
David Cairns resigns ministerial post.

Posted by dws - 2008/09/17 06:59

Well, it was bound to happen sooner or later, but I must admit Mr Cairns wasn't top of my list to take the jump...

David Cairns becomes first minister to quit

Dear Gordon

As someone who has never uttered a public word of criticism of our Labour Government, far less ever cast a vote against it in the years that I have been an MP, the concept of loyalty to my Party and our Leader is at the very heart of my political beliefs.

As such, the greatest privilege in my life has been to serve as a Labour Minister.

For me it is an article of faith that the worst day of a Labour Government is better than the best day of a Tory or SNP one.

This has been borne out by the tremendous progress that we have seen over the past 11 years in communities like my own in Inverclyde where regeneration is replacing years of decay, caused in large measure by destructive Conservative policies.

This is why I got into politics and why loyalty is a price well worth paying.

Yet despite our achievements, if surveys of public opinion and recent by-elections are to be believed, we find ourselves in a position where we appear to have fallen well behind a Tory opposition of quite breathtaking shallowness with no answers to the challenges that our country faces, and an SNP administration that has betrayed pensioners, students, home-owners and is decimating the voluntary sector.

Of course Governments in all countries are facing problems and it would be disingenuous to argue otherwise, but this is not the only challenge we face.

It was in this context that some colleagues requested nomination forms for a leadership contest.

When asked my opinion I counselled against this as I argued that it could only lead to further division and internal wrangling.

Nevertheless they went ahead, their names found their way into the public domain, and, to my dismay, the current crisis began.

However it is the response to this action that has caused me most unhappiness.

Rather than seizing the opportunity to open out to the broader party membership a discussion that is being held in private, our response as a government has been to suggest that these were the actions of a tiny number of disaffected people who have taken leave of their senses, are part of some larger plot and are entirely unrepresentative of the PLP.

These were among the more charitable responses.

I do not believe any of these things to be the case, though I understand the frustration of those good comrades who hold a different point of view.

In any event the debate is now on.

The issue of leadership and direction are being discussed and argued over, and to go on denying it is hardly credible.

I wish it were otherwise.

To that end I believe that the time has come to take the bull by the horns and allow a leadership debate to run its course.

I know that it is incompatible to hold this view and to remain a serving minister, and although it had not been my intention to resign, I have reluctantly concluded that it is the only honourable course of action left open.

Yours sincerely

David Cairns

Member of Parliament for Inverclyde

So what is the original "Parochial McChatterer" up to? Is this sudden outbreak of conscience perhaps something to do with a self-preserving smell of the java, a nudge from his sponsor Siobhain Donagh as part of a bigger gameplan, or a cynical attempt to keep Inverclyde?

The reply:

Dear David,

It is with regret that I accept your resignation.

Firstly, let me thank you for the many years of fine service which you have given to both the party and the government on both sides of the border. Your contribution to the Scotland Office has been particularly welcome at a time when it is vital that the modern day case for the United Kingdom, and Scotland's part in it, is properly made.

As you know, the world is facing a time of economic upheaval. I believe it is vital that we as a Government, and as a country, stand together in the face of these difficult times and concentrate all our efforts on helping the British people to come through them. I am therefore disappointed by your decision to leave the government, and I do not agree with you that this is the time at which the Labour Party should be focused on internal debates.

I will always respect the views of others both in the party and the government but believe that both function best when we show unity.

Gordon Brown

Translation: Don't let the door bang yer erse on the way oot!!

The entirely predictable response from Iain Gray:

David Cairns is somebody I know and respect, and he's absolutely wrong. I have always made clear my loyalty for Gordon Brown, the prime minister.

I'll give Gray six months, tops.

Watch out for a senior minister resigning on the eve of the Labour conference...:)

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Re:David Cairns resigns ministerial post.

Posted by Levenax - 2008/09/17 08:51

"...the greatest privilege in my life has been to serve as a Labour Minister"

Father Cairns' ex parishioners might be surprised to learn that he puts Blair and Brown above Almighty Gawd.

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Re:David Cairns resigns ministerial post.

Posted by Robin T Cox - 2008/09/17 10:56

So what is the original "Parochial McChatterer" up to? Is this sudden outbreak of conscience perhaps something to do with a self-preserving smell of the java, a nudge from his sponsor Siobhain Donagh as part of a bigger gameplan, or a cynical attempt to keep Inverclyde?

Suggestions that I've heard on the radio are that he was 'flushed out' by Downing Street, in order to bite the bullet now and avoid any unpleasantness next week at New Labour's party conference.

But as someone once said: 'They think it's all over ...'

Re:David Cairns resigns ministerial post.

Posted by dws - 2008/09/17 12:28

Robin T Cox wrote:

Suggestions that I've heard on the radio are that he was 'flushed out' by Downing Street, in order to bite the bullet now and avoid any unpleasantness next week at New Labour's party conference.

But as someone once said: 'They think it's all over ...'

If they were going to find someone to ruin Gordon Brown's whole day, wouldn't they find someone with a bit more clout than David Cairns, Rob? His resigning would have all the effect of a damp squib in the scheme of things; it'd have been buried quick-smart.

No, I think this is Mr Cairns trying desperately to hold onto his seat. Whatever he is, he's not stupid and he see's which way the wind is blowing. In distancing himself from Gordon Brown now (I'll bet Cairns wishes the letter wasn't quite so grovelling) he can turn to his constituents and say he made a stand, hoping that enough smoke and mirrors will give them amnesia about his performance up until then.

As to Mr gray's contribution: Surely he knew someone would ask his opinion on this? If he can't do something as basic in politics as issuing a statement which allows him room to manoeuvre at a later stage, what the hell is he doing there?

Salmond will have him for breakfast and not even break sweat.

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Re:David Cairns resigns ministerial post.

Posted by Robin T Cox - 2008/09/17 16:05

If they were going to find someone to ruin Gordon Brown's whole day, wouldn't they find someone with a bit more clout than David Cairns, Rob? His resigning would have all the effect of a damp squib in the scheme of things; it'd have been buried quick-smart.

The argument here, as I understand it, is that as David Cairns was Scottish Office Minister his resignation in the middle of the party conference would have caused great embarrassment to Gordon Brown.

Especially in England, where it would be said that if Brown can't even command loyalty among the Scots, why should anyone else respect his leadership? Knowing how sensitive Brown is about his image, it was considered best to avoid this embarrassment by flushing out Cairns now, drawing a line under it all and moving on.

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