

28 October 1988

PRIME MINISTER

MAIN EVENTS

Prime Minister meets Shaikh Khalifa of Bahrain (photocall)

The Queen opens the Richmond Riverside Development

British Steel pathfinder prospectus published

Launch of National Lead Free Petrol Week

STATISTICS

DTI: Engineering indices of production and sales and orders at current prices
(Aug)

PARLIAMENT

Commons

Business: Debate on a Motion on the Disposal of Radio-Active Waste on a Motion for the Adjournment. The Environment Committee's First Report Session 1985-86 on Radioactive Waste (HC 191) and the Government's Second Stage Response (Cmnd 9852) will be relevant to the Debate

Adjournment Debate: Motor rallies on right of way (Mr A Haselhurst)

MINISTERS - See Annex

PRESS DIGESTMain News

John Moore felt to have done well in presenting social security uprating; to have done a persuasive job over child benefit; and to have rescued his career.

Opposition left floundering - and under attack over leak.

Telegraph says 70 Tories take stand against health check charges.

Trade deficit cut by half to £560million last month; brings reprieve from higher interest rates - Stock exchange and sterling rise.

Lawson hints at division with you over timing of Britain's entry into the ERM of the EMS, when he delivered an unusually enthusiastic expression of support for the mechanism during Questions (Independent).

Both you and Foreign Secretary, while welcoming reports of Soviet promise to release political prisoners, say it isn't enough to earn Soviets a human rights conference in Moscow. Mail leads with "Maggie to Gorbachev - let your people go".

Russians confirm plans to release all political prisoners by the end of the year; Independent leader says the gains for human rights deserve more recognition than you appear willing to grant.

Two Irishmen and woman found guilty, on majority verdict, of conspiring to kill Tom King; press speculate whether a third man ~~was~~? killer - got away.

Police discover flame gun in grounds of Belfast hospice; believed to have come from Libya.

BBC fear Sinn Fein members in the audience for tonight's "Any Questions?" broadcast live from Belfast may try to contravene the Government's broadcasting ban (Times).

Although Britain will sign international protocol next week freezing nitrogen oxide emissions at present levels by 1994, it will not join several other countries agreeing to reduce levels by 30% by 1998 (Independent).

Lord Young rejects idea of Fortress UK which blocks foreign takeovers of British companies.

PRESS DIGEST

British companies warned to resist union demands for pan-European negotiations in the run up to 1992 (Times).

British Rail to announce average fare increases of 10% today, but long distance and season ticket prices could rise 20%.

Customs controls are to be set up at Waterloo for passengers arriving via the Channel Tunnel (Times).

Privatisation hits Fawley power station plan - forces its postponement.

Burials halted in Manchester when gravediggers go on strike for more pay.

Much coverage of what the Broadcasting White Paper, approved by Cabinet yesterday, will cover, with some concentrating on "pay as you view" revolution and the demise of the TV licence (which rises in Spring).

Sun commenting on BBC journalists' threat to strike for 24 hours in protest against ban on IRA interviews, asks if there are more twits in BBC than any other organisation. The victims of the IRA lost more than freedom of speech. Express says BBC journalists are a misguided and self-important bunch. What a message to send to the world: we insist on our right to give a platform for the PR men of killers!

Estate agents must today start to remove many of the signs which turn streets into eyesores under new regulations. Today says this ~~will~~ make estate agencies less conspicuous but not more honest.

Sir Bryan Thwaites, Chairman, Wessex Health Authority, says less than 1% of NHS spending is on information systems and "if ever there was a case for heavy handed Ministerial invention (to improve management) this is it".

You rule out idea of a national lottery.

A serious rift has developed between the Health Department and the Government appointed Health Education Authority over the launch of a national Aids campaign (Times).

Specialist nurses at 2 Birmingham hospitals caring for children are threatening resignation because they have only been classified on the lowest grade (Times).

PRESS DIGEST

Today says you strengthened your "green" credentials by backing tree planting.

Peter Bottomley clashes with Chief Constable of Fife at drink-drive campaign launch over random testing to which Minister is opposed (Express).

Boy, 14, believed to have been driving one of two cars in crash near Blackpool which kills 6.

HMI Annual Report highly critical of 'unacceptably impoverished' conditions of prisons in England and Wales (Independent).

Almost 23% of babies born last year in UK were out of wedlock.

Sun feature on Gordon Brown - the Bright boy who puts Kinnock in the shade.

A 'Council for Academic Autonomy' is to be set up to monitor all cases of infringement of academic freedoms (Times).

Controversy over BBC World Service's plan to abandon its formal style for a more chatty one - Mail disapproves.

Southwark Council bans world boxing championship bout next week because one of fighters is white South African.

West Germany arrests 13 Palestinian terrorists; 5 sentenced to death in Sudan for bomb attack which killed British charity workers.

Today says when you meet Quayle you are likely to shake him warmly by the throat for suggesting he knows you.

Syria has rejected a British request to send more diplomats to Damascus (Times).

SOCIAL SECURITY (and leak)

Star - 'Robin Hood' blitz on wealthy mums. Moore hands cash to poor. MPs fury on child benefit quelled.

Sun - Pension joy in Moore's £2billion welfare handout; old folk get extra £2.45. 16million will be better off. You attack Kinnock in leak rumpus.

PRESS DIGEST

Mirror - Moore buys off rebels. Fury over child benefits. Satisfied most Tories. Leader says John Moore made the maximum out of giving the minimum. His sole talent as a politician is to gloss over the truth.

Today - Moore off hook with £200million for children. A Houdini-like escape from Commons critics.

Express - Moore's £2billion benefit deal. Relaunches his political career. Takes steam out of threatened revolt and leaves Labour floundering. Leader says if helping neediest is not what the welfare state is meant to be all about, it does not know what is. The Government should scrap child benefit, after the election. It is an affront to the taxpayer and shortchanges the poor.

Mail - Battling Moore saves the day. Salvages his ailing Cabinet reputation with a blistering fight back and, with your help, puts Labour leaders on spot over leaked letter. Unmask the mole, Maggie tells Kinnock. Leader says the Government's problem over child benefit is that it is trying to ride two policies at once. John Moore managed to straddle the uncomfortable divide. Mail wants more publicity to encourage take up. Colin Welch says, contrary to expectations, it all went rather well for John Moore.

Independent - Moore averts rebellion on child benefit. He gives commitment of a universal benefit for the remainder of the Parliament. But you are said to have personally vetoed his demands for a fundamental review because it would have compromised the Government's manifesto commitment.

Telegraph - £70million extra for needy families quells revolt. Moore wins over Tory critics into £2billion benefits rise. Delights many Tory MPs by launching strong counter attack against his critics. Your attack over leak represents new determination by Ministers to attack Labour for making use of leaked documents.

Guardian - Moore holds an axe over child benefit. Traditional Tory support for child benefit has given way to demands for more targetted system.

Guardian leader says the Government's decision not to raise child benefit has imperilled many families. But Mr Moore gave a fair account of himself.

John Moore appears to have contained Tory banckbenchers fears over freezing child benefit. He scored a Commons success with an assertive performance (Times).

PRESS DIGEST

You clash with Kinnock at Question Time yesterday and accuse Labour of demeaning the political process (Times).

FT - Tory backbenchers calmed over freeze in child benefit. Mr Moore's political standing has taken a battering recently, but yesterday's performance may have helped to stabilise position. There was general support for him over last night's meeting of the 1922 Committee.

Times leader welcomes the fact that children in need will be better off as a result of yesterday's announcement. It says there is still a case for re-opening the question of the structure of social security as a whole. "It is easier to devise an acceptable package in which the pluses outnumber the minuses within the context of an overall review than in the pressure-cooker of an annual spending round".

TELEVISION

Today says Cabinet yesterday signalled a bright new era on TV screens by agreeing to take an axe to the stifling structure of broadcasting.

Mail - TV revolution puts Channel 5 in focus.

YOUR HEBREW UNIVERSITY SPEECH

Express - Let your people go, Maggie tells Mikhail.

~~Mail~~ leads its front page with your appeal to allow people to leave USSR.

Telegraph - Thatcher challenge to Russia.

ROYAL ORDNANCE

Independent leader supports PAC criticism over the sale of Royal Ordnance. It says the decision to accept a price which did not reflect the asset or redevelopment worth of the company was not good stewardship of the nation's investments, not good business and not a demonstration of free-market disciplines at work.

NATO/DEFENCE

Soviet Union has agreed to destroy two controversial radar systems and convert another into a civilian space research centre. The decision will make it harder to justify SDI (Times).

PRESS DIGEST

Independent - Belgium puts brakes on NATO weapon deployment, threatening to block deployment of new nuclear weapons before cruise missiles have been removed.

VISIT TO POLAND

In an Independent commentary, Timothy Garton-Ash looks at the calls for a Marshall Plan for Eastern Europe, against the background of your visit to Poland. He says it would be useful to hold out the long-term prospect of a Marshall Plan while making it clear that this would only come after radically different conditions have been created.

Almost everyone in Poland is in favour of Thatcherism. You should propose some modest scheme to encourage and support private enterprise - a kind of "enterprise initiative" scheme (Independent).

Telegraph picks up your interview with Polityka - Britain's role to lift Iron Curtain.

EAST-WEST RELATIONS

Independent - In line with perestroika, Soviet Union announces massive projected budget deficit of £34billion and admits some key areas of the economy are not improving but deteriorating.

FT - Moscow unveils plans to sell shares in State enterprises and eventually to create a stock market.

FT - Howe attacks "Marshall Plan" for Soviet economy; welcomes Moscow's reported intention to release all political prisoners but reiterates Britain's opposition to Moscow as the venue for a human rights conference until the West's other human rights criteria are met. You later repeated the sentiment.

MINISTERS (UK VISITS, SPEECHES ETC)

- DEM: Mr Fowler addresses Institute of Marketing, Birmingham
- DOE: Mr Ridley visits Trafford UDC in Manchester
- DTI: Lord Young attends Single Market Breakfast, Effingham Park
- DEM: Mr Cope visits The Bluebell Railway, East Grinstead
- DES: Mr Jackson visits Gloucester College of Art and Technology
- DOE: Lord Caithness visits Birmingham Housing Action Trust Sites (HATs)
- OAL: Mr Luce addresses America/EC Association conference, Leeds Castle
- SO: Mr Rifkind addresses Dundee College of Technology centenary dinner, Angus Hotel, Dundee
- SO: Lord Sanderson addresses Forest Officers conference, Prince of Wales Hotel, Southport
- SO: Mr Forsyth performs sod cutting ceremony, Royal Cornhill Hospital, Aberdeen
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TV AND RADIO

- "Today": BBC Radio 4 (6.30)
- "Kilroy": BBC 1 (9.20)
- "The Parliament Programme": C4 (12.00)
- "Business Daily": C4 (12.30)
- "The World at One": BBC Radio 4 (13.00)
- "Irish Reel": C4 (20.00). Ireland's education system examined
- "The Friday Report": BBC 2 (20.00). Looks at hospital working with private industry to tackle a shortage of intensive care facilities
- "Any Questions?": BBC Radio 4 (20.20) from Northern Ireland with Chris Patten, John Hume, Harold McCusker and Clare Short. Repeated Saturday
- "Protecting the Children": BBC 2 (21.30). Follows an NSPCC Child Protection Team
- "HRH The Prince of Wales - A Vision of Britain": BBC 1 (22.20). Prince Charles gives a personal view of the nation's architecture and environment
- "The World Tonight": BBC Radio 4 (22.30) followed by "Today in Parliament" and "The Financial World Tonight"
- "Newsnight": BBC 2 (22.45)
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