

22 January 1988

PRIME MINISTER

MAIN EVENTS

Prime Minister's interviews with American TV networks and with L'Express

PARLIAMENT

Commons

Business: PRIVATE MEMBERS' BILLS

Abortion (Amendment) Bill: 2nd Reading (Mr David Alton)

Unborn Children (Protection) Bill: 2nd Reading (Mr Kenneth Hind)

Planning Permission (Demolition of Houses) Bill: 2nd Reading (Mr Hugh Dykes)

Adjournment Debate: The impact on Parliamentary sovereignty of recent action by institutions of the EEC (Mr T Taylor)

MINISTERS - See Annex

PRESS DIGEST

MAIN NEWS

You tell nurses action will only harm patients and accuse Labour Party of supporting hospital walkouts. RCN to hold demonstration and rallies.

Threat to pay review body through stikes received with incredulity by NUPE.

Robin Cook advises nurses to think long and hard before striking; COHSE wants meeting with you.

Nurses at 2 more hospitals - in North London and York - join walkout on February 3. Ten more London hospitals to consider strikes next week.

Express leads with forecast of 10% in spring settlement, with Government picking up bill in full.

Government expected to make more money available to meet pay rise (Telegraph).

Some reports that John Moore is in more hot water for canvassing tax relief for private health insurance. Guardian says No 10 firmly slapped him down.

Lords Grimond and Roy Jenkins to make special plea at Liberals' conference this weekend to accept merger. Mail says Steel is unlikely to take No for an answer.

Benn indicates his readiness to challenge Kinnock for leadership.

Some speculation that Abortion Bill will get 2nd Reading today; and Express quotes Alton as saying even rape and incest victims should bear resulting babies.

Scargill expected to win NUM presidency. Guardian says Walsh could hardly do worse than Scargill.

Ford workers vote for strike over pay - nearly 90% in favour of strike.

NUT withdraws opposition to appraisal schemes - Mail regrets they have not yet repented of their striking though, latest move effectively ends campaign.

Millions of Russians will have to change their jobs in Gorbachev's drive for efficiency; redundancies beginning.

UK Government announces new Brigade HQ to command intensified security on Irish border.

Irish Republic police believe IRA have 12 Sam missiles.

New Roman Catholic Archbishop of Dublin, Monsignor Desmond Connell, Conservative academic.

Leading members of the Bar attack the Sun for publishing letters, stolen by a blackmailer, which led to judge's resignation. Clearest case for a right of privacy Bill.

Camden Council said to be spending £10,760 of ratepayers' money on flying lessons for homosexuals, blacks, jobless and disabled.

Michael Grade refuses to screen Channel 4 film which denigrates Air Marshal "Bomber" Harris.

Gossip columns report chill in No 10/FCO relations, with jealousies against C D Powell beginning to show.

Richard Cottrell MEP, who attacks EC waste, accused of having a dinner for two in Strasbourg which cost £349.

Jennie Seagrove, actress, proclaimed heroine for chasing and flooring a thief and recovering £40,000 worth of watches stolen from home of boyfriend, Michael Winner.

Seven executives of West German nuclear waste firm accused of running a £7m corruption racket to conceal network smuggling weapons grade plutonium to Libya, Pakistan and South Africa.

Brian Millon completes microflight across the world - 11 days longer than expected.

NHS

Star: Maggie slams angels - their action will only hit patients.

Sun: Maggie raps union for nurses' chaos. You leave Kinnock red-faced with embarrassment.

Mirror: There's no crisis in NHS, says Thatcher.

Today: Maggie warns nurses but more join strike.

Express says angry nurses claim they have been duped by NUPE militants into attending wild-cat strike meetings; confusion surrounds John Moore's stance on tax relief for private health

insurance but Express says he should be in favour, and so should you and Chancellor. Centre pages feature on what West Germany can teach us about NHS.

Mail: Leader of RCN makes impassioned plea against strike action - Don't let sick suffer. Crisis of conscience in RCN.

Telegraph: You give clear warning to nurses threatening strike that industrial action could jeopardise independent pay review body.

Guardian says a national strike looms as nurses grow militant; leader says emergence of NUPE and COHSE as possible agents of a wave of hospital militancy is being greeted by some Conservatives like the arrival of the US cavalry. Advice to nurses to proceed with caution may be tedious in present circumstances but it squares with commonsense.

Times leads with "Bitter row as Thatcher hits at NHS strike". You condemn strikers, deny there is a crisis and confirm that there will be no more money for NHS in Budget. Confusion reigns over meaning of interview given by John Moore in which tax relief was suggested. Foreign Secretary to enter row today in speech calling for greater use of private health insurance. Royal College of Physicians President accuses John Moore of renegeing over understanding that he would seek more NHS funds.

Times: In-patient costs at North Manchester General Hospital where nurses went on strike nearly twice as much as neighbouring Stepping Hill General Hospital, Stockport.

Paul Johnson, in Times, discusses how Labour has politically exploited the cause of sick children in the NHS row and criticises the Party for its campaign against Alton's Abortion Bill. He concludes that it looks as though Labour is going the way of the continental socialist parties, towards doctrinaire secularism. If so, millions of Christian electors should be made aware of this fact.

Independent: Growing support for 24-hour stoppage but nurses' unions disagree over tactics. NUPE and COHSE seek early meeting with you; proportion of population covered by private health insurance has risen above 10% for first time - an increase last year of some 7%; growing numbers of NHS consultants are investing in private hospitals in which they then treat patients.

FT P1 lead: Post-Budget boost for NHS will be tied to nurses' pay changes. Cash increase will come in response to pay review body proposals. Depending on strength of restructuring, new funding could amount to at least £450m. Inside, Politics Today column

argues the Government is in a trap of your making. It declines any further increase in spending yet it also declines any public examination of new policies that would free the level of spending from Treasury scrutiny and control.

HEALTH

Times: The Lancet calls for an urgent investigation into drug which would reduce dramatically the need for blood transfusions after surgery.

ABORTION

Star says its readers support Abortion Bill; Sun leader supports lowering of time limit except where mother's life is in danger.

Today says Alton's Bill is too crude and simple. It advocates voting for Bill today and amending in Committee later.

Express commends 24 weeks and says Alton has not helped his cause by barely disguising his fundamental opposition to all abortion.

Mail says a simple change to 22 or 24 weeks would have the merit of being uncontentious and allow timely detection of disabilities; George Gale says Bill could fail because Commons are scared of feminists.

Telegraph says issue would not be in doubt if Alton were proposing reduction to 24 weeks. You have adopted proper position.

Times: Your intervention expected to make it a close vote; leader concludes that it would be better and safer if this Bill were defeated.

Independent poll shows public opinion evenly split. You go out of your way to declare your opposition to the Bill but hint at support for time-limit of 24 weeks. Success or failure of the Bill hangs on Alton's willingness to accept 24 week rather than 18 week limit. Leader says there is no obvious prudent course - each MP can only vote according to his or her conscience or instinct.

BUDGET

Charles Moore, in Express, says unpopularity will not be a problem if Chancellor cuts tax by 2p.

Times: CBI call for action in Budget to boost investment and training and cut higher rates of income tax.

POLITICS

Times: Labour's hard-left threatening three-year challenge to the leadership to stop what it sees as the drift away from socialism.

INDUSTRY

Times leader says pressure is growing among Government backbenchers for an end to that antique absurdity, the National Dock Labour Scheme, adding that this would allow employers to begin serious negotiations for changes in working practices.

Times: British Coal warns Yorkshire miners that they will be sacked if they mount any more flying pickets.

Times: MSC going ahead with £1.5bn adult training programme.

Times: CAA to spend £22m on computer for London air traffic control centre.

Times: Survey shows stockbrokers are the trustiest source for financial advice, with business journalists second and politicians a poor third.

Times: Survey shows that northern office workers are better off than southern colleagues when house prices and cost of living are taken into account.

Times. Sir John Harvey-Jones attacks American business for continuing to use concepts that were successful at the Battle of Waterloo.

Times leader compares our vocational training with that of France. It praises TVEI saying its success should be the beginning of further reform.,

Independent: Details emerge of extensive surveillance of Woolworth directors by the Dixon's group during its abortive take-over bid, which may well have exceeded bounds of what is proper.

Independent leader says that whoever wins today's NUM ballot will have to contend with increasingly divided authority at local pit level.

FT: Chernobyl disaster has caused no noticeable increase in radiation risks to individuals in western countries, according to OECD report.

FT: House building starts highest for 14 years, with 194,000 private homes started last year - 4% up on 1986.

FT: Japanese electronic companies might invest as much as £100m in the UK this year, says Electronics Industries Association of Japan.

DEFENCE

Times: Government announces £376m savings in Trident programme.

MEDIA

Times: ITN told that unless it agrees to dramatic changes in supplying Britain's first satellite broadcasting services the £10m contract will be put out to tender.

GULF

Independent: Britain set to cut Gulf minesweeper force by one in cooperation deal with Belgium and the Netherlands but no final decision taken.

EUROPE

Independent: As France and West Germany celebrate the 25th anniversary of the Franco-German friendship treaty today, electoral considerations and self-interest with prospect of US withdrawal from Europe seen as main reasons for their ever-closer relationship.

MIDDLE EAST

Independent: Shevardnadze calls for meeting of UN Security Council at foreign minister level to discuss setting up of international conference.

FT: Moscow launches plan to end Israel-Arab impasse, proposing a special UN Security Council meeting at foreign minister level to discuss setting up international peace conference.

Times: Israeli's relax refugee curfews.

EAST/WEST

Times: Genscher presses President Reagan for early agreement with Moscow on chemical weapons ban.

BERNARD INGHAM

MINISTERS (UK VISITS, SPEECHES ETC)

- DEM: Mr Fowler visits a resource centre for Trackdown Technology Training, Margate
- DES: Mr Baker addresses the Society of Education Officers Annual General Meeting, Royal Overseas League, London; later is principal guest at Kingston Polytechnic science facility degree ceremony, Fairfield Hall, Croydon
- DHSS: Mr Moore opens Employment Assessment Centre for the mentally handicapped, Wimbledon
- HO: Mr Hurd visits West Ham Police Station
- DEN: Mr Morrison visits Milton Keynes Development Corporation
- DES: Lady Hooper visits the Norfolk College of Art and Technology
- DOE: Lord Caithness addresses the Association of County Councils' seminar on the National Response Plan in London; later visits Hull Prison
- MAFF: Baroness Trumpington attends Quentin Bell Organisation Image of Farming lunch
- WO: Mr Grist meets District Health Authority Chairman, Princess of Wales Hospital, Bridgend; later opens first completed home, Kingdomwide Development Site, Cardiff

MINISTERS (OVERSEAS VISITS)

- DES: Mr Jackson visits Bonn, West Germany about the Student Support Review

MINISTERS (PRESS INTERVIEWS)

- DHSS: Mrs Currie on BBC Any Questions, Bishops Castle, Shropshire

TV AND RADIO

- "Today": BBC Radio 4 (6.30)
- "Kilroy": BBC 1 (9.20)
- "Business Daily": Channel 4 (12.00)
- "The Parliament Programme": Channel 4 (14.00)
- "The Friday Report": BBC 2 (20.00) on traffic problems in London
- "Any Questions?": BBC Radio 4 (20.20) with Edwina Currie MP, Joan Lestor MP, Roger Graef and Des Wilson
- "Newsnight": BBC 2 (22.20)
- "AIDS now": Channel 4 (22.30) examines possibilities of heterosexual epidemic
- "The World Tonight": BBC Radio 4 (22.30) followed by "The Financial World Tonight" then "Today in Parliament"
- "The London Programme": ITV (22.35) on crisis in London's hospitals
- "Week Ending": BBC Radio 4 (23.30) - Bill Wallis, David Tate, Sally Grace and Roy Mills with a satirical view of the week's news