

9 March 1987

PRIME MINISTER

MAIN EVENTS

The Queen and Duke of Edinburgh attend the Commonwealth Day Observance Service, Westminster Abbey; later attend a Commonwealth Day reception, Marlborough House, Lord Whitelaw represents the Prime Minister

General Sir Frank Kitson's book on defence published

EC: ECOFIN, Brussels

EC: European Parliament, Strasbourg, (to 13 March)

Commonwealth Day

STATISTICS

DTI: Credit business (Jan)

DTI: Retail sales (Jan-final)

DTI: Producer price index numbers (Feb-prov)

PAY

Civil Service: Industrial Grades; 105,000; discussions on longer term pay arrangements. 1 July.

PARLIAMENT

Commons

Questions: Energy; Transport; Wales

Business: Opposition day (10th allotted day). Until about 19.00 there will be a debate entitled "Prospects for the removal of intermediate nuclear weapons from Europe in the light of Mr Gorbachev's willingness to conclude a separate INF agreement" on a motion for the adjournment of the House. Afterwards there will be a debate entitled "The disparity of opportunities within the UK" which will arise on a motion in the names of the leaders of the Liberal and Social Democratic Parties.

Adjournment Debate: The future of grammar schools in Warwickshire
(Mr J Pawsey)

Select Committees: HOME AFFAIRS: SUB-COMMITTEE ON RACE RELATIONS AND IMMIGRATION
Subject: Passport Control
Witness: Home Office

FOREIGN AFFAIRS
Subject: Cultural Diplomacy
Witness: Central Office of Information

PUBLIC ACCOUNTS
Subject: Scottish Special Housing; Association
Witnesses: Mr T R A Godden, C B, Scottish Development Department; Mr F C Marks, OBE, Scottish Special Housing Association

PARLIAMENT (Cont'd)

Lords: Grampian Regional Council (Harbours) Order Confirmation Bill:
Third Reading.

Consumer Protection Bill (HL): Report (1st Day)

Fire Safety and Safety of Places of Sport Bill (HL): Third Reading

Parliamentary Constituencies (Scotland)(Miscellaneous Changes)
Order 1987: Motion for Approval.

Town and Country Planning (Compensation for Restrictions on
Mineral Workings) (Scotland) Regulations: Motion for Approval.

MINISTERS - See Annex

PRESS DIGESTMAIN NEWS

- Ferry disaster dominates the pages with harrowing stories of family tragedies. Many pictures of 8 year old boy orphaned.
- Open front hatch thought to be the cause - company confirm doors left open. Richard Cottrell, Tory MEP, calls for all roll-on, roll-off ships to be docked for rigorous design inspection.
- Threat of charges hanging over Townsend Thoresen and skipper; human error most likely explanation.
- Assistant boatswain in charge of doors being questioned - said to have admitted it was all his fault.
- Little hope for those still on board.
- Dover City Council, Sun (£50,000 donation) and Mirror (£10,000) launch their own disaster funds.
- Express says insurance claims could top £100m.
- Telegraph says Government is considering an inquiry chaired by Commissioner for Wrecks.
- Guardian says 82 bodies are sealed on the ferry.
- Report that Kremlin is considering sharply reducing the number of Soviet troops in Eastern Europe.

- Fire breaks out again in coaster carrying dynamite in Channel.
- Speculation of legal action of 4 leading figures in Guinness scandal.
- Teachers' strikes due to start on Wednesday likely to hit 9m children; Kenneth Baker speculates about a review body and no strike contracts; describes strikes as contemptible.
- BBC's decision to shelve "The Secret Society" series, including Zircon film, because of legal problems attacked by Labour MPs.
- DAF Trucks investing £100m on a new supervan which could save 800 British Jobs.
- TGWU expels Militant for head butting a fellow union official.
- File on Harvey Proctor, in connection with young male prostitutes sent to DPP.
- Scargill's big set-back as Welsh NUM vote to accept 6-day working
- Express: says Richard Branson, whom you recruited "to clean up Britain", has come up with the idea of imposing a legal obligation on everyone to sweep their own streets.
- Editor of Afrikaans paper in South Africa resigns in protest against pressure to stop him criticising Government over apartheid
- Michael Heseltine's book, published today, gets little notice apart from Guardian interview.
- Sir Albert Costain, ex-MP, dies, 76.

FERRY COMMENT

- Star: Miracle is that so many came out alive. But for a ship to capsize in a virtual mill pond without hitting anything is something very alarming.
- Sun: praises heroism, without which loss of life would have been greater, and says no one is yet qualified to pass judgement on the disaster.
- Mirror: Until we know how the accident happened and why ferry passengers will be in mortal fear of it happening again. Government should instruct a tribunal to make an urgent interim report. And the Chairman of Townsend Thoresen, in post for 3 weeks should immediately pay out £5,000 to each bereaved family.
- Today: complains of TV scenes in reporting the tragedy which have gone too far in lingering on the faces of the grieving. Perhaps access should be more intelligently controlled.

- Express: under heading "Terrible Toll of Complacency on the Seas" says the Government must not wait for the outcome of a full inquiry before tightening safety standards. For the industry to claim there is nothing unusual about ferries heading out to sea with their doors open is an admission of complacency bordering on neglect. The Government and industry face a major task in restoring public confidence.
- Mail: says roll-on, roll-off ferries are inherently vulnerable if water does come in one way or another to the through deck. The equation between customer convenience, company profit and safety will now have to be re-checked.
- Telegraph says whatever lessons are learned the only certainty for the future is that there will continue to be tragedies at sea, in the air or where we travel.
- Guardian leader says the very ordinariness of taking the ferry to the Continent lends the disaster a special horror. Roll-on, roll-off operations should immediately issue a standing order that all hull doors or bulkheads are closed before sailing and there should be a more sophisticated monitoring system of this.
- FT says 3 investigations are underway - Townsend Thoresen's own; UK D/Transport; and Belgian examining magistrate.
- Independent: says the tragedy is not of the gods but our own making.
- Times: designer defends his door system. John Moore to make full statement today. £85m investment by Townsend Thoresen in two new ferries could be jeopardised. Disaster certain to undermine opposition to Tunnel. Eurotunnel anxious not to capitalise on accident. Boats still sail without lists of passengers.

POLITICS

- Labour moderates are launching a fight back against loony Left according to Today; they think Labour's divisions make a June election more likely. Kinnock said to be preparing a new crackdown against Militants.
- Today says Cecil Parkinson is to be given a prominent role during the election, along with Kenneth Baker and Kenneth Clarke in top TV team.
- Express says Labour Party is drastically reducing the number of jobs promised in the public sector to try to improve its credibility.
- Express says a survey by the Options magazine shows that 68% of women want the formation of a special Ministry to represent them in Government.
- Telegraph says Kinnock has ordered a public relations offensive to attempt to overcome loony Left image.
- Guardian says Liberal vote seems to be holding firm in Truro.
- Independent: feature Peter Kellner on distorted news values of the popular press - "Loony Tunes that Charm Fleet Street".
- Independent: Labour's hard Left attacked two fronts by leadership and "soft" Left.
- Times: Neil Kinnock warns Left and Right that any "sorting out" of Party will be done by him, not them.
- Times: some senior Conservative MPs plan to "accompany" Neil Kinnock on US visit and wreck his attempt to sell Labour's non-nuclear defence policy. Aim is to give interviews in Washington to media.
- Times: Young Conservatives beat off attempt by right-wingers to capture key posts.
- Times: Conservatives accuse Liberals of underhand tactics in Truro by-election.

BUDGET

- Low Pay Unit says there are better ways than tax cuts to help low paid - like higher wages! Almost one-third of Britain's taxpayers have an income below Council of Europe's "decency" threshold.
- Guardian reports "a devastating portrait of an impoverished, illiterate, untrained Britain in which true unemployment is much worse than official estimates while executive pay rises at double the rate of inflation.
- Times: carries first of two articles looking at why Inland Revenue is gaining reputation for hard-nosed and sometimes heavy-handed investigation.
- Times: study says in spite of your expressed intention to help low paid with tax cuts, porrest 6,000,000 taxpayers have received only 8% of £8bn given away in tax cuts since 1979.
- Times: car industry ask for abolition of car tax.
- Times: new tax incentive for pay deals related to company profits expected to be given go-ahead in Budget.

AIDS

- Express says a 10 minute AIDS test is about to be launched.

HEALTH

- More smokers than ever are trying to give it up, according to Harris poll.
- Times: Government health education policies failing to tackle main causes of premature death and dietary deficiencies, say DHSS medical advisers.
- Times: trials show aspirin a day can halve chance of someone suffering from heart disease or having heart attack.
- Times: Cancer specialists develop computer programme which may help diagnosis of leukaemia.

EDUCATION

- Paul Johnson, in Mail, says the teachers have taken the road to industrial suicide. Today teachers are increasingly seen as just another bunch of disgruntled workers - hardly as professional people at all.
- Telegraph leader says that the most popular stance in the ballots was abstention. The Government should now make sure that those who strike do not do so without financial penalty.

INDUSTRY

- Stock Exchange chairman Goodison criticises Government for failing to provide mechanisms effectively to combat insider trading.
- Guardian says Friends of the Earth claim that radioactive release from Trawsfynydd Magnox Station has reached level which casts doubt on its fitness to continue.
- International Energy Agency reports a 20% increase in energy efficiency in West compared with 1973.
- Independent: David Scholey, chairman of Mercury International, tipped for Euro tunnel directorship.
- Government to provide management training for up to 60,000 small businessmen a year - Times..
- Times: Jaguar to step up Tokyo sales.
- Times: Government been forced to rethink its proposals to outlaw misleading labels on sale bargains after complaints.

DEFENCE

- David Steel in Guardian says in Moscow you should declare a moratorium on British nuclear tests, welcome zero option and stop further deployment of Cruise in Britain and oppose SDI testing.

LAW AND ORDER

- Times: Special Branch believe Duncan Campbell should be prosecuted.
- Independent: Victims of rape are caught in legal trap which causes them to lose supplementary benefits if they are awarded compensation.

NORTHERN IRELAND

- Guardian lends its columns to Gerry Adams, Sinn Fein, to explain why British troops should be withdrawn.

IRELAND

- Will Haughey make it as Prime Minister - can he muster a majority?

US/USSR

- Independent: summer summit for Reagan and Gorbachev forecast by Richard Perle. He says US verification proposals can be agreed by Soviets.
- Times: 63 Jewish women in nine Soviet cities on three-day hunger strike in protest of emigration policies.

BEIRUT

- Times: Syrian troops meeting growing hostility from Iran and Palestinians.

IRANGATE

- Times: Labour and Alliance to ask about allegations that Britain has covertly supplied Nicaraguan rebels with arms.

SOUTH AFRICA

- Times leader looks at South Africa's refuseniks. In boardrooms and campuses across the country the roll call of refuseniks is growing.

MINISTERS (UK VISITS, SPEECHES ETC)

- DES: Mr Baker opens Primary Education Centre, Liverpool Institute of Higher Education
- DTp: Mr Moore addresses the National Consumer Council lunch, London
- HO: Mr Hurd chairs press conference on fresh start offer to POA
- MAFF: Mr Jopling attends launch of ADAS charging
- SO: Mr Rifkind addresses International Bankers in Scotland dinner, Edinburgh
- DEM: Mr Trippier speaks at Oil Industry Training Conference, Aberdeen and opens Aberdeen Enterprise Trust new offices
- DES: Mrs Rumbold visits Bromley LEA
- DES: Mr Dunn visits Brierley Language Centre, Lincolnshire
- DHSS: Mrs Currie speaks at Media Seminar on Drugs about Development of Treatment Services and Prevention Campaign, Home Office
- DHSS: Mr Newton attends meeting with Wessex RHA/DHA Chairmen, Winchester
- DDE: Mr Waldegrave and Lord Skelmersdale replant lime trees in the Great Foundation Garden, Hampton Court Palace
- DDE: Mr Patten opens Wimpey Complex at Ideal Home Exhibition, Olympia; later opens Chartered Institute of Building Exhibition, House of Commons
- FCO: Lady Young addresses London Diplomatic Association
- FCO: Mr Renton addresses World Veterans' Federation, Brighton
- HO: Mr Mellor chairs media seminar on drug misuse, London
- MAFF: Mr Gummer visits Daventry Farmers Discussion Club
- MAFF: Mr Thompson attends British Equestrian Trade Fair, Doncaster
- MOD: Mr Freeman visits Kent University
- WO: Mr Robinson visits Mid-Glamorgan District Health Authority and opens refurbished ward at Park Psychiatric Hospital; later visits St Tydfil's Hospital, Merthyr

MINISTERS (OVERSEAS VISITS)

- DTI: Mr Clark visits Turkey (to 14 March)
- DTI: Mr Patten visits Hong Kong and Korea (to 15 March)
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TV AND RADIO

Education Secretary, Mr Baker appears on Granada TV's 'Under Fire'

"World in Action"; ITV (20.30): "Finders Keepers". Row over status of leading scientists which is delaying cure for AIDS.

"Their Lordships House"; Channel 4 (12.25 am)

"The Week in the Lords"; BBC 2; (08.55): Shown on Saturday at 17.50.

"Reputation"; BBC 2 (16.40): R A Butler - the uncrowned Prime Minister. Presented by Anthony Howard. Contributions by Rt Hon John Moore, Rt Hon Kenneth Baker, the Lord Home and the Lord Hailsham.

"Panorama"; BBC 1 (21.30): Sport in schools.

"Horizon"; BBC 2 (20.10): Police stress. Police Officers are expected to cope with anything, just like John Wayne

"Woman's Hour"; BBC Radio 4 (14.00): SDI with physicist Dr Viv Moore and BBC Defence Correspondent, Chris Lee.
