

STRICTLY PERSONAL

March 1985

PRIME MINISTER

RESHUFFLE

If you intend a major reshuffle before the election, it probably has to be this year to enable the Ministers to master their new jobs as fully as possible.

There is a case for quite extensive changes. The feeling is widespread that Labour has youngish and impressive spokesmen in some areas, while some of yours are less impressive. You don't want to go into the election with the risk that people will vote for a change of government when all they want is a change of faces.

The time for a reshuffle is probably the end of July. It won't have the same element of surprise as last time. But Ministers seem to prefer to know their fate before the summer holidays.

What follows is intended to help you clear your mind.

The Big Three

You need to know what you want to do about the big three: the Chancellor, the Foreign Secretary and the Home Secretary.

I imagine you will want the Chancellor to go through to the election, always assuming that his personal plans provide for that.

Your comments suggest that you may consider moving or even dropping the Foreign Secretary and the Home Secretary.

It is only when you reach a decision on these three that a reshuffle can take shape.

### Changes in the Cabinet

There are some who need to be moved within the Cabinet. Kenneth Baker clearly feels he has finished at Education Tom King deserves a move. David Young is showing signs of restlessness. Nick Ridley is invaluable and your strongest support. The only question is whether he is more valuable to you elsewhere in the Cabinet than at DOE, for instance as a free-lance Minister without Portfolio.

### Possible leavers

Some will need to go. The main question marks are over the Foreign Secretary and Home Secretary.

Other candidates are Paul Channon, who does not really expect to stay: [REDACTED]

[REDACTED], who has never really recovered from earlier setbacks: John Belstead, who could assuredly be moved if you wanted to make room for a new Leader of the Lords: [REDACTED], who has not really made a mark (but has not had much chance). I assume that you will continue to think it better to have Peter Walker in than out.

One conclusion is that it will not be a radical reshuffle unless you decide to move on the Foreign Secretary and the Home Secretary.

### Possible New Faces

Of course one factor in deciding whether to retire people from the Cabinet is the calibre of political replacements and whether they represent a sufficient improvement to justify ditching experience.

The other factor is the degree of restlessness and frustration lower down the Ministerial ranks if you do not promote some.

Those who I imagine are candidates for promotion are:

- David Waddington. But surely he is too important where he is between now and the election.



- Peter Brooke. Particularly if you envisage a change of Party Chairman. He might make a good Northern Ireland Secretary.
- Paddy Mayhew.
- Chris Patten. Formidable presentational skills
- Michael Howard.
- John Gummer.
- John Patten.
- William Waldegrave. But still too young?
- Norman Lamont. Your wing of the Party.

In choosing among them, you will no doubt give weight to which of them would add most to the Government's overall ability to put across its policies to the public.

Assume Probably Not

There are others at Minister of State level who might be candidates but probably would not represent a net gain in Cabinet. They include:

- [REDACTED]

- [REDACTED].

- [REDACTED].

- [REDACTED].

- [REDACTED].

- Ian Stewart.

- Alan Clark. A temptation to have in, but would probably get you into trouble.

Conclusion

The only purpose of this note has been to organise the material. It boils down to two main questions:

- how big a reshuffle will it be? Do you want sweeping changes? Are you prepared to face the Night of the Long Knives analogy which would be drawn? Or is it enough to lose two or three from the bottom end of the Cabinet, bring in two or three younger faces and switch some of the others around?

- looked at another way, how great is the political need for new faces? And how much better are those available to come into Cabinet than those you might drop?

This is the only copy of this note.

C.P.R.

CHARLES POWELL

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