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## Low-Down on London's Higher-Ups

By Bernard D. Nossiter

LONDON—This town has an insatiable appetite for political gossip and some of the wittiest tongues here have been set wagging by the newly published "The Cecil King Diary, 1965-1970."

The former chairman of the Daily Mirror, the country's biggest selling paper, King was courted by every politician worth knowing. He quietly recorded what they told him in private all during Harold Wilson's Labor administration.

On Wilson, who regularly chatted with King at 10 Downing Street, diary entries record:

"Disastrous . . . apparently living as usual in cloud-cuckoo-land . . . en-

joys the flattery and patronage of being P.M. but takes no interest in the work . . . had 45 minutes with Wilson on Friday evening . . . his vanity is quite astonishing—each failure is hailed as a brilliant breakthrough—realism never shows up . . . George Brown to lunch yesterday. In good form. He doesn't like Wilson and makes no attempt to hide his feelings. He says Wilson has no idea how to conduct cabinet business."

On former Chancellor James Callaghan, another frequent King visitor and, like Brown, a ranking member of Wilson's team, the diary says: "Jim Callaghan last night was very friendly—Jim is very nice but has neither the brains nor the

education to grasp the problems of the Treasury . . . He was obviously very unhappy at the way things were going and planned to stick by Wilson, as sticking together was the only salvation for the Labour Party."

On German politics: "Blankenhorn, the German ambassador, came to lunch . . . he says Erhard is a weak man, a bad politician, and will not last long. He will be succeeded by Barzel. He does not think Strauss will be a menace."

On Conservative Party politics: "When (Sir Alec Douglas-) Home was foreign secretary, Heath asked me what I made of him. I said he would make a good vice-chairman of a subcommittee of the Berwickshire County

Council. What I meant was that he was only really fit for local politics, and that not in any spectacular way. When Home became P.M., Heath said he recalled what I said before and had I seen any reason to change my mind I said I had not."

Unsurprisingly, some of those bitten and their friends have bitten back with equally savage reviews and disclaimers.

Richard Crossman, another ex-cabinet minister, is indirectly quoted by King as charging Wilson with a lack of foresight. In Crossman's review, he recalls King as a "huge, goofy, buttoned-up creature who was chairman (for no) other reason except

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