

21 January 1987

PRIME MINISTER

MAIN EVENTS

Prime Minister meets M. Rocard and Dr Kissinger

The Duchess of York attends the Gala Performance of the Phantom of the Opera, Majestic Theatre, New York

Society of Education Officers Annual General Meeting (to 22 January)

STATISTICS

CLSB: London and Scottish banks monthly statement (Dec)

CSO: Preliminary estimate of consumers' expenditure (4th Qtr Prov)

PAY

Water service; manuals; 21,500

PARLIAMENT

Commons

Questions: Home Office; Northern Ireland; Prime Minister

Business: Firearms (Amendment) Bill: 2nd Reading and Money Resolution.

Duchy of Lancaster Bill: Remaining States.

Adjournment Debate: Government policy towards Kampuchea (Mrs A Clwyd)

Select Committees: AGRICULTURE
Subject: Storm Damage of 16 October 1987
Witnesses: Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food;
Forestry Commission

Lords: Starred Questions
Legal Aid Bill (HL): Committee (4th Day)
Betting, Gaming and Lotteries (Amendment) Bill: Second Reading
UQ to ask HMG what assessment they have made of the extent of the damage to trees and to the countryside caused by the gales of 16 October 1987

MINISTERS - See Annex

PRESS DIGESTMAIN NEWS

Telegraph Gallup Poll shows Conservatives lead reduced from 12 to 8.5% - 45.5/37/15.

Nurses at three London hospitals threatening strike on February 3; more may join - including some members of RCN which continues action. Protest said to be over pay and conditions and better NHS.

John Moore, in interview with Express, says militant hotheads can't be allowed to wreck the NHS and in Telegraph is ready to back tax relief on private health insurance premiums.

John Major hopes there are no expectations of further public expenditure in the Budget though he leaves himself room for manoeuvre.

Presidents or Royal Colleges tell Select Committee that John Moore went back on his word over more money for NHS. They say they do not regard face lift and sex change operations as vital part of NHS work.

Ford workers vote for all out strike over pay.

Prescott withdraws from deputy leadership contest this year; Sun says Left are accusing Kinnock of conning Prescott into dropping challenge; and Today says Left is threatening to contest both leadership and deputy leadership. Mail leader says Kinnock may not be able to win elections but he knows how to prevent them. There is to be no perestroika in his party.

Steel refuses to clarify whether he will or will not stand for leadership of merged party; Express says he is hoping for a miracle to save his shattered career.

Star says another shipment of arms for Libya to IRA is on its way, this time with Libyan instructor.

Sales of council houses booming - likely to total 111,000 against forecast of 80,000.

Tax dodging costing £8bn - or 5p off tax - according to Inland Revenue (Today).

OFT to investigate Kuwaiti stake in BP; meanwhile Britoil becomes more valuable because of North Sea find.

Water and electricity charges likely to rise by up to 9%.

Guardian claims D/Environment officials have completed preliminary work on a graduated community charge - as a line of retreat.

John Walsh accuses Scargill of taking miners' cash and leaving them with nothing for 6 years. Star says choice is simple - either more pay or more strikes, hardship, chaos and redundancies under Scargill. Mirror says miners do not owe loyalty to Scargill who stands for a divided union and who will always fight and always lose.

Iraqi businessman poisoned over a meal in London - for, it is believed, financial irregularities.

Man once questioned about three child murders is branded over kidnap of newspaper girl. Police fear missing Hagley newspaper boy is dead.

Labour MP wants to know why Hungerford killer was given a gun licence in 24 hours.

Douglas French MP accuses BBC of "grossly and deliberately misleading scenes" in Panorama programme due to be screened on NHS on February 1; claims they brought in bogus patients while filming at Gloucester outpatients department (Express).

Sun calls on West to bomb military targets in Iran every day until hostages are released - the same treatment worked with another lunatic: Gaddafi.

FT: Iran has taken direct charge of several foreign hostages, including Terry Waite, according to senior Shi'ite militia officials.

Paul Foot, in Mirror, highlights Conservative links - Tim Bell, Stephen Sherbourne, Lord Young, Peter Luff and Howell James - connections with Lowe Howard-Spink Bill which is being investigated by DTI. He also notes the change of tune by a Brunei journalist over whether Mark Thatcher did or did not visit Brunei.

Sun says Sarah Keays is demanding £30,000 a year from Cecil Parkinson to support child.

Some reports that UEFA has made an unannounced decision to allow English clubs back into European football next year, provided we behave in Euro Championships; Mail says it can't blame UEFA for putting us on probation.

Baron Philippe de Rothschild dies, 85.

NHS

Sun says John Moore wants £200m tax relief for those who take out private health insurance; senior Ministers, including Mr Moore, determined that nurses will not suffer from tight rein in spending. Royal Colleges call for higher taxes on cigarettes and alcohol to reduce demand for NHS beds.

Sun leader headed "Be honest" says Tory MPs who are saying "Spend, spend, spend" on NHS see it as an obvious way of courting popularity. But how much - a billion or ten billion? And did they tell voters at last election they were in favour of higher or lower taxes?

Express P1 lead with interview - Moore takes on hotheads; pledges patients will be protected from health militants. Inside a feature on him in which he says he feels the character of the NHS debate has become more mature; leader says NUPE and COHSE are shamelessly exploiting current uproar over NHS in Scotland and London. Nurses should not strike whatever their grievance. To do so is to betray their patients and their vocation. It also accuses Labour Party of "opportunism" in feeding the dispute but it also accuses Government of craven surrender over blood transfusion and pay structure issues.

Times: Angry nurses at three London hospitals vote overwhelmingly for 24-hour strike over low pay as Government refuse to provide more cash for NHS; the three royal medical colleges' presidents condemn John Moore's failure during Tuesday's debate to mention extra funding; TUC says Government's decision shows an insensitivity to public pressure and is ignoring the desperate need of many sick children.

The NHS in crisis series continues in the Times with Jill Sherman considering the strains on doctors and how they could improve their service.

Times leader says that the Government's decision not to add to the amount set aside for spending on NHS next year is politically dangerous - and right, adding that this is not to say the Government has automatically got its priorities right.

Times: About 300 diabetics die annually from kidney failure, partly because of lack of resources to treat them.

Mail P1 lead: Nurses call wildcat strike; John Moore condemns moves as regrettable. In another story a senior NHS security adviser complains of "apathy" of senior hospital staff over thefts totalling £10m in year; feature says Government's handling of NHS lurches from bad to worse and on industrial relations front Tory

bugles of retreat are sounding loud and clear. Bickerstaffe, NUPE leader, called in Morning Star recently for his members to "get" Moore and "turn the tide of Thatcherism". No coincidence nurses threatening strike belong to NUPE. Government should remind people about winter of discontent and NUPE's role in it.

Independent P1: Government faces revolt on health. Tory backbenchers critical of spending plans which give no more to health service.

Independent: Presidents of the medical royal colleges attack Government's "drip-feeding" and "elastoplast" approach to NHS funding. In evidence to the Social Services Select Committee they all but accuse John Moore of renegeing on a promise for a fundamental review.

Independent says the 66-year-old woman faced with a £30,000 bill for a private coronary bypass operation after being told there was an 18-month wait on the NHS refused an NHS catheterisation test and was told the wait was only 3-4 months.

Telegraph which also had an interview with John Moore yesterday leads with "Moore backs tax relief on private health". Sees a need to encourage much greater private sector contribution but Mr Moore's support for tax relief seems to rely more on interpretation than on actual quote.

Guardian: Treasury turns deaf ear to NHS cash pleas. Leader says fixing spending in October while leaving decisions about tax changes to March is an absurdity. But the real reason Government won't increase public spending on health and education despite consumer demand is that it doesn't like public spending whether public likes it or not. Ministers prove their virility by how much they can cut.

FT: Presidents of Royal Colleges say that they assumed, perhaps naively, that John Moore had agreed to additional resources.

BUDGET/PUBLIC SPENDING

Times: Large groups of Tory MPs urge Chancellor to press ahead with plans to cut tax to 25p as Government effectively rule out any increases in public spending in the Budget.

Andrew Alexander, in Mail, describes Government's ambition of reducing spending as a proportion of GDP as "pathetic". By 1991 it will still be a higher proportion of national income than under Wilson's first administration.

Independent: Major emphasises financial discipline; leader says Government is too optimistic about spending levels in education, health and defence. The desire to cut is commendable but more money will be needed in each of these areas. Too much attention is focused on the unusual buoyancy of revenues and not enough on the pressure for increased public spending.

Telegraph leader says Chancellor should curb some huge tax privileges - home ownership and pension provisions.

FT: Treasury signals firm stand against extra Budget cash for NHS. John Major's comments "We have just completed a public spending round and I do not intend to reopen it" was firmest indication yet of the Government's intention to ride over the health service now. Leader says the Thatcher Government is becoming a victim of its own success. Awareness of the cumulative extent of stringency in public spending is growing just as economic progress has undermined agreement on its necessity. The response of the Government will have to be considerably more imaginative, especially on the issue of the NHS, if it is not to lose control of the electorate.

UNIONS

Times: If Arthur Scargill wins NUM Presidency vote he plans to change rules which would mean the hard left taking control of union.

MEDIA

Independent: Ann Clwyd publishes private members Bill aimed at giving the public the legal right to correct factual media inaccuracies, but it is unlikely to survive its second reading on February 5.

Times leader welcomes plans for more commercial radio stations but it is critical of the Government through its regulatory agent, taking to itself the right to specify programme content and format.

Mail says pop around the clock is not the intention and it hopes it won't be the result. This modified rapture seems to be the most prudent reaction. By all means let a myriad more transmitters chatter but don't allow all our airwaves to be polluted with junk.

INDUSTRY

Times: Hard left keeps foothold on T&GWU executive.

Times: DTI to launch £16m three year programme to keep UK ahead with superconductivity research.

Times: Cecil Parkinson says he is considering publishing a White Paper on electricity privatisation.

Times: Britoil's increased value to £3.5bn may attract higher bid.

Times: Privatised Swan Hunter shipyard has slashed production costs by more than a fifth and is trading with reasonable profits with orders to end of 1992.

Independent: A comparative study of vocational training in France and Britain shows that the number of British workers qualifying annually as electricians and mechanics has halved since 1982 while France trains three times as many.

ECONOMY

FT: Thatcher aide to be "Sherpa" for regular economic summits.

FT: Wall Street falls 57 points in response to dollar weakness.

POLITICS

Times: Norman Tebbit has not abandoned hopes of leading Conservative Party. He believes circumstances could arise under which he could become a candidate to succeed you, in the unlikely event of your stepping down before next election.

Ronald Butt, in Times, calls on you to please listen. The Government is now at odds with a substantial body of its own supporters on a variety of issues. He adds that Parliamentary democracy requires listening governments. The impression being given is that it is not listening at all, either to the public directly or to its backbenchers.

FT: Key chairmanship of H Committee allows John Wakeham to increase his influence within the Government.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Star says Birmingham councillors deserve zero out of 10 for commonsense for trying to block a scheme to give extra free tuition to bright young children in Handsworth; they object to inequality of treatment in trying to help brighter children to pass exams.

HOUSING

Today leader says homeless people have been turned into helpless political pawns by both central and local government blaming each other. Government should allow local authorities to spend more of receipts from property sales to help get empty properties fit for occupation on condition LAs collect £196m rent arrears.

EDUCATION

Times: Government's plan for reforming schools could force Cambridge to change to four-year degree as GCSE could lead to dilution of A-level maths and physics courses.

Independent: Keith Hampson claims he almost has enough support to defeat opting out clause at committee stage.

LAW AND ORDER

Times: Five Derbyshire police surgeons resign after two colleagues are dismissed for diagnosing chief constable as unfit for duty.

Times: Legal aid watchdog committee criticises plan for lay advice centres.

Times: David Alton claims he has specialists backing for his Abortion Bill. Telegraph: Gallup poll of 746 doctors shows nearly 66% of gynaecologists would like upper limit cut from 28 to 20 weeks.

Independent: Amnesty International attacks British Government for increasingly unjust and arbitrary policy towards asylum seekers.

Peter Jenkins, in Independent, urges MPs to shun the Alton Bill. It is not so much a question of reform as a self-righteous minority seeking to impose its will on everyone else. The House of Lords select committee, whose report is expected by the end of next month, provides a much more rational basis for reform.

Independent: IRA men arrested from Eksund about to make declaration taking responsibility for the arms but dissociating themselves from Continental terrorists. Tom King says Government is taking seriously the possibility that the IRA had received additional armed resources from Libya.

DEFENCE

Independent: Senior RAF officers favour collaboration with USA rather than France over development of a new air-launched nuclear-tipped missile.

GULF

Times: Plan between British, Dutch and Belgians to cut minesweeper forces in Gulf by 50% and from single integrated unit under one command.

EC

Independent: Agriculture Council breaks up with Britain on verge of isolation. John MacGregor says informal German proposals considerably weaker than before. Talks to resume on Saturday. But Delors, in a speech to European Parliament, urges EC not to abandon plans for farm spending controls in scarcely veiled criticism of Germany.

BERNARD INGHAM

MINISTERS (UK VISITS, SPEECHES ETC)

DEM: Mr Fowler addresses Industrial Society lunch, Reform Club, London

DES: Mr Baker presents awards at the Business and Technicians Education Council's (B'TEC) Medal ceremony, London

MAFF: Mr MacGregor attends Annual Marketing Grocery Trade Awards 1987, Savoy, London

DEM: Mr Lee presents Top Chef awards, Hyde Park Hotel

DES: Lady Hooper visits Richmond Adult and Community College

DHSS: Lord Skelmersdale visits Moorfields Eye Hospital

DTP: Mr Bottomley visits DVLC, Swansea

DTP: Mr Mitchell attends Foreign Press Centenary party, London

ODA: Mr Patten visits GEC factory, Preston

MINISTERS (OVERSEAS VISITS)

DTI: Lord Young visits the United States of America (to 25 January)

MINISTERS (PRESS INTERVIEWS)

DES: Mr Jackson interviewed for the Oxford Students Union Cherwell Newspaper; also on Education Programme about University science funding

TV AND RADIO

"Today": BBC Radio 4 (6.30)

"Who Owns Britain": BBC Radio 4 (9.30) - new series, examining who owns what, looks at S. Yorks pit villages

"Kilroy": BBC 1 (9.20)

"Business Daily": Channel 4 (14.00)

"You and Yours": BBC Radio 4 (12.00)

"The New Enlightenment": Channel 4 (20.00) - series tonight looks at the rolling back of socialism and turning to market forces

"This Week": ITV (20.30) covers the Euro-passport and British preparations for the single customs market in 1992

"This Week": ITV (20.30)

"Question Time": BBC 1 (22.05) with John Edmonds, Teresa Gorman MP, Cyril Smith MP and Ann Leslie

"Newsnight": BBC 2 (22.40)

"The World Tonight": BBC Radio 4 (22.30) followed by "The Financial World Tonight" then "Today in Parliament"
