

EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

Working Documents

1980 - 1981

14 January 1981

DOCUMENT 1-793/80

MOTION FOR A RESOLUTION

tabled by Mr BALFE

pursuant to Rule 25 of the Rules of Procedure

on the methods of retaining the friendship
of the President of France

The European Parliament,

- having regard to the fact that the London Sunday Observer on Sunday 11th January 1981 carried the information that an emotional response by Sir James Goldsmith to an article in his weekly magazine 'Now!' may have fatally damaged his declining hopes of owning Times Newspapers. It is reported that all copies of the latest 'Now!' destined for sale in France and other Continental countries were called back on Goldsmith's orders. He had objected to a two-page article headline 'Sinister Shadows hang over Giscard', casting doubt on the French President's chances of re-election in March.

Goldsmith has told the 'Now!' management: 'Giscard is my friend. Stop the issue.' The magazine has gone on sale in Britain but vans taking copies to airports were ordered to turn back.

Goldsmith who grew up in France owns the weekly 'L'Express'. He is reported as keen to buy 'Le Figaro', an influential daily - a move which would need Giscard's support.

1. Condemns this use of power by the owner of a magazine;
2. Invites the responsible authorities in France to note this precedent when considering the future ownership of any French newspapers;
3. Invites the European Commission to consider whether the rules governing the free movement of goods may have been broken;
4. Invites the competent committees of the Parliament to consider whether any further protection is needed to guarantee the free movement of the printed word.