

CONFIDENTIAL

Ref. A04053

PRIME MINISTER

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Cabinet: Community Affairs

The Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary might report on the outcome of the 20th January Foreign Affairs Council, which appointed Mr. Dalsager as the new Danish Commissioner and remitted a Belgian proposal for a political solution to the current dispute over the 1980 supplementary and 1981 budgets for further discussion at the February Council. He may also be able to report on the allocation of the Agriculture portfolio, which is due to be decided at the Commission's meeting on 21st January.

2. Next week the Fisheries Council meets on 27th January.

RBA

ROBERT ARMSTRONG

21st January, 1981

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TO IMMEDIATE F C O

TELEGRAM NUMBER 186 OF 21 JANUARY.

INFO SAVING ALL EC POSTS.

IMMEDIATE

COMMISSION PORTFOLIOS

1. THE COMMISSION DECIDED THIS AFTERNOON TO GIVE DALSAGER THE AGRICULTURE PORTFOLIO IN SUCCESSION TO GUNDELACH. ALL OTHER PORTFOLIOS REMAIN UNCHANGED. WE HAVE HAD THE FOLLOWING ACCOUNT OF THE DISCUSSION FROM THE TUGENDHAT CABINET.

2. AT A FIRST DISCUSSION THIS MORNING THE CONCENSUS VIEW IN THE COMMISSION WAS THAT THERE SHOULD BE NO WHOLESALE CHANGE IN PORTFOLIOS BUT EQUALLY NO AUTOMATIC SUCCESSION. THORN WAS INVITED TO PRODUCE PROPOSALS WHICH WOULD INVOLVE A MINIMUM OF CHANGE. THE EXPECTATION WAS THAT HE WOULD PROPOSE ANDRIESEN FOR AGRICULTURE, DALSAGER FOR FISH AND COMPETITION AND CONTOGEOGIS FOR TRANSPORT AND THE PARLIAMENT.

3. INSTEAD THORN AT THE AFTERNOON SESSION SAID THAT ANY NEW COMBINATION WOULD REQUIRE A CHAIN OF CHANGES. ACCORDINGLY GIVEN DALSAGER'S EXPERIENCE, HE WOULD BE GRATEFUL IF DALSAGER WOULD DO AGRICULTURE.

4. IN A SERIES OF EVIDENTLY PREARRANGED INTERVENTIONS HAFERKAMP, ORTOLI AND DAVIGNON AGREED. NATALI MERELY TOOK NOTE. ON A CUE FROM THORN TO THE EFFECT THAT, AS A NORTHERNER, DALSAGER WOULD NEED NATALI'S HELP ON AGRICULTURE QUESTIONS RELATING TO ENLARGEMENT AND THE MEDITERRANEAN, ORTOLI SAID THAT IF NATALI HAD NOT ALREADY GOT THE HEAVY BURDEN OF ENLARGEMENT, AS A FORMER AGRICULTURE MINISTER HE WOULD HAVE BEEN WELL QUALIFIED TO TAKE THE AGRICULTURE PORTFOLIO. DAVIGNON, EMPHASIZING THE DIFFICULTY OF FOLLOWING GUNDELACH, AND SPEAKING SIMILARLY, SAID THAT THE COMMISSION MUST WORK TOGETHER AS A COLLEGE. IT SHOULD PRODUCE A WORK PLAN FOR AGRICULTURE NEXT WEEK. DALSAGER WOULD NEED HIS COLLEAGUES HELP IN THE COUNCIL. THE PRESIDENT SHOULD DEFINE A ROLE FOR HIMSELF IN AGRICULTURE.

5. DALSAGER EXPRESSED GRATITUDE FOR HIS COLEAGUES UNANIMITY AND SAID HE WOULD BE SEEKING THEIR HELP. JUST BEFORE THORN SUMMED UP CONFIRMING THE DECISION, CHEYSSON INTERVENED TO SAY THAT THIS WAS ONE OF THE COMMISSION'S MOST IMPORTANT DECISIONS. HE WOULD SUPPORT IT. BUT HE HAD HAD HESITATIONS ON GROUNDS OF LANGUAGE AND CONFLICT OF INTEREST (IE DALSAGER COMING STRAIGHT FROM DEFENDING DENMARK'S INTEREST IN AGRICULTURE). THE PRESIDENT HAD MENTIONED AN OPEN GROUP OF COMMISSIONERS ON AGRICULTURE AND HE WOULD WISH TO BE ON IT.

6. COMMENT. THE TUGENDHAT CABINET, WHO HAVE BEEN IN CLOSE TOUCH WITH ANDRIESSEN, ARE IN NO DOUBT THAT ANDRIESSEN HAD THE VOTES BUT THAT NATALI'S ADAMANT OPPOSITION TO ANYTHING OTHER THAN EITHER NATALI HIMSELF OR A STRAIGHT SUCCESSION HAD PRODUCED THIS OUTCOME.

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Foreign and Commonwealth Office

London SW1A 2AH

20 January 1981

*Dear Mr. Alexander,*

*For Mr. Alexander 21/1*

COMMISSION PORTFOLIOS

Following discussion in the margins of E Committee this morning about support for candidates for the agriculture portfolio, the Lord Privy Seal spoke to Sir M Butler and Lord Carrington in Brussels.

Sir M Butler said that the Mission had been doing no lobbying on behalf of individual candidates; nor had they been advising our Commissioners on what line to take. Lord Carrington said that he would speak again to Mr Tugendhat to make it clear that we had nothing against the Danish candidate and that he would not wish it to be the UK who blocked his appointment.

Lord Carrington and the Lord Privy Seal agreed that, on this basis, there should be no cause for the Danes to complain of HMG's attitude.

I am copying this letter to Kate Timms (MAFF) and David Wright (Cabinet Office).

*Yours ever*  
*Stephen Gomersall*

S J Gomersall  
Private Secretary to the  
Lord Privy Seal

M O'D B Alexander Esq  
10 Downing Street

21 JAN 1981

