

14 February 1985

PRIME MINISTER

MAIN EVENTS

HM The Queen and the Duke of Edinburgh attend premiere of "Ordeal by Innocence" in aid of King George's Fund for Sailors, Haymarket

Prime Minister meets Italian Premier Signor Craxi

Ian Botham appears Scunthorpe Magistrates Court on drug charges

'Phone tapping Bill published

'Politics and Power' conference, Central Hall

STATISTICS

DTI: Car and Commercial vehicle Production (Jan prov)

PUBLICATIONS

MOD: Defence Votes A, 1985/86 (14.30)

DES: HMI reports on the Education Department of Holloway Prison and an FE College in Liverpool

HMT: Spring Supplementary Estimates (14.30)

PAY

DEM: National Bus Co platform grades; (30,944); claim is for £12 per week; 4 per cent has been rejected; settlement date 1.3.85

DEM: Federation of London Bank Employers; (175,000); 11 per cent increase sought by unions; settlement date 1.4.85

PARLIAMENT

Commons

Questions: Agriculture, Fisheries and Food; Treasury; Prime Minister

Business: Representation of the People Bill: Conclusion of Committee Stage
Adjournment Debate
Government Policy on British air transport (Sir E du Cann)

Select Committees:

Lords: Companies Bill (HL))Third Reading
Business Names Bill (HL))
Company Securities (Insider Dealing) Bill (HL))
Companies Consolidation (Consequential Provisions) Bill (HL))
Prosecution of Offences Bill (HL): Report
Redundancy Payments (Variation of Rebates) Order 1985: Motion for Approval

MINISTERS - See Annex

PRESS DIGESTTHE PONTING ROW

- The war of words goes on with your third letter given a good run. Sun says Kinnock now left with little alternative but to make humiliating climbdown.
- Liberal leader says he is satisfied with your explanation.
- Speaker says "I don't believe you" is NOT an unParliamentary expression.
- Sun referring to Islington Labour councillor on the jury remarks "Some vetting. Even Jack the Ripper could have got through that net!". Juror in question says her political opinions did not influence her. Harry Greenway MP wants tighter vetting.
- Mr Heseltine says he has never considered resigning and John Stanley has been criticised quite unjustifiably. National newspapers who have used the word "liar" in this affair referred to Committee of Privileges.
- D/Star says you are so furious you are virtually certain to freeze Mr Kinnock out of confidential affairs of state.
- Sun leads with Michael Heseltine and John Stanley being on holiday when the decision to prosecute was taken; leader says that by virtually calling you a liar Kinnock is not harming you. He has not produced a scrap of evidence for the charge. The damage is to his reputation and to Parliament. A man of stature does not find it difficult to say "Sorry".
(Kinnock)
- Mirror P1 lead - Now will you/say sorry - you spell out your detailed case for your innocence. Labour claiming Kinnock has scored a major victory in eliciting a wealth of significant information. They want you to help public life by saying sorry for disinformation on Belgrano affair during debate on Monday.
- Mirror leader says if you didn't tell the Attorney General to prosecute it was because you didn't need to. Every member of the Government knows what you think about leakers. In this narrow sense Kinnock was wrong to call you in effect a liar. Had the truth been told when it was known none of this need ever have happened.
- Express: Maggie spells it out in Ponting war of words. Kinnock in a tight spot. Appears to demolish his claim that you set out to stage a political trial. Jack Warden, in feature, says there is an evident and growing detestation between you and Kinnock. Your dwindling respect for him is matched only by his frustration dealing with you.
- Mail: Angry Maggie tells Kinnock: This is how it was.. Relations have slumped to a new low of bitterness. Leader sets out the Mail's views on the Belgrano affair and thinks Government was wrong in misleading the Commons over some of the circumstances surrounding the sinking and foolish to prosecute Ponting on S2. You deserve a Parliamentary pasting over their handling of the affair and if Kinnock were more of a heavy-weight he would administer it hemsself instead of sidetracking himself into a slanging match.
- Robin Oakley in Mail says we are back to juvenile gang warfare. There is simply no point of contact between the two of you. Never anything but a growing dislike. Neither of you has emerged with credit.

PONTING ROW (CONT'D)

- Telegraph says you continued your unprecedented letter writing to convince Kinnock and other politicians that you had not been consulted on the decision to prosecute. DPP, in lecture at Preston, says Government Ministers had no time to influence the decision. You are standing by both Mr Heseltine and Mr Stanley.
- Guardian reports it pretty straight, and back page piece says Mr Heseltine wanted a prosecution "but was content to leave the matter to the Law Officers".
- Guardian leader says Kinnock is missing the point and Downing Street is no doubt extremely happy to help him miss. There is no discretion over whether to prosecute leakers. Mr Ponting was, deliberately or not, double crossed and his confession, however gained, proceeded to the Attorney General whose policy was to prosecute each and every possible case. But central point for Monday's debate is when is a lie to Parliament not a lie. Charge against you is that by unswerving dictat you preside over an incompetent, servile and rather seedy administration.
- Times says your 4 page letter last night may "pacify" Kinnock. MPs of all parties are backing a Bill to protect from prosecution civil servants who leak matters of public interest.
- Geoffrey Smith, in Times, says Kinnock is not practising good politics in challenging your word persistently. He is allowing you to fight on territory of your choice.
- Lord Rawlinson, in letter to Times claims Kinnock has also impugned Law Officers and indirectly the DPP. He has known and worked with all DPPs since 1946 and none, least of all the present, would have tolerated political intervention.
- FT leader says there is plenty of material for Mr Kinnock to mount a formidable attack on your administration. But he seems to have dished it by refusing to believe your word. He has reduced major issues to an unseemly brawl.

POLITICS

- Telegraph Gallup Poll shows Conservatives have dropped back to lowest level of support since before Falklands and Alliance is now running neck and neck with Labour - 35/32/31.5.
- Election deposits to be raised to £500 - half original figure as Government seeks compromise.
- Times leader says after 6 years of Conservative rule we are still a deeply subsidised society, and a subsidised society is basically a sick one.

COAL STRIKE

- NUM executive called to TUC tomorrow after talks this week between Willis TUC, and MacGregor.
- Mirror says an agenda for peace is being drawn up and that Peter Walker has made clear he will put no obstacles in the way. Clear Government and Board are backing away from insistence on written assurance.
- Another 258 men abandoned strike yesterday.
- Yorkshire NUM leaders promise to obey a High Court order on picketing of 11 pits.
- Leaked document suggests CEEGB heading for a loss of £2bn because of strike. Sun says it could add £1 a week to electricity bills.
- 2000 miners' jobs at risk because of flooding at Oakdale colliery in South Wales. Express says the men there have a death wish.
- 1m tonnes of coal expected to reach power stations this week.
- Welsh miners demand a national conference because there will soon be more workers than strikers; Guardian says they dropped a peace hint yesterday - area clearly desperate for some signs of a new initiative.
- Police escort first lorry loads of coal from 2 collieries.
- NUJ tribunal to hear complaint against woman Mail on Sunday journalist who infiltrated a cell of miners' wives, including Mrs Scargill, of unethical conduct.
- FT pessimistic about the chance of talks being resumed.

INDUSTRY

- Nearly 2000 shipbuilding redundancies announced yesterday by Vosper Thorneycroft at Southampton and Portsmouth "because of lack of Government orders".
- Loss of 1220 jobs foreshadowed over 5 years due to streamlining of Heinz Wigan factory.
- Express says Government's decision to veto British Gas's £27bn contract for Norwegian gas is extraordinary. Betraying commitment to competition and cheaper energy.
- Frank Chapple, in Mail, says the idea that unions are only being militant because of the way the Government treats them - or that you created Scargill - doesn't wash. This tosh simply flies in the face of history.
- Press walk out of Industry Select Committee when Bernard Conlan MP says "Press tells lies".
- Southern Water Authority increases its charges by 11.4% - say they would have been only 5.2% but for Government.

ECONOMY

- £ down to \$1.0860.
- David Basnett claims Government's attempt to blame unemployment on wages is another of the Government's fantasies.
- Times says rise in manufacturing output largest since 1977.
- BNOC signals Britain's return to world oil pricing system established by OPEC, at cost to it of £50m.

SOCIAL SECURITY REVIEW

- Sun says you backed plan to end benefits for jobless youngsters who refuse to go on training schemes.
- Norman Fowler says Government wants far reaching reforms which would mean cuts in benefits (Express).
- Guardian say 4m face cut in housing benefits of between £1 and £20 a week.

HEALTH/WELFARE

- Sun says health service unions are set to link up with Civil Service and local government unions in battle for more pay.

LOCAL AUTHORITY

- Patrick Jenkin relaxes rate cap limit for 4 councils.

EDUCATION

- D/Star leader on NUT action, asks what it will achieve apart from chaos in homes - nothing to improve their pay settlement. It hopes your confidence in many teachers not striking is well founded.
- Sun leader asks teachers not to strike. If they refuse to face reality about pay they should face harsh reality. If they won't work normally they should be sent home without a penny in pay.
- Mail attacks NUT for not conducting a national ballot - only in areas selected it is presumed, for their militancy - a "duff sample". Let's have a real test of opinion.

LAW AND ORDER

- Short sharp shock treatment for young thugs to be extended from four to all 18 detention centres, Home Secretary announces.
- 8 of Staffordshires 9 Chief Superintendents and deputy Chief Constables retiring before the Budget.
- More than 100,000 parking tickets cancelled by Met in 1983 because of diplomatic immunity.
- Claim that the tv actor, Stacy Keach, in prison for drug smuggling, is being given "Hollywood-style treatment".
- 80 arrested in violence at Sunderland v. Chelsea football match.
- Crooks swindled £20m out of credit card companies last year - more than £1m in rewards paid to shop assistants for fighting fiddlers.

DEFENCE

- Michael Heseltine faces mob of 600 students and CND members protesting about Trident and force cancellation of Glasgow Conservative Students meeting.
- Nimrod faces 2½ year delay.

EC

- Food mountain produced by Britain's farmers alone will cost £1.3bn this year.

MPs criticised by APEX union for not passing on pay rises to their staff.

RSPCA left £1.75m by widow on condition it is used to prosecute cases of cruelty to animals.

PHILLIPINES

- 3 Britons die in hotel fire which kills 27.

MINISTERS (UK VISITS, SPEECHES ETC)

MAFF: Mr Jopling meets Italian Agriculture Minister, Mr Pandolfi, London

MOD: Mr Heseltine meets Spanish Defence Minister

DOE: Mr Jenkin attends NFU dinner, HoC

HO: Mr Brittan attends Press Association lunch

OAL: Lord Gowrie visits Birmingham

MOD: Mr Stanley meets American Arms Control and Disarmament Agency and visits P & O shipping

MOD: Lord Trefgarne visits SAAFA centenary

DEM: Mr Bottomley attends Safety Representatives dinner, London

DEM: Mr Morrison visits the MSC Sheffield (all day)

DOE: Mr Gow visits Hillingdon to present keys of 5000th council house to be sold

DHSS: Mr Clarke attends Royal College of Surgeons Hunterian Festival Banquet, London

DHSS: Mr Whitney visits North Fylde Central Office, Warbreck Hill

WO: Mr Stradling Thomas visits London Docklands

TV AND RADIO

"Plato to NATO"; Radio 4; (20.10); Brian Redhead on modern political thinkers

"TV Eye"; Thames (21.30)

"Question Time"; BBC 1; (22.15); John Selwyn Gummer, George Robinson, Audrey Slaughter, Dipak Nandy
