

PRIME MINISTER

Press Digest for Sunday 6 December

Foot/Tatchell

Serious doubts whether Foot can win the Tatchell argument with the NEC's Organisation Committee - Express says Committee will have no option but to endorse Tatchell and Observer says Foot risks a humiliating vote.

People says if Foot is repudiated by NEC he should not stay on as leader.

Observer says Tatchell affair has all the makings of a long running farce but reducing the Opposition to a laughing stock is not the best way to defend dignity of Parliament.

Politics

The Yorkshire Regional Council of Labour Party demands tough action against militants; Walter Harrison reselected at Wakefield but Ray Fletcher dropped at Ilkeston.

Observer says local support for SDP continues to increase and Times has big feature on who's who in the SDP.

Observer claims that up to six potential Tory defectors to the SDP have been having preliminary talks with SDP MPs.

Sunday Times says the question is no longer whether Labour can be saved for the right but why it should not become the party of the far left.

3 You are reported to be preparing a shake-up at CCO now that Mr. Parkinson has settled in.

Sunday Times canvasses Roy Mason as Governor of Hong Kong. ?

Mirror leader calls for action this day from the Home Secretary on overcrowded prisons; the "taxing" of every TV set to ease the burden on pensioners; and for you to get rid of the Chancellor. ??!

/Public

Public Expenditure

Sunday Times leader says Chancellor is far closer to the MTFs than he was last winter but a reflationary budget in the spring would be a mistake; however, he should cut the National Insurance Surcharge.

Telegraph says the Chancellor is determined last week's announcement will be the last unpalatable one before the Election; and Jonathan Davis, on the city page, says Chancellor has a sporting chance with more room for manoeuvre than the people think; Treasury axe has been much sharper than has been made out because 7.4% increase in public expenditure is not a real rise.

Observer says increase in public spending is only 7.5% compared with inflation rate of over 10% so volume will actually fall, adding another element of contraction to a heavily recessed economy; the PSBR could fall too; Rooker-Wise increases already built into calculation so more radical injection will be required in budget.

Gordon Leak, News of the World, says Chancellor could not survive without your patronage; News of the World prints an article by the Chancellor in which he defends his decisions as buttressing a gradual economic improvement; says once again the wets have had their way on the problem of reducing public expenditure; Observer feature says you withdrew your support for the Chancellor at crucial stages in the public expenditure exercise.

Sir Ian Gilmour says last week's announcement was offensive and unacceptable; newspapers speculate that up to 30 Tory Back-benchers could abstain in Tuesday's debate.

Hugo Young, Times, asks whether, after his performance on public expenditure, John Nott can any longer be regarded with confidence as the next Chancellor; however his flexibility is in tune with that of his party so it could be a qualification for preferment; elsewhere the Sunday Times says another round of defence economies are on the way.

Unions/Pay

Transmission workers at Halewood vote for all-out strike from 5 January; but Observer reports Ford ready to sit out a damaging strike and quotes an official as saying that the issue is the survival of the company in the UK.

Coventry NUPE strikers end stoppage and go to arbitration.

Trade unions threaten to boycott successor to YOPS because of its compulsory nature and reduced benefits.

Express leader, on Vauxhall man kept on for 4 years with little or nothing to do, says it is a measure of the unbending, unforgiving and implacable face of modern trade unionism.

Industry

Credit card surcharges will be ended this week according to Observer.

Observer says Britain has cut out much of its independent fusion research to save £20 million a year.

Observer, attacking juggernauts, says the Government must introduce long overdue measures to divert goods from road to rail; but David Lipsey, Times, gives his support to juggernauts and says Mr. Howell has a powerful case.

Media

Sir Ian Trethowan, tipped elsewhere for chairmanship of Horse Race Betting Levy Board, says his successor should come from within the BBC.

Law and Order

PLO terrorists threaten to blow up North Sea oil rig - British and Norwegian security services launch extensive check.

Statement expected this week on DPP's decision not to prosecute prison officers after Scrubs riot two years ago.

30 year old man and 15 year old youth charged with murder

/of

of 13 year old boy found dumped a week ago in Leicestershire ditch.

Home Office pays long-term prisoner £1,200 compensation for loss of belongings during Hull prison riot.

Sunday Times reports why we are having another bout of spy fever - all because of the leaky Young Turks of MI5 and MI6.

Northern Ireland

Powell claims that British, Irish and American officials came to an agreement in 1979 to work for an all Irish state within NATO.

RUC says anyone wearing para-military uniforms and masks for the third force parade in Enniskillen will be dealt with under the law.

Observer prints a (poor) picture of IRA informer Black and says he has been offered immunity from prosecution.

International

Moscow: Sakharov's daughter seized by KGB while trying to get to Gorky and dumped 20 miles outside Moscow.

South Africa: Welsh Rugby Union will announce tomorrow that it has called off a tour but an Oxbridge cricket team arrives there for a brief series of matches.

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