



PRIME MINISTER

We have established the pattern that 10-minute bills are not opposed by the Government. Subject to the views of colleagues, content to allow this one to follow the same path?

Foreign and Commonwealth Office
London SW1

6 May 1980

OK this stage - yes

Ms *For Quentin,*

8/5

TEN MINUTE RULE MOTION: EC REFERENDUM

Mr Dennis Canavan MP has put down the following Ten Minute Rule Motion for 21 May:

'that leave be given to bring in a Bill to provide for the holding of a Referendum on whether the United Kingdom should continue to be a member of the European Economic Community.'

There are strong arguments for departing from usual practice by opposing the introduction of this Bill. In the good climate created by the Prime Minister's statement of 29 April and given that we want to make it clear that we are not going to leave the Community, there is much to be said for opposing. If there were a division, we might be able to point to very limited support for the idea of a referendum.

On the other hand, we might find that we had stirred up a hornet's nest, while if handled in the ordinary way, the motion would have attracted no notice at all. The Opposition could be forced to take up a position, Labour anti-Marketters could turn out in force and we might find that there was quite a substantial pro-referendum vote (perhaps even including one or two our own backbenchers).

It does not seem to me to be worth it, so I come down in favour of the usual procedure.

/I am

The Rt Hon The Lord Hailsham of St Marylebone CH FRS DCL
Lord Chancellor
House of Lords

I am copying this letter to the other members of L and of OD(E),
to the First Parliamentary Counsel and to Sir Robert Armstrong.

your em ✓

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