

Political Notebook by George Pascoe-Watson

It's spring and reshuffle talk is in the air.

Middle-ranking and junior ministers are already jockeying for position even though no one knows for sure what David Cameron intends.

I'm told no one in 10 Downing Street is talking about a shakeup in Cabinet.

Figures like Home Secretary Theresa May and Communities supremo Eric Pickles are being seen as strong performers.

Foreign Secretary William Hague and Defence chief Liam Fox wouldn't and couldn't be shifted during a war and an international crisis.

In any event, Mr Hague is determined to fight suggestions his heart is not in the job after recent problems at the Foreign Office.

And Dr Fox is the right winger Mr Cameron needs in Cabinet to keep a large section of his MPs happy.

Iain Duncan Smith at Welfare is also of the right but has said he no longer holds political ambition.

The PM would look to his deputy Chris Grayling as the obvious choice for promotion to the Cabinet to carry the right wing standard.

There are weak links in Cabinet and the finger points to Ken Clarke, who, at 70, is long overdue for a move. Daily headlines lambasting the government over law and order weakness are not good.

So it's the middle ranks and the juniors who are hoping for a lucky break.

The Premier knows he must keep a large group of talented PPSs and select committee brains interested with the prospect of ministerial jobs.

Some are already on the brink of deciding this will be their last Parliament as the prospect of being bag carriers for their (sometimes) less-talented "boss" is too much to bear.

The Justice secretary has a chance to salvage some dignity as his reputation is dragged through the mud over being "soft" on law and order.

Mr Clarke is expected to dismiss the barmy recommendation by the Sentencing Council to hand out non-jail sentences for some heroin dealers.

Their plan has been greeted by universal fury and derision in number 10 and Mr Clarke is under orders to send it to the rubbish bin.

Similarly being filed in the Whitehall trash will be Vince Cable's dream of a mansion tax. It will be parked. Which is Whitehall speak for buried forever.