

25 March 1988

PRIME MINISTER

MAIN EVENTS

Anglo-Irish Intergovernmental Conference meeting

Opening of the Secondary Heads Association Annual Conference,
Reading University

Kenneth Clarke makes inner city visit to St Paul's, Bristol

STATISTICS

DEM: Retail Prices Index (Feb)

DTI: Overseas Trade Figures (Feb)

HO: 1987 Crime Statistics

PARLIAMENT

Commons

Business: Motion for the Easter Adjournment
Motion to take note of EC Document on the Establishment of
a Court of First Instance

Adjournment Debate: The monitoring of undertakings given in relation to
newspaper mergers (Mr G Allen)

Lords: Starred Questions
Debate on the Report of the Select Committee on the Infant Life
(Preservation) Bill (HL)

MINISTERS - See Annex

PRESS DIGEST

MAIN NEWS

Euro businessmen, according to Management Centre Europe survey, make you world's outstanding leader; Gorbachev second.

Post-Budget Gallup cuts Government's lead from 10% to 5.5% - 42/36.5/SLD 13/SDP 6.5; 60% thought Budget socially divisive.

Big fall - costing up to £10bn - in share market yesterday in anticipation of poor trade figures.

Andrew Alexander, in Mail, thinks there will be a change in emphasis if not direction after your meeting today on exchange rate management - using pound as an indicator rather than as an objective.

Telegraph says Cabinet dispute over sterling resurfaced last night when Foreign Secretary backed Chancellor over exchange rates.

TUC fails to persuade Ford to change its mind over refusal to a site electronics plant in Dundee.

Uproar in Labour Party over Benn/Heffer challenge to Kinnock/Hattersley leadership. Kinnock accuses them of damaging Labour's election chances - they don't care about winning

Today says Margaret Jackson, Jo Richardson, Mark Fisher and Clare Short will find it difficult to carry on as party spokesmen while belonging to Benn/Heffer faction.

Benn launches campaign with speech this evening.

Much coverage of funeral of Corporal Wood yesterday.

Telegraph leads with Tom King about to start trying to break political deadlock with meeting with constitutional parties.

Army says helicopter film shows that one of the 2 soldiers put up a good fight to the end.

Eric Heffer, in article in Socialist Organiser, a Trot journal, describes SAS unit which killed three IRA in Gibraltar as "first step towards the kind of death squads set up in Argentina". No mention of killing of 2 soldiers.

MORI opinion poll says 50% want British troops withdrawn from Ulster.

Edwina Currie starts big row by suggesting pensioners should re-mortgage their homes to pay for private health care.

Nuclear Installations Inspectorate close one of Bradwell's two reactors pending safety improvements.

B/Telecom to pay £5 a day compensation to customers if they fail to repair their telephones within 2 days. Express says even without the spur of competition BT is showing that a private firm is more sensitive to customers.

P&O warns 100,000 Easter travellers it won't be running cross-Channel ferries; goes to court today to try to prevent NUS balloting on national strike.

Unions report says B/Rail will decline even faster without a radical package of investment and modernisation.

Relentless rise in crime seems to be under control at last, according to latest figures.

Demand for ban on B/Rail carriages without corridors after murder of girl, 26, on stopping train from Oprington to Victoria - whereupon every pop sends a woman reporter to ride in one.

Prison officers padlock entrance to Wormwood Scrubs in protest at overcrowding; action described as "highly dangerous".

War Crimes investigation advertises for help with information.

The number of black magistrates is very low compared with the size of the black population, according to survey by Lord Chancellor's department (Independent).

TV-AM saving £300,000 a week after sacking 229 technicians; the technicians' union is planning to take the IBA to the High Court for failing to prevent standards falling at TV-AM (Independent).

Scotland to have a new Sunday newspaper later this year from Scotsman stable.

Camden Council wants to hire more homosexuals after sacking 1000 staff to save money.

Fred Smithies, NAS/UWT, threatens a "short sharp burst of classroom action" if a 15% teachers' pay demand is rejected.

Mail highlights how hospital unions in Scotland "make being sick a misery".

Graham Turner's series on health services takes him to USA: if your credit is good the treatment can be the best in the world; but if you are poor.....

Archbishop of Canterbury launches C of E inquiry into rural life.

Hint from Speaker of Iranian Parliament that Terry Waite is alive.

Britain may bow to EC pressure to harmonise summer time from 1991.

Socialist Joe Bassano wins Gibraltar election.

Express picture of your visit to Red Army Ensemble.

LABOUR PARTY

Sun feature says Benn and Heffer, the loopy Lefties, are the most laughable comedy act since Little and Large, determined to prove there is no fool like an old fool. It quotes a senior party official as saying the contest will open a "Pandora's box of evil things" and have Trots, lesbians, blacks and loony elements screaming for Kinnock's head.

Mirror leader says if Labour's far Left had its way it would elect two men in their 60s to lead party into 90s. It is ludicrous. But it is wrong for Labour leadership to denounce the contest when the Benn/Heffer ticket is a dream opportunity to show that the Left has nothing to offer any more.

Today's leader headed "Battle of the Dodos" says Benn and Heffer are taking a last chance to parade their bruised egos around the theatre of politics. Kinnock is no great asset but the Labour Party is not yet so suicidal as to elect two men who would bring their biggest-ever electoral disaster.

Express says Kinnock put on a brave face about the "daft" leadership challenge; leader likens Benn/Heffer to Don Quixote and Sancho Panza but thinks Hattersley is vulnerable.

Edward Pearce, in Express, describes Benn's candidature as "heroic silliness" while Kinnock shows every sign of being furious and genuinely shocked. Pearce contemplates your luck and marvels.

Mail says Livingstone has accused Kinnock of personalising the battle. Paul Johnson, however, says, just for once, Benn is right. He has never been selfish or on the make. He is an idealist and probably the most incorrigible and obstinate idealist in Britain today. Kinnock stands for nothing in particular - a man who thinks adjectives are a substitute for ideas. Benn has

ensured that fundamental issues will be discussed.

Telegraph leader says there is some truth in the claim that the cult of personality is damaging Labour's prospects. The next six months will show whether the trauma of leadership contest will damage them even worse.

Guardian leader says that across the great swathe of the electorate, in areas much more prosperous than Liverpool, the effect is likely to be the reverse of reviving flagging Labour spirits.

Independent: Kinnock yesterday warned that Labour's election prospects could be damaged by the October leadership challenge. Leader says it is disappointment, though all too typical, that Neil Kinnock has chosen to dismiss the challenge to his leadership as being "divisive, distracting, futile and selfish" for the electoral college was created at the behest of Labour's Left wing, of which Kinnock was once a vocal member.

Times leads with a bruising start to Labour leadership challenge. AEU says the £100,000 it will cost to ballot members on leadership election will be deducted from its donation to party; leader says Kinnock, in his own interests, and the interests of all who want to see an Opposition capable of being elected to Government, should now denounce Benn and Heffer as standing for a ruinous economic doctrine and a dangerous foreign policy.

IRELAND

Independent: Yesterday you hinted that TV crews should be prepared to give evidence against those involved in the mob attack on two soldiers. There was widespread support in the Commons when you emphasised that there was a duty on broadcasters to give witness to the attack.

Times: Furious reaction from Conservative MPs after Banks accuses you of publicity-seeking by going to RAF Northolt to attend return ceremony of two murdered corporals.

NHS

Mail leader on call by ancillary workers in Scotland for stoppages to save the NHS from private contractors says that for sheer counter productive stupidity this is almost on a par with the TGWU's refusal to sign the single union agreement at Dundee. Nothing could be better calculated to strengthen Scotland's health administrators' resolve to bring in competition from outside than this shameful display of irresponsible union monopoly power.

Independent: Nursing will face an even bigger crisis in recruiting qualified school-leavers by the mid-1990s than was previously thought, Len Peach warned yesterday, with the shortage of school leavers beginning to bite.

Independent: Health authorities in England are likely to pay £13m this year in legal fees and compensation to patients who sue over negligence.

Times: 15-year-olds will be encouraged to work on hospital wards as part of radical package of Government proposals to recruit more nurses.

EDUCATION

Sun leader says it is "wildly irresponsible" for BBC to screen film tonight on teenage homosexuality which is presented as normal behaviour.

Times: Church protests for new concessions in Education Reform Bill to continue in spite of Government announcement that religious education is to be given additional status; leader discusses the part religion has to play in the curriculum, saying that because schools are vital to the formation of values, belief and moral conduct, the Education Reform Bill is bound to be one of the most important enactments of this Government.

Times. Schools and courts get mixed report on recruitment of ethnic minorities.

B/RAIL

Sun says B/Rail will take until the 1990s to phase out carriages without corridors. BR might as well scrap them today because no woman in her right mind will ever want to travel in one again.

FORD

Independent: The trade union movement will split unless the TUC can agree procedures to regulate single union deals and all unions stick to them, said Ron Todd.

INDUSTRY

Times: Employment Bill to be tightened in attempt to tackle alleged ballot rigging by unions.

Times: Jaguar chairman does not believe workers could not work harder to increase output; demand for Jags in Britain is booming but waiting list is 10 months compared with 3 months for BMW.

FT: BAe plans to streamline management structure in order to reduce costs by up to one-third by early 1990s.

FT: Boeing acknowledges delays in award of AWACS contracts to UK companies.

ECONOMY

Times: High pay increases, falling unemployment and low inflation combined to produce a substantial improvement in living standards last year.

Independent: Howe pitched into the Government row about exchange rate policy last night, supporting discipline, stability and the Chancellor. In a speech in Zurich, Sir Geoffrey described the belief that the exchange rate should float on world markets as a "delusion".

FT: Sir Geoffrey Howe, speaking in Zurich, gives strong backing for more stable pattern of exchange rate policy.

FT: You, the Chancellor and Governor of Bank of England will meet today to clarify official policy towards £, ahead of next week's TCSC hearings.

FT: EMS has achieved considerable success in reducing volatility of exchange rates, according to Dundee University study sponsored by Bank of England.

INNER CITIES

Times: Five big construction companies and Birmingham City Council plan to create a new "urban village" and thousands of jobs on 2,000 acre derelict site in the city.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Times reports that as millions of community charge registration forms are to be delivered in Scotland, a number of campaigns by those opposed to the charge threaten to disrupt the task.

Times: Government announces £28m package aimed at helping homeless by putting 10,000 council houses back into use.

DEFENCE

Times: Ministry of Defence admits delays and slippages in certain areas of Trident but is adamant that the missile system will be ready by mid-1990s.

Times. Dr Robert Bowman, former senior defence adviser to two US presidents calls on Conservative MPs in hope that they can persuade you to cancel Britain's support for "Star Wars" research.

Times. Government planning to find replacement weapon for Bloodhound.

Independent: Your efficiency unit has identified the MoD Procurement Executive as a top candidate for independent management after continued evidence of waste and incompetence.

EC

Times: EC ambitions to control taxes arouse British fears.

Independent: Plans to reshape EC regional policy announced in Brussels yesterday. Could sharply reduce the flow of EC cash to struggling rural areas of the UK.

GATT

FT P1 lead: US is seeking emergency trade talks with Japan after GATT rules their bilateral semiconductor business illegal.

ANNEX

MINISTERS (UK VISITS, SPEECHES ETC)

- DEM: Mr Fowler addresses CBI lunch, Edgbaston, Birmingham
- DES: Mr Baker launches Education on Teaching as a Career, Business Design Centre, Islington; later addresses Secondary Heads Association annual conference, Reading University; later attends, and Mr Jackson addresses, the Higher Education Liaison Seminar about the Bill and its effect on higher education, Carlton Club
- DTI: Lord Young and Mr Clark meet Mr Mike Moore, New Zealand Minister for Overseas Trade
- SO: Mr Rifkind addresses Convention of Scottish Local Authorities annual conference, Dunblane Hydro, Dunblane
- DEM: Mr Cope addresses Wansdyke Enterprise Agency AGM, Bristol
- DEN: Mr Morrison performs the opening ceremony for Texas Eastern's Sinetex Limited facilities, Burnley
- DHSS: Mrs Currie opens Castle Hill Cardiothoracic Wards in Yorkshire
- DHSS: Lord Skelmersdale addresses Somerset division of British Medical Association dinner, Taunton
- DHSS: Mr Newton opens Essex Ambulance Training School
- DOE: Lord Caithness visits Wigan Pier to present Heritage Education Trust's, Sandford Awards; later attends Groundwork Trust's Brightside launch in Wigan
- DOE: Mr Trippier addresses Manchester Chamber of Commerce lunch
- DOE: Mr Moynihan visits Sellafield and Drigg in Cumbria
- DTp: Lord Brabazon visits Dover Harbour Board
- DTp: Mr Bottomley visits the A406/A10 Great Cambridge road junction improvement; later addresses the Institute of Directors, Pall Mall
- FCO: Mr Mellor addresses UK/Tunisian Society annual dinner, House of Lords
- HO: Lord Ferrers addresses end of course dinner at the Fire Service College, Moreton-in-Marsh
- MAFF: Mr Thompson meets American meat traders, House of Commons
- SO: Lord Sanderson visits tourist attractions, Stirling
- WO: Mr Roberts presents Chemical Industry Association Young Chemist of the Year award, Mostyn, Clwyd
- WO: Mr Grist visits Montgomery District Council to mark 1,000th house sale under the right to buy scheme; later addresses colloquium on the professional role of clinical nursing, Llandrindod Wells
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MINISTERS (OVERSEAS VISITS)

DES: Mrs Rumbold attends the Council of Europe meeting on languages, Strasbourg

MINISTERS (PRESS INTERVIEWS)

DTI: Lord Young interviewed by Mr Lichfield, Independent, on the single market; later on "Any Questions"

TV AND RADIO

"Today": BBC Radio 4 (6.30)

"Daytime on Two": BBC 2 (10.38) 'Getting to grips with racism'

"Business Daily": Channel 4 (12.00)

"The World at One": BBC Radio 4 (13.00)

"The Parliament Programme": Channel 4 (14.00)

"PM": BBC Radio 4 (17.00)

"What the Papers Say": Channel 4 (20.00) with Ann Leslie

"Dispatches": Channel 4 (20.15). Investigative documentary

"Any Questions?" BBC Radio 4 (20.20) with Lord Young, Tony Blair, Alan Coren, editor of the Listener, and Joan Phylacton, Newcastle Polytechnic lecturer

"Stop Press": BBC Radio 4 (21.05). Geoffrey Goodman with a personal view of the week's papers

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

"The London Programme": ITV (22.35)

"Newsnight": BBC 2 (22.45)
