

Funding the Future

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There are some interesting political scheduling issues coming up.

I am presuming Johnson is toast now. It already feels as if the power is draining from him. It is only time before the Tories turn on him.

The convention is that they will not do this before local elections on 5 May, even though I suspect their performance would improve if they did. So 6 May, a Friday, is the first day Graham Brady might call a poll organised by the 1922 Committee.

The trouble is that parliament ends its season on either 6 May or 9 May, meaning all business closes before the State reopening scheduled for Tuesday 10 May.

Actually, I doubt we will have a State reopening. I rather suspect that the Queen is not up to this task. It will save her considerable embarrassment if she is not. The reopening will be by the Lord Chancellor, who will read the required speech.

But, suppose on 10 May when MPs are back the 1922 has the 54 letters needed to call a vote of no confidence in Johnson? He will be offering his programme for government to the House and country whilst facing the real risk of being deposed. How can that work?

Of course, the challenge to Johnson may fail. But suppose it does not? Could he then carry the Queen's speech? The answer must be no, because he will be gone.

Then suppose the challenge fails, although the vote against him is likely to be big? What then? We can be sure he will not go. But would those Tory MPs trying to be rid of him then vote for his programme for government? Who can tell?

There is only one thing I can be sure of right now, and that is that it would be wise for the Queen to miss this speech. The coincidence of timings makes it look as if May might deliver quite a political mess. She would be best clear of it.

And one day we might be rid of Johnson.