

THE



TIMES

Tuesday January 9 2018 | thetimes.co.uk | No 72427

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INSIDE TIMES2



The truth about coconut oil

Greening quits in shambolic reshuffle

Education secretary rejects PM's job offer

Francis Elliott Political Editor

Justine Greening quit in protest at her demotion from education secretary last night as a shambolic reshuffle laid bare Theresa May's lack of authority and revived questions over the competence of her administration.

Ms Greening turned down the prime minister's offer of the post of welfare secretary and walked out of government after more than two hours of wrangling in Downing Street.

Earlier Jeremy Hunt resisted pressure to become the new business secretary, persuading Mrs May to allow him to remain as health secretary with a brief expanded to include social care.

The prime minister's allies said that Mr Hunt had not refused to move but had made a "passionate" case to be allowed to remain. He is understood to have argued that he would be portrayed as abandoning the NHS in the midst of a crisis.

His decision to resist becoming business secretary was regarded by some as part of a longer-term calculation about his chances of becoming leader.

The decision to abandon what was designed to be a central plank of the reshuffle — which came on parliament's first sitting day of the year — dismayed even loyal Conservative MPs. The veteran Sir Nicholas Soames warned the prime minister that she needed to redeem herself with remaining changes at lower ministerial levels today.

One backbencher said: "Everyone went away for Christmas and because

of the Brexit deal forgot that the operation around the PM is shit."

Ms Greening is said to have rejected Mrs May's pitch to use the welfare job to develop her stated political priority of improving social mobility. According to allies the former education secretary blames Nick Timothy, Mrs May's former chief of staff who has criticised her in a series of articles, for her demise.

Ms Greening, who only narrowly held on to her Putney seat at the election, is expected to join pro-European Tories such as her predecessor Nicky Morgan, who was also dismissed by Mrs May from the education post. The prime minister was able to name a new education secretary — Damian Hinds, a well-regarded moderniser — to give impetus to school reforms but there were limited changes elsewhere.

David Lidington, a prominent Remain backer who served as David Cameron's Europe minister, was handed Damian Green's former role deputising for Mrs May but not his first secretary title. David Gauke replaces Mr Lidington as justice secretary.

From the outset, when Chris Grayling was mistakenly announced as the new Conservative Party chairman only for the job to be handed to Brandon Lewis 45 minutes later, little went according to plan during the ten-hour reshuffle.

Party jobs for a host of MPs from the 2015 and 2017 intake, including James Cleverly as deputy party chairman, showcased more non-white and female Tories. When it came to those

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Next step Princess Charlotte outside Kensington Palace before her first day at nursery. The picture was taken by her mother, the Duchess of Cambridge Page 7

Church tells landowners it owns their hidden riches

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The Church of England has laid claim to minerals beneath privately owned land covering an area the size of the Lake District, including in regions earmarked for fracking, *The Times* has learnt.

Since 2010 the church has officially registered its ownership of 585,000 acres of underground resources. Thousands of people have received letters warning that they do not own potentially valuable deposits under their land.

In most cases, the church has laid claim to deposits beneath land that it used to own but is now held privately. It has also exploited ancient property laws allowing it to claim the minerals beneath land that it owned under the feudal system. This gives the church the right to cash in on any profits from the extraction of stone, metals and other minerals in the earth, though it may have to compensate the surface landowners for access to those minerals.

Two months ago the church's investment bodies produced a report which concluded that there was no Christian reason to object to the extraction of underground resources as long as the environment and local communities were protected.

The church cannot profit directly from fracking because shale gas, like oil, is owned by the Crown. Lawyers have said, though, that it could seek compensation from fracking companies that want to drill through its minerals. Drilling can be carried out horizontally to reach deposits.

Last night the church said that it had no plans to profit from fracking. It is understood that it does not believe the compensation available to mineral rights holders is valuable enough.

Land Registry data analysed by *The Times* shows that the Church Commissioners, who handle almost £8 billion of assets, have filed claims to "mineral rights" in 5,773 locations since January 2010. A change to the law that came into force in 2013 stated that mineral rights may be lost if not logged with the Land Registry.

Large areas of England and Wales

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IN THE NEWS

Hospital bans sugar

An NHS hospital has become the first in the country to ban sugary snacks entirely as it seeks to encourage overweight staff to set a better example for patients. Page 6

BBC pay row deepens

Two of Britain's most prominent legal practices are advising the BBC's female stars on potentially suing the corporation for gender pay discrimination. Page 7

Oprah 'for president'

Friends of Oprah Winfrey said that she was considering a run for the US presidency. The television mogul was praised for her speech at the Golden Globe awards. Page 13

Syrian rebels trapped

Syrian forces backed by Russia have begun an assault on Idlib, the biggest rebel stronghold, trapping nearly three million civilians against the Turkish border. Page 30

Carmaker's anger

Jaguar Land Rover, the country's biggest carmaker, has attacked ministers' criticism of diesel cars and said that it was affecting the company's growth. Page 37

Murray has operation

Andy Murray has undergone hip surgery and hopes to return to tennis in time for Wimbledon. He said the initial assessment of the operation was positive. Page 68