

28 February 1986

PRIME MINISTER

MAIN EVENTS

Prime Minister meets Vice Chancellor Steger of Austria; later records interview for BBC's 50th anniversary

Home Secretary visits Handsworth and also Birmingham prison

Deadline for bus operators to nominate unsubsidised routes/services

TUC General Council

Burnham panel meets to discuss teachers' pay

Mr Thatcher's appointment to Southern Regional Council for Sport and Recreation announced

STATISTICS

DTI: Company liquidity survey (4th qtr)

DTI: Finished steel consumption and stock changes (4th qtr-prov)

PUBLICATIONS

DTI: "British Business" includes feature on European Regional Development Fund; market report on Switzerland

PAY

DEM: Primary and Secondary School teachers; (459,100); provisional agreement of 6.9% on earnings (8.590 in full year) plus commitment on salary and conditions reforms to be ratified; settlement date 1.4.85

PARLIAMENT

Commons

Business

Business Sponsorship of the Arts (Sir W van Staubenzee)

Social Work Training (Mr A Rowe)

Anti Democratic Movement in West Yorkshire (Mr G Waller)

Adjournment Debate

Housing in Hyndburn (Mr K Hargreaves)

2.
PRESS DIGEST

JOHNSON MATTHEY

- Mail: The political scandal over JMB explodes again after a customs gold bullion swoop. Around £7-and-a-quarter million of gold smuggled into Britain from Switzerland is involved. Investigators believe bogus dealers have defrauded the authorities of about £750,000 in VAT. Allegations that the racket has been going on under the noses of the Bank of England poses questions about the credibility of the clean-up operation.
- Sun: The shock raids were revealed in the House by David Owen, who has been demanding an inquiry into JMB's bullion operations for months.
- Mirror: One of the raids was on the London headquarters of JMB. Neil Kinnock has demanded a Parliamentary statement.
- Express: Dr Owen says the ramifications involve you because you have refused to order an inquiry, and the Chancellor because of his repeated assurances that all is well.

WESTLAND

- Guardian: Sir Robert Armstrong has publicly admonished officials involved in the Westland leak for not consulting their superiors. He is said to have been angry at the way the whole affair was handled by the Government. He will give evidence against next week to the Defence Committee. Requests have also been made for Downing Street and DTI officials to appear.

BL

- Times: There were no signs last night of a change in your view, shared by many colleagues, that GM offers the best solution.
- Telegraph: The House of Lords has ruled that car manufacturers cannot use copyright laws to stop spare part firms copying their components for repairs. BL and other firms are furious about this "pirates charter".
- FT: Reporters talk to BL workers. They fear the company being split and believe that job losses are certain.

MINERS

- Mail: The "astonishing" claim that you and Ian MacGregor planned the miners' strike is to be made in his memoirs, to be published this autumn. The book has been ghosted by Rodney Tyler. You lost your nerve halfway through the strike and only began to relax when Scargill's links with Libya were revealed.
- Leading article examines "Scargill's bottomless pit of blunders".
- Mirror: "Maggie set up pit war, claims boss". We dismiss suggestion as "ludicrous".
- Leading article looks at the situation in the coalfields now and says that a year after the strike the bitterness still remains.
- Express: "Storm over Maggie and MacGregor strike plot". But MacGregor says reports do not represent his views accurately.
- Guardian: "MacGregor says PM panicked during pit strike". Last night you and Mr MacGregor were involved in a furious row.

CABINET RESIGNATION

- Telegraph: Peterborough says another Cabinet Minister is planning to resign - on Budget Day. Associates of Peter Walker deny that it is him.

NORTHERN IRELAND

- Express: Yesterday you warned Ulster Unionists that their planned strike had no chance of altering Government policy.
- Guardian: A shadowy new body called the 1986 Workers' Committee is the force behind the strike.
- Times: The Government has warned Unionists that they are threatening union with Britain
- The province's main manufacturers and trades plan to open normally on Monday and hope their employees will ignore the strike.
- Telegraph: President Reagan yesterday sent Congress a preliminary proposal for a 250m dollar Ulster aid package.
- Power workers have agreed to join the strike.
- FT: "Towards high noon in Northern Ireland". Leading article says nobody expected the Unionist leaders to be repudiated by militants.

NUCLEAR POWER

- Guardian: In what it claims as an exclusive, the paper says that BNFL has rejected a report by consultant engineers which said that the Calder Hall reactor at Sellafield and the Chapel Cross reactor on the Solway Firth have serious design faults which could lead to their collapse. They are in danger of destruction by a minor earth tremor.
- Mail: A film series of British Nuclear Fuels TV commercials aimed at convincing people that nuclear energy is the safest and cleanest way of providing electricity has been banned by the IBA.
- Telegraph: Britain is alone in its waste problem. Some countries have vast national resources and France pay affected communities substantial sums.

BUSINESS

- FT: Systime, Leeds computer group warn that allegations by Liberal MP Michael Meadowcroft about its involvement in illegal actions by US officials could affect its business.

BUDGET

- Sun: Stockbrokers Phillips & Drew have forecast £4bn tax cuts for next year.

UNIVERSITY ATTACKS

- Express: Police mounted a major operation to help John Carlisle beat "campus bully boys". A crowd of about 200 was held back and eggs thrown as he went into Leicester University to give speech on South Africa.

WEST INDIES TEST

- Mail: Former England cricketer, Geoff Boycott, was saved from deportation from Trinidad last night by the intervention of Sir Geoffrey Howe. The Foreign Secretary ordered the High Commissioner to mount a rescue operation after Boycott and a Guardian reporter were refused entry to Trinidad because they had no work permits. Boycott's South African links were thought to be the reason for the action.
- Star: If the England side feel in danger they are almost certain to leave Trinidad.
- Express: "Bring them home!" The cricket authorities should cancel the tour before we are further humiliated.

LORD HAILSHAM

- Mail: Lord Hailsham, 78, is to marry Miss Deirdre Shannon, 57, his former legal secretary. It will be his third marriage.

ROYAL FAMILY

- Mail: The Princess of Wales visited Brixton yesterday.
- Formal and informal portraits of the Queen will appear on two stamps to mark her 60th birthday on 21 April.

UNEMPLOYMENT

- Mail: Leader says that, disappointingly, the long-term jobless trend still seems to be on the up. But the picture is not all gloom. With the economy expanding faster than anywhere else in the EEC, productivity rising and union power waning, we are well placed for the future.
- Star: "Joy as jobless total tumbles".
- Mirror: "Gloom over dole queue". John Prescott says Lord Young is to unemployment figures what President Marcos is to election results.
- Express: "Jobless total falls but the outlook is gloomy".

REGIONS

- Guardian: Regional policy is more effective than conventional wisdom suggests and can claim credit for creating 630,000 jobs, says DTI research.

POLITICS

- Left wing MPs led by Tony Benn last night, in defiance of Mr Kinnock, introduced a Bill demanding a full review of the cases against all miners jailed in the strike, with free pardons for most.

EDUCATION

- Guardian: The teachers' settlement hangs in the balance as employers try to get assurances from the unions that their members will resume working exactly as they did before the dispute. Some teachers might not return to doing voluntary duties.
- Leader criticises NUT intransigences.

RETIREMENT

- Mail: The Government looks set to change its new Bill ending sex discrimination by agreeing to a common retirement age for men and women. But it will be left to individual industries and professions to agree the age. The qualification age for a state pension will not be affected.
- Sun: Leader says that allowing women to retire at the same age as men would be a sensible idea but it should not be forced on us by "a pack of foreigners".

UNIONS

- Mail: Moderate Labour MP John Golding has won the election to become General Secretary of the 160,000 strong National Communications Union. He defeated his Militant opponent by 22,000 votes.

LAW AND ORDER

- Mail: The police inspector who shot Mrs Cherry Groce last September in an incident which sparked the Brixton riots has been charged with unlawful wounding.
- An inquiry headed by Julius Silverman, has concluded that, contrary to police views, plastic bullets could not have been used effectively in the Handsworth riots.
- Star: The inquiry blamed unemployment as the main cause of the riots.
- Mirror: Three teenagers were beaten up by "bully boy" police in Northampton in an attack almost identical to the Holloway scandal. Four officers have been charged.

MILITANT

- Mail: Labour Party members in Liverpool last night voted to defy the NEC decision to expel 16 Militants.

LIBYA

- Mail: Colonel Gaddafi is to be sent a rates bill for nearly £200,000 for the former People's Bureau in London. Iraq also owes £140,000.

COLD WEATHER PAYMENTS

- Mail: Norman Fowler last night issued an order to local DHSS managers to give top priority to making cold weather payments. New publicity material will be issued.
- Sun: Hospitals in Berkshire and Surrey are forced to close their doors because of a flood of elderly people suffering from chest infections and hypothermia.
- Express: "Heating aid pledge as two women die in big freeze horror".

WELFARE

- Guardian: Government initiatives to stop fraud are frightening some innocent people off the benefits register, according to Civil Service unions.

AIDS

- Guardian: A secret Government decision to exclude TV and homosexual magazines from a £6m information campaign on AIDS has led to disputes among advisers.

ROAD ACCIDENTS

- Mail: Dogs cause more than 54,000 road accidents a year at a cost to the nation of £33m, according to Manchester University researchers who have called for legislation to stop strays.

DEFENCE

- Express: Leader says it would be nice to think that the £882m NIMROD "farce" had led to one or two Whitehall types being punished for not spotting early warning signs of disaster.
- Times: Leader says nobody monitored the project's progress with an eagle eye. The system needs tightening.

EEC

- Guardian: Danes vote 56.2 per cent in favour and 43.8 per cent against EEC reforms.

EGYPT

- Telegraph: 2000 police held in Cairo after 36 deaths. City is calmer now.

JIM COE

MINISTERS (UK VISITS, SPEECHES ETC)

- DEM: Lord Young makes regional visit to Southsea and Portsmouth
- DEM: Mr Clarke visits Leicester (inner city programme)
- DEN: Mr Walker meets Austrian Vice-Chancellor Steger, London
- HO: Mr Hurd visits Handsworth followed by visit to Birmingham prison
- DTI: Mr Channon meets Italian Ambassador; attends Board of Trade bi-centenary reception, London
- WO: Mr Edwards hosts St David's Day reception, London
- MOD: Lord Trefgarne visits Rosyth Docklands
- DEN: Mr Buchanan-Smith opens new Hunphreys & Glasgow Ltd Building, Aberdeen
- DOE: Mr Patten opens Bowey Homes Estate, Newcastle; lunches with Newcastle Gateshead Water Authority
- DOE: Sir George Young addresses Association of Residential Letting Agents
- ODA: Mr Raison addresses University of Bristol political society on development
- SO: Mr Stewart visits BAUTIEL Engineering, Newtownmearns
- SO: Mr Ancram meets CBI on rates reform, Edinburgh
- DTI: Mr Howard visits north west
- DTI: Mr Morrison visits south west
- DTI: Lord Lucas meets Vice-Chancellor Steger of Austria
- WO: Mr Robinson attends St David's Day dinner, BSC, Newport

TV AND RADIO

- "Brian Hayes"; LBC Radio (10.00): With Lady Olga Maitland
- "Pillars of Society"; BBC Radio 4 (11.00): Repeat of Thursday's programme
- "A Question of Economics"; Channel 4 (14.30): Looks at ways to give status to the unemployed
- "A Week in Politics"; Channel 4 (20.15): Includes report on the Progressive Democratic Party in the Irish Republic
- "Law in Action"; BBC Radio 4 (20.20): Joshua Rozenburg presents legal issues
- "Any Questions?"; BBC Radio 4 (20.45): With Chris Patten, David Blunkett, Margaret Clay, Ned Sherrin

PRIME MINISTER

HIGHLIGHTS

Weekend

Northern Ireland, JMB, teachers and the retirement age are likely to be prominent in the weekend media. Abroad, the Philippines will continue to be a dominant story.

Mr Hurd addresses the local government conference at Wembley on Saturday, and on the same day BBC TV transmit the first episode of "The Collectors", a drama series about staff at a south coast Customs House.

On Sunday, Mr Heseltine appears on "Weekend World", Mr Baker on "This Week, Next Week", Mr Powell on "Face the Press", and Mr Prior on "My Britain".

Main Events

Monday sees the one-day strike in Northern Ireland. The book "The Thatcher Phenomenon" is launched. Tuesday is the deadline for firm bids for BL Trucks and Land Rover; and Austin Rover workers lobby Parliament. The Today newspaper is launched. On Wednesday you receive President Momoh of Sierra Leone; and you attend the Airey Neave Memorial Trust Reception, and then the Greater London Area Council AGM. On Thursday the Criminal Justice White Paper is published; you meet the National Pensioners' Convention; and the World Conference of General Motors Union Leaders opens in Liverpool with an emergency debate on BL. On Friday you give an interview to Good Housekeeping; and Sir Keith Joseph attends the National Association of Head Teachers' Conference, Oxford.

Parliament

The major debates next week are those on Wapping (Monday) and on the plight of the elderly (an Opposition Day debate on Thursday).

Other business includes a debate on the European Community (Wednesday), on drugs (Thursday), and on the closure of Bates colliery (Friday).

Other Events

Monday: Lady Young attends the Council of Europe Ministerial Conference on equality between men and women. The TCSC hears evidence from Treasury officials on EC budgetary discipline.

'World in Action' questions the Government's method of selling off B Tel.

- Tuesday: The UK foreign exchange reserves are published. Sir Geoffrey Howe addresses the Institute of Directors. Mr Waldegrave attends the Pollution Technology Awards scheme. The Trade and Industry Committee hears evidence on the tin crisis from Mr Alan Clarke.
- Wednesday: The NEDC meets. Mr Trippier makes presentation to winners of Young Persons in Industry Awards. Sir George Young opens and concludes joint DOE/DHSS seminar on the elderly "Staying at Home". Various committee hearings: Trade and Industry (Mr Heseltine); Defence (to be announced); Energy (the UDM); Employment (the MSC); the PAC (the Lord Chancellor's Department, on legal aid).
- Thursday: The Balance of Payments (1985 Q4) published. Sir Geoffrey Howe appears on "Question Time".
- Friday: Sir Geoffrey Howe visits Scotland. Mr Edwards begins a visit to Korea and Japan.

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