

Early election ruled out

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By Philip Webster, Political Reporter

Mr Cecil Parkinson, the Conservative Party chairman and a member of the inner "war Cabinet", yesterday ruled out an early general election and expressed the belief that the Government would complete its remaining two years of office.

The extent of Government embarrassment yesterday over interpretations of a speech by Mr Francis Pym, the Foreign Secretary, in his constituency on Saturday, was shown by Mr Parkinson's forthright rebuttal of suggestions that there might be a snap election in the spring or summer because of the rise in Government popularity during the Falklands crisis.

Mr Pym had told the annual meeting of the Cambridgeshire Conservative Association to look beyond the hubbly-burly of present events and turn their minds

to the general election, less than two years ahead. The election theme dominated his speech.

Mr Parkinson, who is known to believe that an attempt to cash in on the Government's popularity would be regarded with cynicism by the electorate and be exploited by its opponents in an election campaign, said Mr Pym's speech had been misread.

All MPs were telling their workers that they must prepare for the election, he said on *The World This Weekend* radio programme. Mr Parkinson added: "We have no plans to call an immediate election. Our plans are not changed by the Falklands crisis. We regard this as a national issue way above party politics. We would not dream of trying to engineer an election around

it. It is simply not being considered at all. Nor will it be.

"We have many things left which we wish to do in this Parliament. There is a lot more still to be done. I believe we will carry on, see our term of office through and go to the public on the basis of our full record. That is our plan at the moment."

Although Mr Parkinson had not consulted the Prime Minister before making his remarks, Mrs Thatcher was said last night to agree absolutely with what he said.

Conservative Central Office expressed surprise that Mr Pym's speech, which it distributed, had been interpreted in the way it had. "The full text does not by any means read like an election alert", an official said.