

7 January 1987

PRIME MINISTER

PRESS DICEST

YOUR BROADCAST

- Star: Maggie rules out a Spring poll.
- Sun: Mrs T's big hate - hung Parliaments.
- Mirror: Poll fever curb; you dismiss North-South divide.
- Today P1: I'm in no hurry for poll, says Maggie.
- Express - big piece on P2. Our Britain is free and fair; Maggie tells phone-in of Tory triumph.
- Mail P2: Maggie dampens poll fever.
- Telegraph leads with story linking rapid rise in living standards - biggest quarterly jump since you came to office with your damping speculation of early election.
- Guardian back page: "Thatcher rejects early dash to polls".
- Times P1: "Thatcher cool on spring election". You also spoke of your hatred for hung Parliaments or coalition government, while being careful to leave open the possibility of being involved in a coalition pact should the Conservatives fail to get an overall majority.
- FT: You dampen election fever and make clear your dislike for coalition government.
- Independent: P1: Thatcher cool over election fever. You poured cold water on speculation about a spring general election.

POLITICS

- Express says Kinnock looks set for more punishment on his return to the USA next month.
- Shultz should strap himself securely into his pram - out of which Kinnock said he had fallen last time - since Kinnock's ideas have not improved in the interim.
- John Vincent says the thought that the Ulster Unionists might make or break a minority Government is a powerful argument for giving an outright majority to one of the big parties.
- Today leader on the "reality" which is more complex than is conveyed by the simple images of Hattersley as Robin Hood and Nigel Lawson as Scrooge. Recent tax cuts have had the unexpected consequence of producing more revenue, which puts a rather different light on Hattersley's strategy.
- Paul Johnson, in Telegraph series, says lower tax rates are essential if we are not to lose the best and brightest to our competitors but this is not enough; all aspects of British life and culture must be exposed to the discipline of the market.
- Times: In a letter to constituents, Michael Meacher makes "astonishing" allegations that your Government has deliberately connived in making Britain a humiliated subordinate of the United States. Among his claims: the CIA places agents in the MoD ostensibly to prevent our supplying arms to Eastern bloc countries but in reality to spy on British companies. Other senior Labour figures have distanced themselves from his claims.
- The Alliance is in turmoil over its attempt to put together a team of joint spokesmen for the election campaign.
- Labour plans to use today's meeting of the Shadow Cabinet to burst the Government's "bubble" of optimism about the economy.
- Independent: British Communist Party is at a watershed and its survival a matter for speculation; leader says Labour's policies lack depth.

MEDIA

- Independent: Growing hostility between Labour leader and Fleet Street has confirmed Kinnock's advisers' view that he must campaign on television to overcome a bad press in the forthcoming election. Feature concludes that Conservatives also working out a strategy to exploit the symbiotic relationship between newspapers and television.

ECONOMY

- FT: Seniro Italian Ministers are considering using the slogan "We are overtaking the English to become the Western world's fifth economic power".
- FT: CSO figures released yesterday show living standards rise as profits begin to recover.
- FT: British manufacturing industry's cost performance has "improved dramatically" over the past year and unit labour costs may show no growth at all in 1987 says leading London securities house.

INDUSTRY

- Top directors of Burtons seek shareholder approval for share option schemes worth 8 times their salaries - one, Sir Ralph Halpern, already earns £1m.
- Telegraph reports that Cornish tin miners who lost their jobs when mines closed have almost without exception found jobs elsewhere in Britain or abroad.
- Guardian says report shows Restart programme for long term unemployed is finding jobs for less than 1% of those counselled.
- Times: Striking BBC electricians claimed victory in their plans to disrupt programmes, but the effects were invisible to viewers.
- Consumer activists are trying to prevent the Government giving too much protection to firms which could otherwise be sued for damages caused by dangerous or defective products.
- The number of management buyouts reached record levels last year - £1.4bn.
- Times: A pilot scheme could become a potent weapon in the fight against regional unemployment began yesterday when nine youths from the north started work experience in the South East. The scheme is sponsored by the MSC and private firms.
- FT: MoD lists prospective Royal Ordnance buyers.

CITY

- John Vincent, in Sun, makes the point that Kinnock's attack on the Government for not stamping out City rackets shows once again he has not done his homework - insider dealing wasn't even illegal under Labour.
- Guinness demands return of controversial £7bn from Asbacher.
- Times: A meeting yesterday of Guinness directors is believed to have considered a plan for chairman Ernest Saunders to step down, at least during the government investigation.
- FT: Michael Howard states there are no present plans to appoint more inspectors to investigate insider dealing in the City. Nevertheless he stresses there can be no question of tolerating malpractice.

TRANSPORT

- Underground railmen vote to strike for 24 hours next Wednesday - and ordered to do so by NUR.
- Independent: DPP is not to press criminal charges following Staffordshire train crash last year.

NORTH-SOUTH

- Sun leader says no one outside the Left's satellite press believes you secretly decided to sacrifice jobs in the North to bolster the South. The North has been in economic decline for most of the century and no Government has been able to reverse the trend. Northerners must be ready to help themselves by moving south.

ENVIRONMENT

- Marine Conservation Society and Coastal Anti-Pollution League launch £1bn clean up campaign for beaches.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT

- Mail leader on Hackney's suspension of a £0.5m grant to a West Indian Centre run by a "Dr" with 10 previous criminal convictions and period of mental instability and with six members of his family on the payroll. Report quotes man as saying he is not crooked and is being crucified.
- Margaret Hodge, Islington, says that without more Government money and lifting of capital controls and ratecapping, London's Labour councils will find it difficult to maintain their services.
- Times: Camden Council is taking the DHSS to arbitration over its refusal to pay a £2m bill for hospital social work.

HOUSING

- Times: House prices in London went up by 23% last year - more than ten times the increase in Northern Ireland and nearly 8 times more than in Scotland and the North, according to the Nationwide Building Society.
- Jeff Rooker, Labour spokesman, claims that 700,000 fewer houses have been started since Government came to office than previous rate.

EDUCATION

- Express feature on the ILEA's desperate plight for teachers and also that of boroughs like Brent. Who can blame teachers for not wanting to work in schools with tough police?
- Independent: Head teachers want more pay and administrative staff if they are to manage school budgets.
- Independent: Brent is to go ahead with plans for a task force to improve educational programme of black children.

HEALTH/WELFARE

- Independent: National Audit office report criticises failure of NHS to control staffing properly in areas such as physiotherapy, radiography and occupational therapy.

AIDS

- Express leads with "panic" among those who have recently had transfusions after BMA's warning against those who have had casual sex in last 4 years giving blood.
- Mail leader inclines more to the Government's advice, rather than that of the BMA.
- Mail says Archbishop of York has criticised Chief Constable Anderton for his attack on AIDS sufferers.
- Guardian leader says the Government has wisely chosen to publicise rather than to preach morality and is so far holding a good balance.
- Independent: Concern is growing that AIDS television advertising campaign which starts tomorrow will be too low-key to have enough impact. You and other key figures in Government are understood to oppose explicit advertisements.

COLD WEATHER

- Star leader says thousands of old people are about to die from hypothermia and thousands more will be scared out of their wits about fuel bills. How much longer must Britain continue to treat its senior citizens in such a tawdry fashion?

TV LICENCE

- Star says Home Secretary is going all out to sink the idea of free TV licences for pensioners; leader says it is quite iniquitous that those in genuine need should have to pay the full licence fee and wants a free vote in the Commons.

LAW AND ORDER

- Prison rioters at Barlinnie hold 3 prison officers hostage; Sun leader says these "scum" forfeited all rights the day they went into prison - they are violent, evil savages who must be dealt with accordingly. Send in the SAS with the guns blazing.
- 9 members of a Chelsea soccer gang in court accused of plotting nationwide campaign of soccer violence.
- Times: Armed raiders ambushed a security van in the centre of Nottingham yesterday and escaped with £925,000.
- Staff in Lambeth's housing department were accused yesterday by a senior police officer of leaking information about police operations when asked for help.
- Independent: MPs and peers yesterday met Home Secretary to press for a review of Birmingham and Guildford pub bombings cases.
- Independent: Crown court officers are to be issued with new guidelines to reduce growing backlogs and delays in criminal cases.

PEOPLE

- Reagan gets cancer all-clear.
- Prince Edward reported to have left the Royal Marines because the training is too tough, but that his letter of resignation was refused.
- Captain Mark Phillips to give \$2000 a day shooting lessons to American tourists.
- Sir Ian MacGregor claims your "weakneed advisers" prevented him from taking over as head of NHS last year.

EAST-WEST

- Mirror leader writes of "sincerity" of Gorbachev in seeking changes to Soviet system in view of recent changes - trying to withdraw troops from Afghanistan; freeing dissidents and encouraging a little private enterprise.

USSR

- Russia urges Afghans to accept a ceasefire to allow peace talks; Shevardnadze says political settlement is nearer than ever. Express says Gorbachev is trying to woo home cultural giants who defect to West.
- Times: The last-minute cancellation of the first western press visit to Kazakhstan since last month's nationalistic rioting has convinced western observers that the situation in the city is still very tense.

EC

- Independent: Howe seeks to cool trade war with US. "I will take the opportunity to underline the political importance of a willingness on both sides to try to find a negotiated solution," he said of Bermuda meeting with George Shultz.
- Independent: Mr MacGregor told Oxford Farming Conference that Government expects EEC farm support to decline. This month's public expenditure White Paper would show that UK spending of £2,289m on agriculture in 1986-87, much of it incurred because of EEC commitments, was "significantly less" than last year.

FRANCE

- Power cuts affect half of France as power workers support railmen.

SOUTH AFRICA

- Times: South Africa's leading cinema chain is threatening to close down cinemas which do not become multi-racial within the next few months.
- British policy now is to wean the frontline states away from economic dependency on South Africa. Previously we said there was no option.

ISRAEL

- Times: Vanunu is on hunger strike in prison.