

PRIME MINISTER

MAIN EVENTS

Prime Minister attends International Conference of Ministers on Drugs Misuse reception, London

Mr Channon, Trade & Industry Secretary gives evidence to Trade and Industry Select Committee on Westland plc

NACODS overtime ballot result expected

Lobby of Parliament on youth opportunities (approx 1,000 people expected)

Customs Officers continue strike at Heathrow

Conference on updating in the professions, Reading University

National Union of Insurance Workers annual conference, Hastings (to March 20)

STATISTICS

DEM: Average earnings indices (Jan-prov) employment, hours and unit wage costs (11.30)

PUBLICATIONS

HOC: 1st Report Environment Select Committee - radioactive waste - Vol 3 - appendices (11.00)

HOC: 17th Report Committee of Public Accounts, vocational education and training (HC 46, 1985-86) (NOON)

PAY

DEM: HNS RHA and district works staff; (7,300); substantial pay increase sought; settlement dates 1.4 and 1.7.86

PARLIAMENT

Commons

Questions: Environment; Scotland

Business: 10 Minute Rule Bill: Opportunities for Young People (Mr D Steel)
Budget Day (2nd Day)
Adjournment Debate
Unemployment in Wentworth (Mr P Hardy)

PARLIAMENT (Cont'd)

Select Committees: SELECT COMMITTEE ON THE ARMED FORCES BILL

Subject: To be announced

Witness: To be announced

DEFENCE

Subject: The defence implications of the future of Westland plc

Witness: Mr William Paul, President and Chief Executive Officer, United Technologies Corporation - Sikorsky Aircraft

TRADE AND INDUSTRY

Subject: Westland plc

Witnesses: Representatives from British Aerospace; Mr A E Bristow (at approximately 11.30 am)

ENERGY

Subject: The Coal Industry

Witnesses: Lord Marshall of Goring and officials from the Central Electricity Generating Board

SOCIAL SERVICES

Subject: Prison Medical Services

Witness: Department of Health and Social Security

TRANSPORT

Subject: Financing of Rail Services

Witness: Department of Transport

TRADE AND INDUSTRY

Subject: Westland plc

Witness: Rt Hon Paul Channon MP, Secretary of State for Trade and Industry

Lords

Debate on the needs of voluntary organisations following the abolition of the GLC and Metropolitan Counties.

UQ on promotion of employee involvement

MINISTERS - See Annex

PRESS DIGEST

Britain expectant of engagement announcement from the Palace this morning.

BUDGET

- Odds on Conservatives to win next election after Budget - price hardens from evens.
 - Welcomed by industry; predictable criticism from unions.
 - David Owen says it is a Budget for the South rather than the North.
 - Michael Heseltine complains that Budget does not help the unemployed.
 - But the test is seen/coming today: will it give confidence to cut interest rates
 - Shell say they will pass on all tax increase to motorist.
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- D/Star P1 lead: What a drag! Nigel takes it out on smokers. But many Tory MPs declare it a brave Budget and makes it clear a U-turn is not in your vocabulary - big disappointment was action on jobs.
 - Leader says "Maggie is still playing it her way". Whatever you think of this Government it sticks to its guns and critics had better accept they are blowing in the wind; otherwise Budget a bit of a bore and certainly nothing to merit a standing ovation.
 - Sun P1 lead: "Hic-hic Hooray" - a penny off income tax and booze is untouched. Britain said cheers last night to Chancellor after a Budget bursting with something for everyone. Central feature on Budget proclaims 1986 will be a vintage year for Britain with the best news on inflation since Dad was a lad.
 - Leader - Chancellor demonstrated he is once more a past master of balancing the books. Imaginative scheme to encourage spread of share ownership deserves warm support. But we have to look in vain for a full blooded assault on the record heights of unemployment which could have been accomplished had State spending been reduced rather than contained.
 - Mirror P1 lead a somewhat disparaging "Nigel spends a penny". An almost empty Budget. However, inside it says it was a Budget of bribes wowing the Tories with a 1p off income tax and wooing the voters as drinkers and motorists.
 - Leader - A little and large Budget. Little for the unemployed but large bribes in time for next election. Jobbers in City of London will lose it. Jobless won't. You are saving up the goodies for next year. Meanwhile Budget won't help to get people back to work.

BUDGET (CONT'D)

- Today P1 lead: "Still two nations" - something for everyone but almost nothing to make inroads into the dole queues. Inside - The boom and the gloom. Bosses are pleased but unions find little to cheer about.
- Leader - Profoundly disappointing. Threw away chance to go for job creating growth. Brutal truth is that there are likely to be more out of work by the next Budget. He is clearing the ground for a general election and his next Budget will cut taxes handsomely. But he will never make his brand of capitalism popular if he doesn't deliver jobs.
- Express P1 lead: "Three cheers for Lawson - a big boost for enterprise". Bold, imaginative. Brought hope for young jobless. Springboard to the future. Tory delight as Nifty Nigel sees way ahead. Fuels hopes of general election victory. City Page says in City terms it was an excellent Budget.
- Leader: Enterprising, brave and confident. Every measure designed to advance personal responsibility and initiative. Budget '86 is sound, safe and optimistic. The Budget of '87 should be a momentous one indeed.
- Mail P1 lead: Lawson shares it out in the good news Budget. Ingeniously turned a marking time Budget into a mini-triumph. Budget aimed above all at the £140-a-week purse. City ecstatic. But fears foreign sports and stage stars will boycott Britain because of new tax.
- Leader: One thing Mr Lawson and British economy have in common right now; plenty of bounce. He could not have taken £5bn loss of revenue on the chin if after 6½ years of stewardship nation's finances and country's recovery were not real and resilient. A healthy mix of the acquisition and benevolent in the Budget. But not enough to alleviate unemployment. After 3 Budgets, however, he conveys increasing authority as Chancellor and has come of age as a politician.
- Andrew Alexander describes it as a mixture of sense and popular capitalism.
- Telegraph P1: Lawson cuts income tax. Boom ahead prediction cheers Tory MPs. Political correspondent writes of hopes of a 4p tax cut next time. £150m a year bonanza for charities. About 550,000 more people will pay no income tax at all as a result of changes. City Page says it is a Budget for next year's tax cuts and a basic rate of 25% in what should be election year is a real possibility.
- Leader: "Ingenious" best sums up majority verdict of Tory MPs. But he may prove optimistic about exports and buoyancy of non-oil revenues. This is where judgment may be hazardous. But the competition to lend money grows daily more intense and the revived target for money growth must suggest a strikingly relaxed approach to credit. Sooner or later that points to faster rising prices.
- Guardian P1 lead: Pennyworth of jam from Lawson. Budget holding operation to rally troops. Political correspondent says the tax cut signals that the Cabinet majority sceptical of his emphasis on direct tax reduction has a fight on its hands. Hugo Young says the Budget shows that Conservatism still marches to the tax cutters' drum. Thatcherism has not been transformed with the creed of public spenders and job subsidisers.

BUDGET (CONT'D)

- Guardian leader; helped by tighter security over leaks, the Chancellor was able to pull some rabbits out of the hat and lay foundations for a bumper election Budget next year. Much to commend among the measures and in political terms a clever formula - jam today and more tomorrow. But it is not election winning in the sense of providing anything to cure rampant unemployment beyond cosmetic job schemes. And it did not begin to address the grim and growing legacy of problems in infrastructure, housing, manufacturing, investment, technological base and unemployed.
- Times P1 : Pep for people's capitalism. Tories pleased as Chancellor sows Budget surprises. General verdict he did well within limited scope.
- Leader headed "A People's Budget" says Chancellor has used his opportunity well. Managed to turn popular capitalism from slogan to tax reality. A politically skilful mix of small measures. Deserves its reception as a Budget for enterprise. And in a vital sense it is the Government's policy for jobs as well.
- Times leader on Green Paper says the overwhelmingly simple argument for transferable allowances is that it leaves married couples free to choose how to arrange their affairs.
- FT: Tax concessions to create "a popular capitalism". Hopes raised on early interest rate cut.
- Leader: Not so much a curate's egg as a Chinese meal of a Budget, with some tempting flavours, some less so and unlikely to satisfy the appetite. Three groups will be less happy - poor (who get nothing at all), professional economists and financiers.
- Sam Brittan finds the two best things the proposals to boost profit sharing and the reform of personal taxation. The worst aspect is the waste of £1bn to reduce the basic rate instead of pricing people into jobs. And he strongly advocates membership of EMS.

GCHQ

- Government portrayed as climbing down - Foreign Secretary says sacking threat for those defying terms and conditions of employment has been lifted.
- But some could face disciplinary action.

MEDIA

- Sun leader on last Saturday's violent demo at Wapping says Brenda Dean thinks it was a disgraceful affair; but who is her guilty party - why the police! She is supposed to be one of the sensible union bosses. Imagine what the worst must be like.
- Maxwell sacks 220 Scottish journalists.
- Today read by 6.6% of population in its first week (6.5% for Daily Telegraph).

RAPE

- Merseyside vicar accused of assaulting boy is to face private prosecution - thanks to Geoffrey Dickens MP, according to organiser of Campaign for Law and Order.
- But father of doctor Mr Dickens named as raping 8 year old girl says Mr Dickens should be shot; is only after publicity.
- Today says Dickens was rightly criticised for revealing one name and rightly stopped from revealing another. If Parliamentary privilege is abused its very existence will be threatened.
- Lynda Lee Potter, in Mail, finds Mr Dickens' self satisfied oily glibness on television quite awful - relishing every moment.
- Julian Critchley MP says Mr Dickens is by no means the sole offender in misusing Parliamentary privilege.

BL

- Today says management buyout moves a step closer with rumours that GM takeover is close to collapse.
- BL failed to decide which bid it preferred at yesterday's board meeting.
- Geoffrey Smith, in Times, says if Britain adopts a reflex resistance whenever American ownership of a significant British company is contemplated, it will help to exclude this country from the development of the global economy. True patriotism today is to consider each proposition without emotion on its merits.

INDUSTRY

- School cruise ship Uganda, which took part in Falklands, looks to be heading for scrapyard.
- Guardian leader on TUC conference on future industrial relations law says the tide may be turning for the unions and it is the job of the conference to channel that tide. Demands which do not take account of public opinion which wants strike ballots and democratic elections and unions accountable at law will not be acceptable to Labour's leadership.
- British trawler company, J Marr, Hull, has chartered 10 Japanese vessels to fish within 200 mile zone in Falklands.
- Exploratory drilling for nuclear waste sites could start in May, according to Nirex.

HEALTH/WELFARE

- Detectives called in to investigate abortion at Croydon after which baby of 20 weeks was seen kicking vigorously and breathing. Test case?

LAW AND ORDER

- Today says Ian Botham, cricketer, is at the centre of a police investigation into the possible misuse of drugs during his charity walk across Britain.

NORTHERN IRELAND

- Soldier killed, and another injured, in booby trap explosion in Co Down.
- Times leader says current US law makes America a haven for Irish gunmen. The love of Congressmen for Ireland will be shown in the expedition with which they move to change it.

SPORT

- Question as to whether boxing should be stopped after death of 12th boxer since war, examined by press. Today is against stopping it - vast majority of boxers remain perfectly healthy during and after their careers. But Express writer says it is time to count boxing out for good.

FRANCE

- Chirac looks like becoming Prime Minister.

LIBYA

- 32 year-old British man, held tax hostage for 2 years, released and returns home.

CYPRUS

- John Dickie says the Prime Minister is at the centre of a Big Power push to have Cyprus re-united.

SWEDEN

- Police uncertain whether they have enough evidence to convict alleged assassin of Olof Palme.

EC

- Commission claims budget economies will cut spending in areas which benefit UK most - eg regional aid.

UN

- Miss Margaret Anstee, Briton, tipped as new head of World Food Council.

BERNARD INGHAM

MINISTERS (UK VISITS, SPEECHES ETC)

DEN: Mr Walker opens Stone International factory; visits NCB Enterprise exhibition, Sherwood

HO: Mr Hurd hosts lunch for Zambian Home Affairs Minister

DHSS: Mr Fowler, Mr Hayhoe and Mr Whitney attend conference on drug misuse, Lancaster House

DTI: Mr Channon addresses Japan Association, London

MAFF: Mr Gummer visits Midlands and Western region (to March 20)

DEM: Mr Trippier visits British Youth Council, London; visits Basingstoke

DEM: Mr Lang addresses CBI Conference, London

DOE: Mr Waldegrave and Mrs Rumbold in bilateral talks with Norwegian Environment Minister, Mrs Surlien

DOE: Mr Tracey meets Tobacco Advisory Council over renegotiation of tobacco sponsorship agreement, London

DHSS: Lady Trumpington visits Harlesden Social Security local office, London; later tours/speaks Norfolk Children's projects IT facility, Norwich

SO: Mr Ancram meets Admiral Stacey to discuss oil pollution in Scotland; later meets Norwegian Environment Minister

SO: Mr Stewart opens annual conference of Paper Industry Technical Association Edinburgh; later attends annual meeting with North of Scotland Hydro Electric Board, Edinburgh

SO: Lord Gray hosts dinner for Danish Parliamentarians, Edinburgh Castle

SO: Mr MacKay attends Conference of Health Ministers, London

DTI: Mr Clark lunches with Vice-Chairman of Barclays Bank; meets Polish Ambassador

DTI: Mr Pattie attends Patent Office 'open day'; host seminar "Civil Spin-off from the SDI programme"; addresses Copinger Society dinner, London

DTI: Mr Howard lunches with American Banks Association of London

DTI: Mr Morrison addresses Envelope Makers and Manufacturing Stationers Association, London

DTI: Mr Butcher visits Grant Micro Ltd, Hampshire

DTP: Lord Caithness visits Blyth

DTP: Mr Mitchell visits Bradford

DTP: Mr Spicer addresses American Chamber of Commerce (UK) lunch, London

MINISTERS (OVERSEAS VISITS)

MOD: Mr Younger attends Nuclear Planning Group, Wurzburg

TV AND RADIO

"Money Box Budget Call"; BBC Radio 4 (09.05): Listeners discuss the Budget with the Money Box team

"File on 4" BBC Radio 4 (16.05): Repeat of Tuesday's programme

"Out of Court"; BBC 2 (19.30): Examines divorce cases and arguments over access arrangements

"All Our Working Lives"; BBC 2 (20.00): Reviews the electronics revolution

"Analysis"; BBC Radio 4 (20.15): 'Shoot-out at Tombstone Gulch' looks ahead to the abolition of the metropolitan local authorities

"Diverse Reports"; Channel 4 (20.30): Asks 'Does our way of paying dentists mean they need us more than we need them?'

"The Budget"; BBC 1 (21.30); ITV (22.30); BBC Radio 4 (22.40); BBC 2 (22.45): Statement by the Rt Hon Roy Hattersley

"Back in the USSR"; BBC 2 (22.15): Preview of feature film "White Nights" includes ballet dancer Mikhail Baryshnikov talking about why he defected from the USSR 10 years ago