

Might a party that thinks Badenoch is the answer to any...

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Kemi Badenoch went to the House of Commons yesterday to insult a man who is understandably upset at being sacked by her for doing something he had not done whilst simultaneously doing what she had asked.

Henry Staunton is not the sort of man who I usually defend on this blog. A long-time part of the financial elite who have spent their careers hoovering up excessive fees from the companies that they supposedly manage, Staunton denied himself semi-retirement at the government's bidding to become chair of the Post Office.

That might not have been his wisest decision. I presume that he did it out of either political loyalty, or for the hope of a gong. In either case, his trust in this government was misplaced.

That said, as far as I can see, he is a man whose track record to his mid-70s is unblemished. He has moved from job to job but without the hint of either misdemeanour or failure that such a progression can sometimes imply. It might be argued that he was, instead, promoted to reflect his ability.

And then, he got to the Post Office. There, he had to deal with Badenoch. I suspect that he is not the first to have found that a demand too much for any career to suffer. I suspect, even more strongly, that he will not be the last, because she is the person who we know that the membership of the Conservative Party thinks is their leader in waiting.

What we also know, based on her House of Common performance yesterday, is that she is a very angry woman, willing to say many things that the wise might have reflected a little more upon before suggesting them. She appears able to do such things because the capacity to both reflect and feel remorse appear to have been omitted from her character.

Do I believe Staunton's version of events? His claim is that he was instructed, prior to his sacking, to delay payments to sub-postmasters to assist government finances

before it limps towards an election. Yes, I do believe that he was told that.

Do I believe Badenoch's claim that he was simply seeking revenge for being sacked? No, I do not.

I think it is very likely that Staunton told the truth about the way in which Badenoch was seeking to micro-manage a situation in which, in theory, she should have had no involvement. I also think it is very likely that she demanded that he be sacked for doing something for which she should have accepted responsibility.

However, responsibility, truth-telling and competence are qualities not now known to this government. I am sure, however, that Badenoch can reassure herself by asking why she should accept responsibility for anything when none of her colleagues ever accept the blame. As a consequence, she proved that she could be very angry without the slightest justification during the course of her performance (that word being used wisely, in this case) at the Dispatch Box yesterday.

We should get used to this. When the rump of the Conservative party reassembles in Westminster after the next election, Badenoch is the person that they are most likely to choose as their leader since it seems unlikely that the good people of Saffron Walden will grant us the favour of dispatching her as their MP. In all likelihood, Starmer is going to have to face her vitriol week in and week out. It will make for mild entertainment, but thankfully, it will do the Tories no good.

The question that might be asked is whether a party that thinks Badenoch is the answer to any question ever likely to be fit to govern again? I correctly suggest that the question might be asked, because I think the answer is obvious. That makes the question superfluous.