

23 September 1986

PRIME MINISTER

PRESS DIGEST

PARTY CONFERENCES

- Sun: More than 50 constituency parties have tabled motions critical of the Government for failing to get its message across to voters. This demonstrates Tory pre-election jitters.
  - Mail: A blistering attack by Tory rank and file on the party image, the schools, crime and unemployment is brewing for the Bournemouth conference.
  - Today: Next month you will face the most jittery gathering of Tory faithful since before the Falklands war.
  - Police are being given unprecedented powers to prevent a terrorist attack at the conference.
  - Education will be the most controversial issue at the conference.
  - Times: "Education to top Tories' agenda".
- 
- Liberals to back David Steel's limited support for nuclear weapons.
  - Express: Delegates refused to give David Owen a standing ovation. The defence rift has been laid bare.
  - Liberal Party president-elect, Des Wilson says there is more than a hint of corruption in the Conservative regime.
  - "Back-the-bomb" Owen drives in the wedge".
  - Star: "Owen soothes the Liberals".
  - Mirror: "Steel set for Nuke victory".
  - Today: "Owen fails to win peace on defence".
  - Telegraph: "Steel set for victory on defence".
  - The Liberals have committed themselves to reducing unemployment to 2m.
  - Leader says Dr Owen set a standard of analysis on the nuclear issue that others must now try to match.

PARTY CONFERENCES (CONT'D)

- Neil Kinnock's favourite for the job of Britain's first Minister for Women - Joan Lester - seems certain to get the support of the powerful transport union at the party conference.

ARMS TALKS

- Sun: President Reagan has said he is willing to postpone for 7 years the 'Star Wars' system if Russia makes concessions on missile sites.
- Mail: Gorbachev is ready to have Russia and the US both cut their atomic warheads to 100 each in Europe.
- Mirror: Leader says of the troop movements agreement: "For the first time the nations of Europe - with America - have taken a real step towards peace."
- Telegraph: Leader says the Stockholm Agreement augers well for further progress on arms control.
- Times: The Soviet Union last night attacked President Reagan's proposals. He was clinging to outdated forms of political thinking and looking to unilateral advantage for the US.

DRUGS

- Express: Douglas Hurd yesterday announced that 37 new officers will boost the Central Drugs Squad at the end of this month, when stiffer penalties for drug trafficking come into force.
- Mail: A senior Scotland Yard officer says a network of billionaires are controlling the world sales of drugs. Britain's drugs problem is just beginning to explode.
- Star: 'Cocaine barons set for coup in Britain'.
- Mirror: One in three of Britain's top firms will soon be giving their workers advice and treatment for drug addiction, says the CBI.
- Today: Government action cannot save Britain from a lethal tide of cocaine, David Mellor warned yesterday. Only a small proportion of the drugs starting to flood across the Atlantic can be stopped.
- Telegraph: "£600m drug menace to Britain".

LAW AND ORDER

- Star: The Government has ordered a major inquiry into deaths and injuries caused by police car chases.
- One of the ringleaders of the latest violence at Bradford's soccer stadium was a wealthy Swedish fan. He was jailed for a month.
- Today: The Football League has kicked Luton Town out of its competition because of the club's ban on visiting fans.
- The new Crown Prosecution Service faces an acute staffing crisis with only seven days to its launch.

HEALTH/WELFARE

- Mirror: More shock-horror from the NHS - this time about long waiting lists.
- Today: Leader, referring to report by the National Children's Home charity, says that unemployment hits not only the unemployed but also the family and friends of those without a job. Up to 10m people may be affected. It is Britain's greatest social problem.
- Telegraph: Hospital pharmacists are to be given rises of up to 25% to try to stem the flow from the NHS to high street chemists.
- Citizens' Advice Bureaux are reporting a disturbing increase in personal debt problems caused by easy credit.
- Times: Hospitals are unable to fill research posts as scientists go overseas.
- Cabinet ministers are to be urged by civil servants to initiate discussions with our EEC partners on the introduction of international health checks for people suspected of carrying the aids virus.
- Leader supports aids tests for foreigners.
- Guardian: Leader says if tests are to be carried out they should apply to all countries not just to a selected few.

DEFENCE

- Express: GEC says its Nimrod project is now on course for success. It can at last tell a cruise missile from a speeding lorry.
- India plans to buy eight more Sea Harriers.
- Norway barred US F1-11 bombers from taking part in last weekend's NATO exercises.
- Times: French officials have been looking at the Nimrod system as an alternative to Boing's AWACs.

EDUCATION

- Mail: Leader says education is now recognised as being the top item in the political agenda. Urgent reforms are needed.
- A Select Committee report on education published yesterday is highly critical of Britain's system. In particular, it wants a big shake-up in primary schools.
- The Committee's report says primary schools need 15,000 extra teachers.

EDUCATION (Cont'd)

- Times: Mr Baker is expected to tighten up the law next month to control the way homosexuality is portrayed in schools.

ECONOMY

- Telegraph: A report that European governments are to ask America to cooperate on exchange rates lifted the dollar against sterling and other currencies yesterday.

INDUSTRY

- Sun: Executives of Austin Rover, Vauxhall and Ford, in secret talks with Paul Channon, have told him that the Nissan plant will result in thousands of job losses.
- Express: Graham Day is about to announce a massive management shake-up.
- Telegraph: Dover will become a ghost town if the Channel Tunnel is built, petitioners told the Commons Select Committee on the Channel Tunnel Bill yesterday.
- Telegraph: A new approach to Honda to help ensure the survival of the Rover Group is being considered by Graham Day. Honda may take over part of the Cowley complex.
- Holiday Inn is having such difficulty filling vacancies in its British hotels that it may soon start recruiting on the continent.
- Japan accepts criticism of trade policy following launch of new GATT round. Paul Channon sees it as a major step forward (FT).
- B/Aerospace publicly endorses Nimrod airborne early warning system, reports FT.
- Massey Ferguson to shed 150 staff at Coventry plant (FT).
- Business Expansion Scheme benefits concentrated in South East according to Inland Revenue statistics, says FT.

POLITICS

- Sun: Leader highly critical of Jim Prior's attack on you.
- Express: Mr Tebbit also hits out at Prior.
- Today: Senior people in Conservative Central Office are quietly terrified that you may become the first Prime Minister to lose your seat in an election. A major investigation into the views of Finchley voters has been launched.
- Times: A full page (P10) article by Robert Kilroy-Silk includes references to a meeting he had with you at your room in the House on 26 March last year. He says you decided to meet some of his Knowsley constituents and the visit was of enormous propaganda value to Labour.
- Guardian: Michael Meacher says Labour will not be rushed into unrealistic spending programme if it wins the general election.
- The list of Tory MPs who have announced they will not stand at the election has now topped 30.

CITY

- Mirror: Black market spivs are hoping to make a killing out of the TSB sale. They are offering £350 each for priority application forms which have been given to the bank's customers.
- Today: Several major investment institutions could be planning to say "no" to the TSB because they believe they will only receive paltry numbers of shares.

"WOMAN" INTERVIEW

- Sun, quoting from advance excerpts of your interview with "Woman" magazine, the paper says the Brighton bombing left you terrified of the dark.
- Express says you want to be a Grandma.

LEBANON

- Sun: Hundreds of Israeli troops have gathered along the northern border with Lebanon. Defence Minister, Shamir, has warned of retaliation against guerillas.

HOUSING

- Today: The boom in house prices appears to be slowing down - except for the south east - according to the Royal Institute of Chartered Surveyors.

PLANNING

- Nuffield Foundation report calls for clearer planning guidelines on national issues such as housing development, airports, transport and industry (FT).

SOUTH AFRICA

- Telegraph: The South African Cabinet is expected to decide tomorrow whether to hold an early general election on November 26.

IMMIGRATION

- Telegraph: A new visa system to be introduced later this year to tighten up immigration controls is already beginning to cause serious problems for officials at Heathrow as people from several countries try to beat the deadline.

JIM COE