

Prime Minister

NICHOLAS RIDLEY

1. He is coming to see you at 11.15 a.m. on Tuesday, 21st December.
2. I went to see him at his request, this morning.
3. You and he came into the House together in 1959; he will be 54 on 17th February 1983.
4. He has said to me, in the past, that he never sees you nowadays, and wonders whether you are displeased with him because of the Falklands matter. I told him that there was no question of your displeasure with him.
5. He is enjoying his work as Financial Secretary, and says that he is working immensely hard. He had just received your letter about the Privy Council, and he is very pleased about this.
6. His commitment to the House of Commons is not total; and one of the matters which I think he will raise with you is his own future. I explained that you would not be able to give any commitment that he would be in your Cabinet after the next Election. He made the point that you had put a very dry team in the Treasury, but that some of the spending Ministers had not made radical changes to diminish public spending within their Departments. Nicholas said that there was much money to be saved in the Department of Health and Social Security and some to be saved in the Department of Transport.

7. If he is not going to be in the Cabinet after the next Election, I had the impression that he would not want to soldier on, even in a non Cabinet post as senior as that of Financial Secretary.
8. Nicholas said that if he was not going to be in the Cabinet he would like to do some other job, and mentioned the possibility of being one of our Commissioners in Brussels. As you know, Christopher Tugendhat wants to return to the House of Commons. His present appointment expires on 31st December 1984.
9. Nicholas is committed personally, and politically, to you; Judy is his Constituency Secretary and I think complains a bit about the hours that Nicholas works. Judy (and this is not unknown in wives) thinks that Nicholas ought to be in the Cabinet and would be more reconciled to the disadvantages of being wife to a busy Minister if Nicholas was in the Cabinet.

13.12.82



IAN GOW