



10 DOWNING STREET

Prime Minister

I wouldn't normally
bother you with an
attache, but I gather
that the details here are
more than little - tabs.

He is, apparently, really
feeling under pressure;
feels he has to do
everything himself; and has
little confidence in his
aides.

Stella

13/12

WHY IS NEIL KINNOCK SO GRUMPY?

By TREVOR KAVANAGH, Political Editor

WHAT'S up with Neil Kinnock? Why has his famous Welsh good humour suddenly deserted him?

He is plainly fed up, grumpy and for the first time in two years as Labour leader he is not bothering to hide his depression.

Mr Kinnock has started snapping at his friends, his closest political advisors and — a sure sign of political paranoia — the media.

Privately he has begun blaming Shadow Cabinet figures for failing to help lift the party in the opinion polls.

Friends say that:

● He regards author, columnist and Shadow Chancellor Roy Hattersley as a part-time politician.

● He has little respect for ex-Bennite Michael Meacher who, as social security spokesman, holds a major front bench job.

● He finds it difficult to work with intellectual heavyweight Peter Shore.

● He is sometimes embarrassed by the thuggish-style tactics of Employment spokesman John Prescott.

● His relationship with Shadow Home Secretary Gerald Kaufman has always been cool.

For some reason, the talented Robin Cook is also out of favour.

Sadly, Mr Kinnock feels he can rely totally on only two key Shadow Cabinet members — trade spokesman John Smith and Environment special-

No 10 dream slips away

ist Jack Cunningham. There are half-a-dozen other young rising stars like Jack Straw, Tony Blair and Jeff Rooker but, until they are elected to the inner circle, they remain only junior spokesmen.

Mr Kinnock's deep frustration has been bubbling to the surface for weeks.

The first public sign came on Wednesday when the leader of Her Majesty's Opposition made an exhibition of himself in the Commons.

He looked daft as he bellowed with forced

laughter, doubled up on the Labour front bench.

He was visibly ill-humoured a few hours earlier when he turned up for lunch in his honour with political journalists at Westminster.

He showed his irritation with Jeff Rooker for being present instead of preparing an important speech.

And he glowered at crestfallen press secretary Patricia Hewitt for landing him with the invitation to speak in the first place.

Mr Kinnock denies he

was anything but sober during a clash with Mr Tebbit in the Commons that night and his colleagues believe him.

"Neil wants to be Prime Minister too much to fall into that trap," said one MP.

And that sums up the reason behind Neil's sudden attack of the vapours.

He desperately wants to lead a government but, with an election perhaps only 15 months away, all his dreams are going up in smoke.

"He is completely de-

flated by our position in the opinion polls," said a colleague.

"We rose after his attack on Militant at Bournemouth, but we're back down to 32-33 per cent again.

"He just doesn't know what to do about it."

Kinnock about Kinnock has astonished critics and friends alike with his tight-rope walking skills.

But after one fall too many, he's entering the election war worn out by battling with his own troops.

And it's beginning to show.

