



Government Chief Whip

12 Downing Street, London SW1

12th November 1982

Thank you for sending me a copy of your letter to Ian Gow of 8th November, following the letter which Fred Warner wrote to Geoffrey Howe on 14th October. I have been able to give this matter a little thought and I have also had a talk to the Conservative Whips in the European Parliament on the general matters which were raised.

Could I make the following comments on Fred Warner's three suggestions:-

- i. I suspect his reason for wanting more civil servants to attend debates in the European Parliament is to enable Members of that Parliament to gossip to them rather than have the benefit of listening to the debates. I get the feeling that a number of them go already as a matter of course when it is of value and I would be very doubtful indeed whether the extra expense was worthwhile either in terms of the Government at home or in terms of the Members themselves.
- ii. I can see a good many problems here and I would reject immediately the possibility of an MEP being described as a PPS. Within the Parliament I could see great tensions arising between the "PPS" and our spokesman on the particular Committee concerned. There seems a fundamental misunderstanding of the role of a PPS who is there principally to help the Minister. I guess this proposal derives from a desire to give some of the MEPs a little more status! Frankly, the initiative for this should come from Ministers themselves and I told John de Courcy Ling that if Peter Walker and Geoffrey Howe felt the need to have a Member of the European Parliament who was closely associated with their Private Office, that is a matter for them; but I have never heard Ministers express a desire for this development.



iii. I do not think I have anything to add to what you have said to Ian Gow, the limitation is clearly a matter of cost and Parliamentary business. Ian Gow and I have both had extremely interesting visits to the Parliament in the last two years and I am always glad when Westminster Members go to Strasbourg for this purpose.

I am copying this letter to Ian Gow.

The Hon Nicholas Ridley MP  
Financial Secretary to the Treasury  
Treasury Chambers  
Parliament Street  
SW1P 3AG



MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE, FISHERIES AND FOOD  
WHITEHALL PLACE, LONDON S.W.1



*From the Minister*

Ian Gow Esq  
10 Downing Street  
London  
SW1

6 December 1982

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be 'I. Gow', written in a cursive style.

You kindly sent me copies of correspondence arising from Fred Warner's letter of 14 October to Geoffrey Howe. Can I just say that I welcome the tone of your reply. A European PPS would be a total disaster and I hasten to add I have no intention of sending my Civil Servants to observe the European Parliament at frequent intervals. They waste enough time watching the Council of Ministers!

With best wishes.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be 'P. Walker', written in a cursive style.

PETER WALKER