

The Times Diary

John Bentley, Tory hopeful

Another young tycoon in the mould of Peter Walker is planning to embark on a political career in the near future. John Bentley, chairman of Barclay Securities, one of the fastest growing conglomerates on the stock market (though much of the fizz has gone out of its share price of late), has been interviewed by Conservative Central Office for inclusion in the party's official list of candidates.

I am told that he passed "with flying colours", though his nomination will not be confirmed until the committee dealing with candidates meets after the party conference later this month.

In fact, although still not officially approved, his name has already been touted in Havant, where members of the local party have been seeking a replacement for Ian Lloyd, MP. Bentley says that he knew his name was being put about in Havant "but so were 110 other candidates". He strongly denies any knowledge of having his candidacy helped along by Peter Walker, but I gather that such was the case.

Bentley himself is guarded about his political ambitions although he expresses doubts about finding a seat in the near future. There are, he points out, hundreds of candidates on the party's list.

However, there are those in the party who feel that he might

quickly find himself at the head of the queue. He is pleasant, personable, with plenty of drive, and is anxious to spend money for the cause. He has already been helping in his capacity as a businessman to raise funds. Against this, however,



John Bentley : hoping to secure a Tory nomination.

he has no experience of constituency politics apart from canvassing in Brighton when he was 18 and driving voters to the polling booths.

... the ... of the Lines
... (Ting) factory - have
left him in rather bad odour.