

## BREAKING THE CODE

the Social Market Foundation – to the heart of government inside a year. He has walked right into Downing Street – and been welcomed with open arms – not just because he is so good (and has the knack of making bright ideas accessible to politicians), but also because there was no one else there. You would have thought that the Prime Minister of the United Kingdom would be surrounded by the brightest and best minds in the land. He isn't. There is an intellectual vacuum at the heart of government – so we have to be thankful there are the likes of David and Danny on hand, ready, willing and able to fill it. And I have to be thankful that these chaps are my chums.

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### LATER

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Fall-out from David's resignation:

1. A new policy on whips' notes. David only ended up in this mess because his note to the Chief was kept on file. There seems to be a dispute as to who has legitimate claim on messages sent to the Chief Whip. Are they his personal property to be kept by him and disposed of as he sees fit? Or are they, as whips are all government ministers, government property, to be treated accordingly? Some blame R. Ryder for not destroying the evidence... The question is: what to do in the future? The Chief's conclusion is: keep writing the notes – he needs the information, so does the PM. But, sleep easy, boys, from now on the notes will be shredded on a regular basis.

2. Michael Bates becomes the new Paymaster-General (he has been sulky since the summer: now he is a *very* happy bunny) and I move from the Lower Office to the Upper Office and become a Lord Commissioner of Her Majesty's Treasury<sup>615</sup> and – better still – assume the mantle of the whip responsible for the First Secretary (aka Deputy Prime Minister), for the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster, and for HM Treasury. (And, yes, I have noticed. My advancement is due entirely to someone else's misfortune. And the someone else is a proper friend at that.)

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### MONDAY 16 DECEMBER 1996

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10.40 p.m.: We have survived the Fisheries vote. This is the one we lost last year and, had the UUs been against us, feared we might lose again. We summoned the lame and the halt (I was on the ambulance run), we brought ministers back from hither and yon

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<sup>615</sup> Constitutionally, the Treasury is governed by a Board of seven Lords Commissioners. The First Lord is the Prime Minister, the Second Lord is the Chancellor of the Exchequer and the remaining five are government whips.