

8 November 1988

PRIME MINISTER

MAIN EVENTS

US Presidential Election

Visit of President and Madame Diouf of the Republic of Senegal  
(to 11 November)

EC: Political Co-operation Council, Athens (to 9 November)

EC: Energy Council, Brussels

IEPG Meeting, Luxemburg (to 9 November)

Anniversary of Enniskillen bombing, Northern Ireland

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STATISTICS

HO: Summary production statistics England and Wales 1987

OPCS Infant and perenatal mortality 1987: DHAs

OPCS: Deaths by cause: March Qtr 1988 registrations

OPCS: Deaths from accidents and violence: March Qtr 1988 registrations

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PUBLICATIONS

HMT: Autumn Statement (Grey Book)

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OTHER DEPARTMENTAL BUSINESS

"Acidification in Scotland" Symposium, Edinburgh

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PARLIAMENT

Commons

Questions: Education and Science; Defence; Prime Minister

Business: 10 Minute Rule Bill: British Rail (Privatisation).  
Motion on the Criminal Evidence (Northern Ireland) Order  
North Killingholme Cargo Terminal Bill (Carry-over Motion)  
Associated British Ports (No 2) Bill (Carry-over Motion)  
Copyright, Designs and Patents Bill (Lords): Consideration of Lords  
Amendments

PARLIAMENT (Continued)

Adjournment Debate: The Scottish salmon netting industry (Mr J Home-Robertson)

Select Committees: EMPLOYMENT  
Subject: Health and Safety Matters  
Witnesses: Officials from Health and Safety Commission and Executive

COMMITTEE ON PRIVATE BILLS  
Associated British Ports (No 2)  
North Killingholme Cargo Terminal

Lords: Starred Questions  
Health and Medicines Bill: Consideration of Commons Amendments.  
UQ to ask HMG whether it is their intention to introduce a measure of competition in the water industry on privatisation

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MINISTERS - See Annex

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PRESS DIGESTMain News

George Bush expected to win handsomely - and even by a landslide; his last advertising blitz features you greeting him in Downing Street.

Extensive coverage of broadcasting White Paper which gets a generally warm welcome for increasing choice, though some concern over effect on quality. TV companies fear standards will drop because advertising revenue will be spread too thinly.

Chancellor felt to have done a U-turn over means tests for pensioners at cost of £200million in extra help for worst off. Over 75s look to be target for help. Some papers say he wrong-footed Opposition.

Labour wants to clarify whether pensioners are still safely exempt from prescription charges.

Government may be forced to exempt pensioners from £10 eye test charge to prevent constitutional conflict with the House of Lords (Times).

Chancellor, in Panorama interview, warns US that there could be a loss of confidence in the dollar unless it takes early steps to get to grips with the budget deficit (FT).

North-South divide continued to widen last year, according to CSO regional GDP figures.

Express suggests Labour faces an upset in Govan at the hands of the SNP who are making a late surge - 13 points up at 34% on a week ago. But Labour still has 53%.

Association of London Authorities claim that safety on Underground has deteriorated since the King's Cross fire with twice as many serious fires in the first half of this year than in the whole of 1987 (Times).

Norman Fowler tells CBI to keep a tight rein on wage increases - now running double those in USA, France and West Germany. He wants annual wage deals scrapped.

Sir Trevor Holdsworth, CBI president, says industry has made a magnificent recovery thanks to your efforts.

But CBI attacks high interest rate strategy and calls for higher investment rather than personal tax cuts.

PRESS DIGEST

NUPE nurses begin indefinite strike over regrading at Manchester psychiatric hospital.

Jaguar loses £5million in 24 hour walkout over sacking of a senior shop steward for using a photocopier for personal correspondence.

Vigorous argument emerges between Government and CEBG over terms of electricity privatisation, as Cecil Parkinson says he is thinking of limiting length of generation contracts (FT).

Japanese automotive manufacturers, including Toyota and Mitsubishi, rethink plans for investing in European assembly plants amid concern over conditions in planned single market (FT).

Railway fare cheats to face £10 on the spot fines.

Call for estate agents to pass some recognised test of competence before being allowed to operate (Times).

The Post Office is to review low morale among its staff (Independent).

Kinnock at GCHQ strike rally: We don't just want freedom in Gdansk; we want it at GCHQ. He says he will restore trade union rights there.

Today leader says if Kinnock had been trying to make himself look ridiculous he could not have chosen a better way than by comparing Solidarity to GCHQ trade unionists.

Government says protest was a flop (Express) - only 1 in 10 Civil Servants take part.

Comprehensive in Labour-controlled Bolton becomes first of its type to vote to opt out - vote 903-4 in favour.

British Universities are buying software from British companies rather than sign undertakings to meet US export regulations (Independent).

HMI report says schools must pay more attention to role of women in history and to contributions of blacks and Asians.

Dixons to sponsor Bradford City Technology Centre.

PRESS DIGEST

Case of two primary school children, 7 and 10, who mugged a widowed pensioner on way to church, trying to snatch her handbag and who escape because they are below age of responsibility.

Sun leader on TV's plan to put "health warnings" on reports of IRA/Sinn Fein, asks if they publish similar warnings in reports from Communist countries. The TV moguls should be down on their knees giving thanks they live in a democracy instead of supporting those who would destroy democracy.

QCs may act without juniors this week under changes agreed by Lord Chancellor's Efficiency Commission (Times).

Archbishop of Canterbury stands ground against women priests.

Sakharov, in USA, claims Gorbachev's liberalisation policy is in danger.

Israel's president suggests Likud and Labour form a government to change the system which failed to produce clear election result.

Britain and Iran have reached agreement on resuming diplomatic relations (Independent).

Rumours that Mandela is to be released (Independent).

BROADCASTING

Star - Hurd's box of surprises. Puts ITV up for grabs.

Sun - Pay as you view night channel plan for BBC. Biggest shake-up small screen has known.

Mirror - TV devolution - dozens of new channels; ITV faces a huge shake-up. Pay as you view for BBC; hundreds of radio stations. Leader says while our TV is the best in the world we have lost out through inadequate choice. The Home Secretary has promised to end that. But the new lighter touch policy must not degenerate into a choice between one awful imported soap opera and an old film.

Today - Red card to black out TV's misfits. Leader fears that the plans are no better than a quarter step in the right direction of free competition. But BBC and ITV companies will be left holding a privileged place.

PRESS DIGEST

Express page 1 lead - The Great Television Revolution; biggest shake up in broadcasting history.

Mail - Red card penalties in the TV revolution. Leader says British TV has lift off. Once again it is a Tory Government which welcomes the wonders of technology and trusts the people to make the most of it.

FT - Hurd unveils biggest TV shake-up for 30 years. White Paper received a generally warm welcome from Tory MPs but there was concern on both sides of the House about the potential impact on programme quality. Lex column says that even those investors who would not know a cable if they tripped over it must now be able to calculate that more channels means greater demand for programme-makers output. Leader's assessment is that the general principle that the viewer and listener should have greater choice deserves a welcome; but it is doubtful that the Government has got the mixture right.

Times - Dozens of TV channels in broadcast revolution; leader says the Government's proposals are both bold and coherent - but they are, inevitably, a leap in the dark. There were fears about how far Mr Hurd would go, but he has not tried to have his cake and eat it - and for that he deserves more praise than he won yesterday.

Telegraph - Hurd TV plan for dozens of new services. Fifth national channel by 1993 in 'more means better' era. Labour MPs fear drop in quality; leader gives qualified welcome. Your impulses are contradictory; you seek freer rein for market forces while wishing to impose stricter standards of taste. The main worry is the future quality of commercial TV programmes. Government has done great good by exposing large portions of British life to competition. But there are areas over which reservations must remain and broadcasting is one of them.

Guardian page 1 lead - Guardian cues the TV revolution. Radical proposals deigned to liberalise British TV for the '90s.

Guardian leader says Government still can't be brought to address the central issue - the cultural role of broadcasting. The great risk is that it will deliver TV broadcasting into the hands of single minded, narrow minded money men.

Independent - Broad welcome for White Paper. Concern about standards; about concentration of ownership in too few hands. Surprise at Home Secretary's "conversion" from a regulator to a free market exponent.

PRESS DIGESTPENSIONERS

Star - Lawson denies pensions squeeze on the old folk; welfare cash stays. Leader headed "What did you mean, Nigel?" wonders if every reporter there misinterpreted his words. Whatever the truth he has killed the means test stone dead.

Sun - Nigel vows £200million boost for old folk. Turns Tables on Kinnock. Boost could raise pensions by £2 a week.

Mirror - Lawson U-turn on elderly.

Today - Lawson U-turn on means test.

Express - Lawson £100million bill to save face. Paul Potts on "Why Lawson is too tough even for Thatcher" says the sight of Chancellor in full political retreat is a rare spectacle.

Mail - Now it's Nigel the Nice Guy - adroitly digs himself out of a political hole with a display of fast political footwork which managed to wrongfoot Labour. Leader headed "Scrooge turns into Santa" says whatever happened between him and journalists his performance yesterday was the ripest. Here was something completely different; a promise of something extra for the elderly in need. But it looks to them more like a politician caught with his trousers down and having to pay a forfeit to a deserving cause.

Telegraph - Lawson pledges more cash for poor pensioners; leader gives qualified welcome.

Times says the Lawson row forces pension top-up pledge. The scheme to help more than a million of poorest pensioners was unveiled to defuse controversy. Separate story describes in detail the briefing given by the Chancellor on Friday saying the journalists were not expecting much of the story and not all of them even bothered to take full notes. The Lobby have asked Treasury for a transcript of briefing but have been told the tape-recorder had not worked due to a fault. Robin Oakley spells out the consequences of the pensions briefing under the heading "Lawson's amazing gaffe".

FT - Government seeks to defuse row by announcing that it was planning new package of measures to help poorest pensioners. Journalists present at the Chancellor's briefing insist that they did not misinterpret his remarks.

PRESS DIGEST

Guardian - Embarrassed Lawson promises plenty for pensioners; leader says rarely can a Ministerial kite have been shot down so quickly.

Independent - Unexpected pledge of more money for needy pensioners. Government machine yesterday mounted a salvage operation to show Sunday papers had got it wrong.

YOUR POLISH VISIT

FT - Assessment of impact of your visit is that without detracting from your crowd drawing charisma, your ideas on the need for greater democracy and free market economics came as much less of a shock to the Polish regime than they would have done a few years ago and many of them fell on already fertile ground.

MINISTERS (UK VISITS, SPEECHES ETC)

- DEM: Mr Fowler addresses Federation of Recruitment and Employment Services Executives Committee lunch; later addresses Pannell Kerrs Forster informal dinner, London
- DES: Mr Baker addresses the CBI National Conference on the subject of building a better community.
- DTI: Lord Young addresses Greater London Women's Committee autumn conference
- LCD: Lord MacKay visited by Chief Justice of Israel
- MAFF: Mr MacGregor gives opening address at seminar on Impact of Biotechnology on Agriculture, London
- WO: Mr Walker attends reception at American Embassy
- DEM: Mr Lee visits Peterborough
- DEM: Mr Cope addresses national exhibition on learning technology, London
- DH: Mr Mellor opens London and Thames Valley Pharmaceutical Group conference, Middlesex; later lunches with Association of Directors of Social Services
- DH: Mrs Currie attends reception at Playmates National Toy Libraries
- DOE: Mr Trippier addresses RIBA 1992 conference, Birmingham
- DOE: Mrs Bottomley visits Isle of May in Scotland (seals)
- DOE: Mr Howard visits Yorkshire Water Authority, Leeds
- DSS: Lord Shelmersdale attends reception for Playmatters National Toy Libraries Association
- DSS: Mr Lloyd visits North Fylde Central Office
- DTp: Lord Brabazon opens the Institute of Freight Forwarders' conference, NEC, Birmingham
- HO: Mr Patten visits Samuel Coleridge Taylor Day Centre for Young Offenders
- HO: Mr Hogg visits Oxford Prison
- MAFF: Baroness Trumpington addresses Womens' Advisory Committee one day conference, Aylesbury
- MAFF: Mr Ryder addresses National Agricultural and Countryside Forum, London
- SO: Lord James Douglas-Hamilton opens Acidification in Scotland Symposium, Crown Office, Edinburgh
- WO: Mr Grist attends Monitor Gala Evening, Cardiff
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MINISTERS (OVERSEAS VISITS)

DEN: Baroness Hooper attends Energy Council, Brussels

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MINISTERS (PRESS INTERVIEWS)

FCO: Sir Geoffrey Howe appears on BBC Radio Analysis Programme

DOE: Mr Gummer interviewed by Womans Hour

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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)

'File on 4': BBC Radio 4 (19.20). Bradford's Town Hall revolution

'The Divided Kingdom': C4 (20.00). The Protestant and Catholic communities in Ulster.

'Brass Tacks': BBC 2 (20.30). What kind of jobs are being created by Britain's economic revival.

'4 What It's Worth': C4 (20.30) New evidence about drugs used to treat arthritis.

'The Other Europe': C4 (21.00). Communist economics: Poland's economy contrasted with Hungary's.

'The World Tonight': R4 (22.30) followed by "The Financial World Tonight" and "Today in Parliament"

'Newsnight': BBC 2 (22.30)

'Witness': ITV (22.35) In-depth report on social workers in Bradford

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