

NOTE TO PRESS OFFICERS

LUXEMBOURG COMPROMISE: MEETING OF THE TEN ON 24 MAY

1. Mr Pym made a statement at the beginning of business to draw attention to the unprecedented and politically unjustifiable decision taken in the Agriculture Council on 18 May, to proceed to a vote in spite of the British affirmation that very important national interests were at stake. This has created doubt, confusion and ambiguity in the Community's procedures. He asked two questions:

- (a) Does the Luxembourg Compromise of 1966 - albeit contested by some (Benelux) - remain the understanding under which our business is transacted?
- (b) Is it ^{it} for the individual Member State or States in question to determine whether or not an important national interest is at stake - or is some other critereon being proposed?

These questions raise major and serious issues which the Community must discuss.

2. Mr Pym was supported by the representatives of Denmark and Greece, and the matter was discussed substantively later in the day when it arose under the Genschel/Colombo proposals. The debate revealed widespread concern at the implications of what had been done on 18 May.

3. Ministers agreed to reflect further on these implications and to devote a special meeting to the subject which will be held in Luxembourg on Sunday, 20 June - the eve of the next Foreign Affairs Council.

4. This is a highly satisfactory outcome. We had not ourselves reached firm conclusions on the best way forward and had not expected others to have done so. As the Prime Minister told the House on 20 May: 'The decision is without precedent and has serious implications. A number of options are open to the UK and are being carefully considered by the Government. This consideration will take account

of the discussion in Brussels and of tomorrow's Parliamentary Debate.

5. Meanwhile, Mr Pym's remarks to his colleagues in Brussels have signalled our concern which we find is widely shared. We shall attach importance to the meeting on 20 June.

NF

25 May 1982