

10.10-83

PRIME MINISTER

THIS WEEK - HIGHLIGHTS

But for the Conservative Party conference this would be a fairly quiet week. The outstanding events outside the conference are:

- EC Special Budget Council, Athens (today and tomorrow);
- Consultative document on local transport after abolition of Metropolitan Councils (today);
- Mr Prior meets Northern Ireland Assembly committee to discuss prison security (Tuesday);
- Money supply (tomorrow) and Index of Retail Prices (Friday).

Details:

Conservative Party Conference

- Tomorrow - Taxation; homes and land; Chairman; law and order; rates; energy.
- Wednesday - Employment; proportional representation; defence; economic policy; education; electoral law.
- Thursday - Health; food and farming; industrial relations; free enterprise and industry (Mr Parkinson); transport.
- Friday - EEC (Sir Geoffrey Howe); your address.

Ministers

- Mr Parkinson on BBC Panorama (tonight).

Statements (apart from conference)

- Consultative paper on local transport after abolition of Metropolitan Councils (today);
- Attorney General's guidance on misuse of student union funds (today)

International

- New Israeli Government ratified (today);
- Lord Shackleton's lecture at Royal Institute on future of Falkland Islands (Friday).

Northern Ireland

- Anglo-Irish Kinsale gas agreement (today);
- Mr Prior meets Northern Ireland Assembly Committee on prison security (Tuesday).

Industry

- Stock Exchange reform - extraordinary meeting (tomorrow).

Pay

- Waterworkers (today); British Shipbuilders (Wednesday); BP (tomorrow and Shell (Friday) tanker drivers.

Economic Indicators

- Producer price indices (today);
- Money supply; vehicle production (tomorrow);
- Index of industrial production; and new earnings survey (Thursday);
- Index of retail prices; building society figures; and steel production (Friday).



Main Events:

Mr Parkinson interviewed on "Panorama" programme, BBC 1.

Announcement of Anglo/Irish Kinsale gas agreement.

EC Special Budget Council, Athens.

EC Part-Session of European Parliament, Strasbourg: debate on UK 1982 budget rebates.

ODA announces £2m cash grant for Afghan refugees.

Waterworkers' pay talks resume.

New Zealand high-level trade mission begins visit to UK.

New Israeli government ratified.

Aquino assassination inquiry hearings resume, Manila.

LBC Computer Week begins.

British Health Care exhibition and seminar opens, Cairo.

Statistics:

Producer price indices (Sept-prov).

Publications:

Consultative paper on local transport and Metropolitan authorities.
"Long and short courses for teachers" booklet.

Ministers - see Annex.

PRESS DIGEST

Mr Parkinson

- LWT public opinion poll shows nearly two-thirds think Mr Parkinson should stay; 32% think he should resign. Labour nearly closes gap in public opinion poll.
- Mr Parkinson variously seen to be fighting back or about to go.
- D/Star, page 3 - The Pressure Mounts for Parkinson. Chief Whip's soundings, it says, show that, notwithstanding a great deal of sympathy, he must go. Failure to keep his word to marry Miss Keays said to be main argument for resignation.

- Sun, page 1 - Defiant Cecil to ride out scandal. Likely outcome of Chief Whip's soundings - no substantial demand for Mr Parkinson's resignation. But if there is overwhelming evidence of rejection at Blackpool he will quit. Premature resignation would have been unforgiveable slap in face for you.
- Mirror leads on anguish of Mrs Parkinson photographed (as by other papers) going to church alone. And it asks "Will love-tangle Tory quit today?".
- Express, page 2 - Minister stays, insists Maggie. You act firmly and quickly. If Mr Parkinson decides to quit after this it will be seen as a personal slight. Soundings reveal sadness rather than anger.
- Mail, page 1 - As talk grows for him to go Parkinson defies his critics. Cabinet life hanging on thread of your goodwill. Friends claim that politically it would have been easier if he had sought a divorce and married Miss Keays. Mr Parkinson's friends furious reports of criticism are coming from Tories who are not prepared to be named.
- Telegraph, page 1 - Grass root anger over Parkinson; some local officials say Mr Parkinson should resign today. Pym attack adds to Tory unrest. Mr Biffen makes clear opposition to cutting taxes through savings on public expenditure. You and Mr Parkinson still resolute last night and no Conservative of any seniority came out against Mr Parkinson.
- Guardian, page 1 - Tory disarray as blows rain on Thatcher. 'Victory' conference marred by Biffen and Pym attacks, far Right moles and Parkinson affair.
- Times, page 1 - Chance of Parkinson survival dwindling, but paper leads on attempt to stop right wing infiltration and gives more prominence to Cabinet divided on tax reductions.
- Nigel Dempster, D/Mail, says a top Labour Politician is in almost identical situation to Mr Parkinson.

Tory Moles

- Draft report by Young Conservatives on infiltration of party from the Right leaked before party conference. Chairman announces tightening up of candidate selection procedures.
- Harvey Proctor says report is malicious and evil.
- Mirror says racism scandal shakes Tories; Express says Tory "entryism" makes a change but problem seems minor and can be easily dealt with.
- Mail says it is good Young Conservatives have sounded the alarm; even better Mr Gummer has been quick to tighten up vetting procedures.

Speeches

- John Biffen warns that taxes unlikely to be cut before next election (D/Star).
- || Cabinet battle broke into open yesterday when Mr Biffen said he would not be part of economic crusade against public spending to pay for tax cuts; Biffen hauls up rebel flag.
- Mr Pym warns on jobless - dole queues will go on growing even if Government does end slump; Express says Mr Pym is wringing his hands again over favourite spectre - technological mass unemployment. Government should have nothing to do with foolish work sharing schemes. Mail says Mr Pym is over-doing the gloom - does well to challenge complacency but too apocalyptic.
- Express Mori poll rejects less public spending and lower taxes; 2-1 in favour of more spending even if it puts up taxes. Growing number of people rate health service as one of country's most important issues.
- Enoch Powell wishes (on TV) you had been able to digest your victory with more relaxation and greater magnanimity.

Comment:

Guardian says Mr Biffen is right in saying there is no miracle cure for Britain in lower public spending or lower taxation; Christopher Huhne argues that in the absence of more convincing evidence to the contrary, Mr Lawson's spending crisis looks entirely of his own making; Peter Jenkins says Mr Parkinson is involved in Edwardian or Victorian triangle involving honour and he expects his position to become impossible even though it is not the most important political question. You could do with a good conference.

Times says Government does not give collective impression of knowing what to do with its election victory. We need to be told how Government sees task over next 4 years and budgetary and fiscal consequences of various policies. Not only a question of presentation, strategic backcloth seems to be lacking. Call for clarity at Blackpool.

D/Star under heading "Troubled Times for Tories", says Tory Party looks uneasy and uncertain for first time in many months. Some Ministerial performances have looked fumbling and inept but central issue of conference will be welfare policy. At present Government looks to be lacking both compassion and resolution. Country will want to be re-assured this week Government is alive and back in action, not just ticking over.

Sun - Ominously heavy clouds darken conference sky when it ought to have been sunshine all the way. Labour has dramatically closed public opinion poll gap. Trouble with Tories is that having ridden to victory on your petticoat they are too often content to leave you to do it all. It is for Tory conference to demand Government honours its promises.

Mirror - Tories have their own extremists every bit as unpleasant as any group on far Left. As Labour Party moved noisily Left so Tories slithered Right. You have now got your own Militant Tendency.

Express - George Gale says there is no justice in politics. After stunning victory Conservative Party is troubled and uneasy. You find yourself at bay and some think you have aged considerably since election but it may be no more than reaction to election rigours. But you remain central and without you present state of British politics would fly apart. Your behaviour at Blackpool will thus deserve and get the greatest attention. How you look, what you say and way you say it will determine likely content and tone of British politics for next 4 years.

Mail, Paul Johnson, says Tory disarray is really an illusion. It is Labour's troubles which are deep rooted. In electing Kinnock it has preferred rhetoric to change and chosen to believe that its policies are sound and only their presentation needs to be altered. That is road to a third electoral defeat. Paradoxically it is Tories who must brush up presentation. You treat PR as marginal. Mr Parkinson has made task of re-establishing party image of almost insuperable difficulty.

Telegraph says very little fresh information has come to light since Mr Parkinson's statement. Meanwhile, scandal has fed upon itself but no reason to regard this as considered judgement of public opinion which should impel Mr Parkinson out of office. Very eccentric morality that a husband's promise to mistress should take priority over responsibilities to wife and children. Deserves credit for making right choice. Moral argument points to punishment short of resignation; Peter Hordern MP, in leader page article, wants Government to question its very role in some areas if we are ever to reduce public expenditure and taxation; that is after all what it said it would do.

FT under heading "Power without purpose", says your Government needs to reassert itself. Government vulnerable above all to change it has not thought out future of social services and health service. Government should not be surprised if everyone does not believe you when you say "Health Service is safe with us". You need not only to drive but to say where you are going. Your first term brought a welcome change in attitudes. Strategy for second term is still missing.

Politics

- Norman Tebbit to give unions 100 days to cut automatic funding of Labour Party - or legislate.
- Mr Healey to stand for Shadow Cabinet.
- Conservative Bow Group attacks "patchwork" social policy.
- SDP wants tighter control on payments to political parties by unions and companies.
- Times profile of John Selwyn Gummer.

Industry/Economic

- Mail says inflation will nudge 5% on Friday.
- Ford car delivery drivers' strike expected to end today.
- B/Caledonian to decide today whether to place £100m order for Airbus.
- Regional aid will be tied more directly to number of jobs created by projects; says West Midlands will be one of main beneficiaries.
- City expects good news on monthly supply this week; some looking for fall.
- New £2.3m energy saving plan to be announced by Mr Walker.
- NCB's coal stocks cost £100m a year in interest alone.
- FT says Treasury is calling for more cuts in defence, NHS and social spending.
- Sam Brittan canvasses idea of contingency plans for international debt write-off.

Unions

- Phone services disrupted by B/Telecom engineers objecting to privatisation; B/Telecom says it has tremendously improved international services by ordering management to take over disruption.
- Communists trying to persuade Lawrence Daly to stay on as general secretary to block soft Left candidate, Peter Heathfield, Derbyshire.
- BBC row with union over expenses blacks out big golf final; ACAS to set up talks.
- Moderate and Right wing leaders of CPSA launching late effort to persuade members not to affiliate to Labour Party.

Education

- Government-backed research shows that black children do better in grammar schools than in comprehensives.
- Mail says many headmasters at independent schools have changed their minds about discipline and decided to get tough.

Law and Order

- Police raid flat near Buckingham Palace and Irish Embassy and take away "arsenal" of guns and ammunition.
- Clothing of 4 year old Dagenham girl, missing since March, found in Epping Forest.
- Youth killed in high speed chase by car load of thugs when he loses control.
- Muggers in North London slash 20 month old baby's face after taking cash and rings from mother.
- French getting tougher over drinking and driving and bringing law enforcement more into line with ours.

Defence

- Guardian says Bonn Opposition will reject Cruise, Pershing deployment.
- Auditor General, in TV broadcast tonight, says MOD overpaid contracts by £150m over last 2 years - "unintended profits".

Northern Ireland

- Review of security in Belfast and Dublin after scare over safety of wife of Ulster's Lord Chief Justice.
- You are to have a full scale bilateral with Dr Fitzgerald next month.
- New Ireland forum may publish "searing" report on cost of violence on both sides of border before summit.
- Civil Service challenge report into jobs bias in favour of Protestants.

People

- Sir Michael Edwardes and wife to live apart.

International

Afghanistan - Express, which has had a photographer and reporter inside the country for six weeks, says Russians are close to winning by carrying out policy approaching genocide; hopes they will be forced to pull out by pressure of resistance fighters is wildly optimistic; leader says we must never forget Afghanistan - or ignore what Russians are doing there.

Alleged British spy, shot dead by Russians, said to have worked for Gulf Features Services, a mysterious British-owned agency without staff

Korea - Four Cabinet Ministers killed by bomb, plus another 15, in Burma outrage; North Korea accused.

Turkey - Senior Soviet general defects - now giving away Russian missile secrets to USA (Express).

Zimbabwe - Mugabe says that if he doesn't get aid to buy land they will just take white farms.

Iraq - Tells US it plans to use super-Etendards with missiles to end war with Iran; US warships sent to guard Gulf oil link.

Falklands - Argentine raids on Gibraltar and Ascension during war were foiled (Mail).

USA - James Watt, Interior Secretary, resigns.

B. INGHAM

10 October 1983

Ministers

Mr Younger meets Royal Fine Art Commission, Edinburgh.

Mrs Fenner speaks at launch of Tesco's "Food from Britain" campaign and speaks at annual lunch of Maltsters Association.

Mr MacGregor pays fact-finding visit to the Northern region including York, North Yorks and Alnwick.

Lord Belstead pays fact-finding visit to the Midland and Western regions.

Mr Jopling attends EC Special Council, Athens.

Lord Trefgarne meets representatives of the Merchant Navy Officers' Assoc.

Lord Avon attends working lunch with the CBI; and attends Northern Industrialists' dinner, Manchester.

Mr Newton inaugurates Adoption and Fostering Course, Goldsmith's College, University of London.

Lord Elton visits Wandsworth Prison.

Mr Waddington visits the Equal Opportunities Commission.

Michael Ancram meets CBI, Edinburgh.

Mr Stradling Thomas visits Cwmbran Development Corporation.

Mr Rifkind visits European Parliament, Strasbourg.

Mr Channon visits British stand at the International Textile Machinery Association exhibition, Rome.

Mr Ridley attends EC Special Council, Athens.

TV/Radio

'Panorama' - BBC 1: "Which way will she turn?" - examination of the choices facing the Conservative government on the eve of the Conservative Party Conference in Blackpool; includes interview with Mr Parkinson (2010).

'Countdown to Cruise' - BBC Radio 4: examination of the effects of the deployment of Cruise and Pershing missiles in Western Europe; includes interview with Mr Heseltine; Secretary-General, NATO, Dr Joseph Luns; the Supreme Allied Commander, Europe, General Bernard Rogers. (2025-2200).

'World in Action' - ITV (new series): "Watching the Waste go by" - examination of wasteful Whitehall policies and the work of the Public Accounts Committee and Exchequers and Audit Department in monitoring these. (2030).

'The Arabs' - Channel 4: "The making of the Arabs" - first programme in 10-part documentary series on the Arab world. (2100).