

The Labour Party. I am not an expert of the Common Market issue within the Party, but I have had conversations with the Labour pro-Marketeters. The position appears to be as follows:

V. infolet
1. If there is a 3-line Whip on the Labour side against the Market, the pro-Marketeters estimate that between Forty (40) and Forty Five (45) Labour Members will vote positively in favour of the Market. This would ensure a reasonable majority on the first vote. They stress, however, that if there is a 3-line Whip on the Conservative side for the Market, they are not prepared to support the Government on the consequential legislation: they would confine their support to the question of principle and after that will follow the Party line.

2. If there is a free vote on the Conservative side, then the Labour pro-Marketeters estimate that over One hundred (100) Labour Members will vote with the Government on the first vote. In the event of a free vote, they would be prepared to continue to support the Government on the consequential vote in relation to legislation.

To sum up, the Prime Minister has clearly been proved right in his judgment that once the terms for entering the Market were known, there would be a big swing in favour. This has taken place in the House, in the Parliamentary Party; it has taken place in the Conservative Party outside the House and amongst voters as a whole. Indeed, instead of pro-Marketeters being subjected to pressure by their constituents and Party supporters to vote against the Market, it is the anti-Marketeters who have suffered this fate. Neil Marten, for example, is under very strong pressure from his constituents and seems likely to reach a compromise position by which he would be free to vote against the Government on the issue of principle, but would give the Government support in consequential legislation.

Clearly the question whether to have a free vote or a whipped vote on our side is a vital and complicated one. I would not care to pass a judgment as to the best course in this matter at this stage, but put forward the following factors for consideration.