against the Members of the Group electing their own Leader (possibly because he might never have been elected himself).

6. Finally, he asked whether, before the Summer Recess, you would be willing to meet Conservative Members of the Assembly. Your diary is horrific between now and the end of July. Could you bear to give them an hour?

7. There is, I detect, among the Conservative Group a feeling that you are less than enthusiastic about Europe and they perceive (rightly) that I am even less enthusiastic than you. Scott-Hopkins and de Courcy Ling have asked me to visit the European Assembly for two days in September, and I have said that I will go.

12th June, 1981

IAN GOW