

11 November 1988

PRIME MINISTER

MAIN EVENTS

The Queen and Duke of Edinburgh dine with the Speaker at Speaker's House

Piper Alpha Inquiry Preliminary Hearing

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STATISTICS

BSC/BISPA: Usable steel production (Oct)

HO: Criminal Statistics, England and Wales, Supplementary Volume 3

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PARLIAMENT

Commons

Business: Debate on Housing and Homelessness on a Motion for the Adjournment

Adjournment Debate: The implications for Anglo-Indian relations of the situation of the Sikh community in India (Mr T Dicks)

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MINISTERS - See Annex

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PRESS DIGESTMain News

SNP's victory at Govan plunges Labour into a new crisis.

Govan shock stuns Kinnock whose leadership will again be called into question with a 33% swing against Labour. Their defeat forces Labour to contemplate the disintegration of their last real power base in Britain - Express.

Poll misery for Kinnock as one of his safest strongholds falls in one of the biggest by-election reversals of all time - Mail.

Kinnock humiliated - Sun; result was a disaster for Kinnock - Mirror.

SNP deal humiliating blow to Labour - Telegraph.

Sensational Govan by-election victory for SNP - Independent.

Kinnock says it was a bad result which they will carefully examine. He adds that there was clearly a protest vote against you - Times.

Blunkett and green trio in new Labour team, as Kinnock moves to strengthen the 'green' profile of his front bench - Guardian.

Conservative Party rules out fielding candidates in Northern Ireland by turning down North Down Model Conservative Association's request to affiliate to the Party's National Union. Sir Peter Lane says there is little prospect of winning seats ~~there~~, and there was a danger the pro-Union vote would be split.

Tube chiefs face prosecution over King's Cross disaster - Express.

Report accuses Tube bosses of being blinkered - Mail.

Official verdict on London Tube bosses is "GUILTY" - Star.

"No Safety; No Money; No Chance" is Mirror headline.

£300,000 pay-offs for transport bosses - Today.

Government planning new special airborne disaster squads to deal with national emergencies to deal with tragedies such as King's Cross.

Government postpones sale of Girobank as no suitable buyer comes forward.



PRESS DIGEST

Prince Charles says European countries' national identities will not be swallowed up when single market comes into force.

Robin Cook refuses to name mole who leaked Ministerial letter on community charge when interviewed by Cabinet Office official.

Cabinet blocks Opposition's censure debate on Chancellor and you give him a big boost in the Commons.

13 saved as helicopter ditches in North Sea.

Report says fewer people are falling behind with mortgages and having their homes repossessed as unemployment falls.

Council in Dorset thinking of buying cheap accommodation in the north to house their homeless families - Mail.

Lord Armstrong says Civil Service has lost top people to private sector through inadequate pay.

Labour Party General Secretary found guilty of illegally using Red Cross sign in a political campaign. Given conditional discharge and ordered to pay £200 costs.

You have allowed Nicholas Ridley to sue the Mirror for libel over an article by Paul Foot (Independent).

Around 20% of hospital outpatients fail to keep appointments, leading to wasted resources and longer waiting times for other ~~patients~~ - Times.

Research suggests the rise in cot deaths appears to be caused mainly by the absence from home of the father or where he is unemployed.

Japanese firms preparing to flood Britain with imports using America as a "back door" to get round tough EC anti-dumping tariffs - Mail.

House prices set to plunge by 10% in next two years - Today.

£20million annual sale of toy guns is halved since Hungerford massacre.

Storm over appointment of £100,000 a year new head of Whitehall accounting service - Today.



PRESS DIGEST

A number of water authorities are threatening to put up charges by 20% unless the Government eases its tough financial targets (Independent).

Guardian highlights case of Dundee plumber who has been trying for two years to obtain a grant for his son to train in his own company.

BR to buy up homes blighted by planned high speed line between London and Channel Tunnel.

Jaguar shop steward demands £20,000 pay off to end strike which has cost firm £25million.

BAA chairman says fifth passenger terminal at Heathrow and a second terminal at Stansted may be needed by the turn of century to meet air travel growth.

PAC report criticises staff in some Social Security offices for not telling claimants what they are entitled to. More than £600million not being claimed.

NUS criticises student loans plan, saying it will lead to widespread increases in student hardship and place even heavier burden on parents.

Telegraph leader says student loans has been well worth waiting for. The scheme is generous, and having 10 years to repay a "soft" loan once borrower is earning 85% of average wage is hardly a deterrent.

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Teachers at Greater Manchester comprehensive vote against opting out (Independent).

Central TV likely to diverge from ITV's line over Broadcasting White Paper, and say it is keen to take advantage of new openings in TV.

New row threat with EC over British built Nissan Bluebird as Commissioner warns that officials favour French claim that cars are Japanese imports, not British products - Express.

Soldiers warned to move families out of Northern Ireland as IRA threaten to blow up quarters outside forces' bases - Star.

Independent leader says that Colin Moynihan and football's controlling bodies are a long way from producing a scheme which is practical, let alone acceptable in terms of civil liberties.



PRESS DIGEST

Snooker champion, Steve Davies, fined £12,000 for refusing to attend press conference last month.

Church of England General Synod votes to have at least 24 black members at a time, despite strong opposition.

Michael Heseltine calls on Government to set the pace on improving Europe's environment and should ditch policy of following rather than leading on environmental matters at European level - Telegraph.

Diplomats believe breakthrough is near for release of Terry Waite after Britain agrees to resume full relations with Iran - Star.

Following up yesterday's story about Britain paying £200million pensions to Spanish, the Star has pictures of a group toasting "us big hearted" Britons in champagne.

US Defence Department hand out photographs, which the Russians have probably had for seven years, of their revolutionary Stealth jet fighter.

Soviet Union offers to become directly involved in negotiations on independence for Namibia.

Hungary is to legalise rival political parties - Independent.

KING'S CROSS REPORT

Mail leader says there is no political capital to be made by anybody out of the horror of King's Cross.

Today leader condemns pay-offs to Tube bosses saying the Government should not let it happen. It is intolerable that the suffering should wait for peanut compensation while the guilty walk off with gold.

Express - New chairman of LRT is City businessmen Sir Neil Shields who has almost no previous experience in the transport industry. Leader says the root cause of the disaster was management complacency and Bright and Ridley have resigned, as decency dictated they must.

Sun leader says the report was a devastating indictment of London Underground and there were 157 reasons why the bosses had to go.



PRESS DIGEST

Mirror leader condemns London Transport for putting money before safety. It says Paul Channon has done the proper thing by finding money, accepting the inquiry's 157 recommendations and bringing his railway inspectorate up to strength. But asks why is it takes a tragic loss of life before those in authority do what they should have done without it?

FT leader says that as important to the causes as poor training and dirty equipment were managerial attitudes towards safety. A year after the fire the Underground still seems chronically inefficient: there is no sign of a "serve the customer" ethos.

Times - Tube Chiefs blind to safety. In one of the most outspoken reports of any public inquiry, Fennell says the Underground suffered from blinkered and dangerous self-sufficiency. Victims' families consider taking out private manslaughter prosecution against LRT. Leader praises the report and says it is right not to look for a Ministerial scapegoat.

Guardian leader says safety is paramount. Paul Channon's head is close to the block but he is better employed staying where he is, to consider how best to improve safety.

Ferdinand Mount in Telegraph says that now the guilty men have owned up attention can focus on the underlying reasons for the disaster. He says there was a feeling amongst management that the "financial climate" was not right for spending on safety and that the atmosphere of nationalised industries - half-hearted, slovenly, unco-operative - contributed to scale of disaster and hindered rescue effort. Leader says Fennell's thoughtful and ~~penetrating~~ report revealed negligence and inadequacy at every level of LRT's management.

Independent leader says Inquiry revealed a "shocking level of managerial incompetence and complacency".

CHANCELLOR'S BRIEFING

Express leader says the Chancellor is no nearer to extricating himself from Lawsongate. It says the tape-recorder affair gets curiouser and curiouser. Most sensible people now accept the principle of targeting benefits. It gives the Chancellor 10 out of 10 for content. Nothing for execution.

Charles Moore in the Express asks how the Chancellor, an experienced ex-scribbler, so misread the practitioners of his old trade.



PRESS DIGEST

Times - Clear indication of government's concern about political fallout from the affair is given as backbenchers are told that a briefing on its pensions record has been rushed out and will be available today.

Guardian - Kinnock vows to pursue Chancellor over his briefing while Biffen criticises Press Lobby system, saying the press is too close to Government for comfort.

Guardian leader suggests Labour has not pressed its case for a debate with as much fervour as it might, because it was unlikely to gain much advantage.

INDUSTRY

FT - Furious row breaks out between Government and City as Elders continues buying S&N shares after MMC referral is announced. Its action was seen as a breach of the spirit, if not the letter, of the rules governing corporate practice during an inquiry by the MMC. Leader says there were reasonable grounds for a reference; and Elders will have to convince the MMC that the takeover would enhance rather than reduce competition. Judging by its buying spree yesterday, it has every confidence of doing so.

FT - Steel production in Britain in October was at its highest rate for almost nine years, with an average weekly output of 389,800 tonnes.

EC

~~FT~~ - Unemployment in the Community shows its biggest year-on-year drop since 1983 - 1.3% below September 1987.

Lord Cockfield criticises you for resisting greater political and economic union with EC.

IRAN

Times leader looks at the resumption of normal relations with Iran and sees greater trade opportunities and renewed hope for the release of hostages. But it calls for a continuation of patient diplomacy rather than overhasty action to consolidate the relationship.



MINISTERS (UK VISITS, SPEECHES ETC)

- DTp: Mr Channon visits BA Computer Reservation System, Heathrow
- HMT: Mr Major opens J B Microsystems new factory, Ashby de la Zouch, Leicestershire
- LCD: Lord Murray visits Dartford courts
- MAFF: Mr MacGregor addresses Baccles and Halesworth branches of the National Farmers Union
- DEM: Mr Lee attends Englands North Country video launch, Manchester Airport; later addresses North Wales Tourism Seminar, Colwyn Bay
- DEN: Baroness Hooper visits British Paper and Board Federation, Swindon
- DES: Mr Jackson addresses Oxfordshire National Union of Teachers
- DOE: Mr Gummer addresses Law Society on the Community Charge
- DOE: Mr Chope visits Palm House, Kew Gardens
- DTI: Mr Maude addresses National Federation annual dinner on the Single European Market
- DTp: Mr Bottomley addresses the Alcohol Detection Technology for the 1990s' conference, Lion Laboratories, Heathrow
- HO: Mr Hogg visits HMP Blundeston
- HO: Mr Renton addresses India Association of the UK annual dinner
- MAFF: Mr Thompson presents Agricultural Training Awards, London
- MAFF: Baroness Trumpington meets Mr Ali Mansur, Anglo-Turkish Council
- SO: Lord Sanderson meets Scottish Tourism Coordinating Group at St Andrew's House, Edinburgh, followed by press conference
- WO: Mr Grist addresses launch of Crimestoppers, HTV Wales, Cardiff; later officially opens laboratory at Blood Transfusion Centre, Cardiff
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MINISTERS (OVERSEAS VISITS)

- DH: Mrs Currie attends Tobacco Conference in Madrid
- SO: Mr Lang on trade visit to Japan (to 23 November)
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MINISTERS (PRESS INTERVIEWS)

DEM: Mr Fowler on Radio 4s Any Questions, Cheshire

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TV AND RADIO

'Today': BBC Radio 4 (6.30)

'Kilroy': BBC 1 (9.20)

'Analysis': BBC Radio 4 (11.00) Are the Conservatives conducting their own detailed policy review?

'The Parliament Programme': C4 (12.00)

'Business Daily': C4 (12.30)

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

'On The House': BBC 2 (19.30) Scientists from the Building Research Establishment talk about noise insulation

'Any Questions?' BBC Radio 4 (20.20) with Norman Fowler, Pierre Salinger, Gordon Brown and Sara Parkin.

'Protection the Children': BBC 2 (21.30) An Estate in Grantham forms a group to help children at risk.

'Newsnight': BBC 2 (22.30)

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

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