

Prime MinisterIAN PERCIVAL

1. At his request, I dined with him last evening.
2. The discussion went round and round in circles. He asked whether he could become Paymaster General or Minister without portfolio, and I said that this simply was not on.
3. He accepts that he could not become Minister of State in a Department.
4. He says that if he was to return to the Bar he would be able to earn £100,000 per year. He says that, on the Bench and at the Bar it is perceived that there are three candidates for the Woolsack, when a replacement is required for Quintin:-
 - (a) Michael Havers
 - (b) Peter Rawlinson
 - (c) Himself
5. He says that "of these three, I am coming up fast."
6. I said that in my opinion it was wholly unrealistic for Ian to think in terms of the Woolsack.
7. The discussion ended on an inconclusive note. He said that he would think further about his position. On balance, I think that he will stay.

8. We really ought to make him a Privy Councillor. Hamish Gray, whose appointment is junior to that of the Solicitor General, is a Privy Councillor, having come into the House in 1970. Ian came into the House in 1959, and has been a QC for 19 years.

9. We cannot have a by-election in Southport. Ian's majority is only 6,527. The liberal came second with 19,426 votes.

18.8.82

IAN GOW