

25 November 1988

PRIME MINISTER

MAIN EVENTS

Prime Minister sees President Vassiliou (photocall) and has lunch with British Sports Association for the Disabled (photocall)

The Princess Royal visits the West Midlands

STATISTICS

DTI/CSO: Balance of payments current account and overseas trade figures (Oct)

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

DTI: Finished steel consumption and stock changes (3rd Qtr - prov)

PUBLICATIONS

HO: Prevention of Terrorism Bill

PARLIAMENT

Commons

Business: Debate on the Address

Adjournment Debate: Asbestos pollution and mesothelioma in Arnley, West Leeds (Mr J Battle)

Select Committees: Not available at time of diary preparation

MINISTERS — See Annex

PRESS DIGESTMain News

"The Battle of Westminster" is how Mail and Express describe the student demonstration which brought London's traffic to a standstill last night, closed three bridges and resulted in 60 arrests.

Police claim crowd was whipped up by Militant element of Socialist Workers Party who were interested in storming Parliament.

FCO bids to cool Royal Moscow trip row by insisting that the Queen has not been invited and that no soundings have been made (Express).

Whitehall shrugs off suggestions of snub as Gorbachev pays visit. He will spend only 36 hours in Britain, but you will see more of him than will President Reagan or George Bush. No evidence supports Labour Party suggestions that the visit is being cut short because of your alleged veto of any visit by the Queen to the Soviet Union (Guardian).

Labour stoke up row between you and Queen with Kinnock demanding a full explanation (Mail).

£200million boost for poor pensioners generally welcomed.

Nurses' union chiefs predict widespread disruption as ACAS talks collapse. Kenneth Clarke refuses to meet unions threatening strike action (Mirror).

Nurses' dispute takes new twist as midwives at North Middlesex Hospital vote to resign in mass grading protest.

Labour win by-election in Tower Hamlets to rob SLD of overall majority.

Cabinet Ministers accuse Labour chief of leaking top secret information on Government plans for MI5 after confidential briefing.

Joe Haines in the Mirror attacks you under the heading "The Great Dictator". He says that you don't care a damn for freedom and that you run a government in your own image. It is revengeful and vindictive. Swollen by conceit, bloated with arrogance, it doesn't give a damn for freedom, only the suppression of it. He describes the Queen's Speech as Thatcherism at its worst.

PRESS DIGEST

Government will still control privatised electricity according to an unofficial summary of the legislation due next week (FT).

Details of power sell-off are leaked, provoking a chorus of attacks from opposition, unions and environmentalists over plans for taxpayers and consumers to pick up a large share of the cost of the nuclear programme (Independent).

Member of Government-commissioned study on acidic emissions says electricity prices could rise by up to 8% if sulphur dioxide emissions from power plants are reduced.

Guardian leader's main complaint is not about what is in the Children Bill but what has been left out - especially child assessment orders and social workers' right of entry to houses where abuse is suspected.

Child care professionals and social workers broadly welcome Bill to strengthen rights of children and parents. Leader also gives it a welcome but warns against excessive optimism; none of the seven earlier acts it replaces is older than 1971, yet still there are abominable cases of child abuse. But it says the whole Bill merits the non-partisan scrutiny which characterised the Butler-Sloss Report (Independent).

Lord Thomson, Chairman of IBA attacks Government's broadcasting policies, saying plans to reshape ITV amount to an act of wanton destruction carried out for doctrinaire reasons (Independent).

US customs investigating claims that Aer Lingus supplied Iran with millions of pounds worth of American spares for military aircraft (Mail).

Sales and profits still surging ahead as industry switches to exports (Mail).

Companies in the Thames Valley offering "Bounties" of up to £400 to attract key workers because of serious skills shortage (Telegraph).

Economic and Social Committee, representing both sides of industry in Europe, votes overwhelmingly in favour of 'social dimension' (Guardian).

Salaries for computer staff in South-East slip behind those in Wales, the South-West and the Midlands (Times).

PRESS DIGEST

Businessmen told that boozy lunches are costing industry £700million a year and companies could go down the drain if they don't tackle the problem urgently (Mirror).

IMF team now in Britain, could warn Chancellor against further tax cuts, in bid to halt "runaway boom".

A new EC exhaust emission proposal will put £150 on to the price of a car.

Furious Barlow-Clowes investors demand to know where money is coming from for £150,000 renovation of home owned by Peter Clowes' wife.

Mail education correspondent reports that more well heeled Socialists are sending their children to private schools in London.

DES working group report demands reforms in teaching of technology in schools (Guardian).

New leader of chief constables association pledges to step up the fight against city centre hooliganism with a get-tough arrest policy (Mail).

Avon & Somerset Police Authority suing Home Office over costs of reinvestigation of IRA Woolwich and Guildford pub bombings.

Police chief calls for privatising parts of the force - caring for stray dogs, lost property and security patrols - so that officers can be used in the fight against crime.

Ministers are believed to have stepped away from requiring all civil servants in the Secrets Bill to sign legally enforceable contracts imposing life-long obligations of secrecy (Times).

Ministers put off until next month decision on transatlantic tank battle.

PAC criticises 'inefficient' MOD accusing it of wasting huge sums of public money particularly on British Forces in Germany.

British Army exercises in West Germany are taking place with more restrictions than ever amid concern about antagonising local people.

You win the international deal you have been demanding to curb sex and violence on satellite TV.

PRESS DIGEST

British Rail admits blunder which led to 60 luxury homes near Maidstone being built in the path of a new Channel Tunnel railway line (Today).

British Airways ending flights to three European destinations, including Malta and Gibraltar.

Britain facing worst rat plague in living memory - bringing an increased risk from dangerous diseases.

Murder suspect David Evans attacked in French prison.

Major inquiry begins after Calderdale social services chief is jailed for sexually corrupting two young boys.

Russian RAC rally driver fined £350 and banned for reckless driving (Express).

More than 1,700 Armenian women and children evacuated by air and road from Azerbaijan as mobs leave trail of carnage.

South African Government confirms Mandela will not return to jail; announcement clearly intended as a further step in a cautious process of relaxing his prison restrictions (Independent).

Arafat orders end to raids against Israel.

SOCIAL SECURITY

Express leader welcomes the extra money for poor pensioners saying all's well that ends well. It adds that if it were not for the Government's economic success John Moore would not have been able to pull £200million pension bonus out of the hat.

Times - The surprise announcement of £200million more for the poorest pensioners, which came months earlier than expected, has defused Lawson row. The date for bringing it in is probably earlier than it would have been, but for the row and Conservative MPs believe the Treasury has been forced to be more generous than it would have otherwise been.

More than 2,500,000 pensioners to share a £200million a year cash bonus (Sun).

Britain's breadline pensioners given £200million boost to cope with cost of living (Star).

PRESS DIGEST

Old folk cash in on Lawson's blunder (Today).

Independent - Extra rises for older pensioners are accelerated by the Chancellor's gaffe. The package will now be used by Ministers as evidence that the Chancellor was telling the truth.

Guardian - £200million windfall for old. Extra benefits for 2.6million pensioners rushed through to cover Lawson's means test gaffe.

FT - Moore's £200million benefits package for pensioners designed to extinguish recent political row over its policy towards state assistance for pensioners.

Announcement brought forward as face-saving measure after claims that the Chancellor intended to means test pensioners' benefits (Telegraph).

WATER PRIVATISATION

Mail leader welcomes the proposed National Rivers Authority but says that the Government has to show that the quango will have both power and personnel to make it effective. It concludes that the Bill is a large one in every sense. It may prove easier to pass than pay.

John Cunningham describes water sell off as a huge rip-off against the taxpayer and claims that charges will double (Mirror).

You are determined that water industry sell-off will benefit the environment as well as taxpayers and investors. Water chiefs will face two years jail or huge fines if they pollute rivers, lakes, canals or reservoirs. There will also be tough penalties for substandard drinking water (Today).

Guardian leader's verdict, headed "The holes in the bucket", is that establishment of Director General of Water Services and creation of criminal offence for supplying unfit water are welcome. But these could have been achieved without privatisation; and the Bill won't increase competition in the market place one jot.

FT - Water Bill leaves many critical questions on the future of the water industry unanswered. Worries remain in the City about the scale of the regulation that is thought necessary and about the amount of capital investment required. Leader says the Government is embarking on an immensely complex and costly exercise, without considering alternatives and without having made

PRESS DIGEST

a convincing case that the end results will bring benefits to the consumer. A huge amount of parliamentary time will be devoted to a Bill whose economic justification is hard to detect.

Times leader says the debut of the Water Bill was not auspicious. The Government has a case to prove. To be justified privatisation must offer the prospect of making the basic costs of making treating and supply cheaper still and meeting rising public expectations about the place of water in our ecology.

Telegraph leader claims many Conservative MPs still believe the case for this privatisation is "not proven". Mr Ridley's strongest card is that the industry will act more efficiently once privatised. Concern that the legislation does nothing to control new owners cashing in on the Water Authorities land holdings.

NORTHERN IRELAND

"Murder Incorporated regrets", is how leader in Express describes the IRA killing the wrong people again. It adds that at least we are spared the sight of Murder Inc's public relations officer Gerry Adams weeping crocodile tears from our TV screens. We have the Government's broadcasting ban to thank for that.

Sun leader says that the Government may be getting tougher with terrorists. But still not tough enough. It calls for jail, without remission. An IRA criminal should not serve a day less.

Star leader asks how many more innocents must die before the IRA's supporters realise that these scum are their country's own worst enemy.

Today leader under heading "Revulsion of IRA killings" says the IRA stands for murder and destruction, nothing more. There will be no staunching of the blood until it has been destroyed.

STUDENT DEMONSTRATION

Labour MPs accuse police of brutality as 20 student demonstrators are hurt when mounted police charge without warning (Mirror).

Police beat back thousands of rioting students who tried to storm Parliament. Bottles and wooden stakes hurled at mounted police during pitched battle (Sun).

Battle lines of crazed protestors charge across Westminster Bridge hurling wooden stakes at police.

PRESS DIGEST

Student protest commandeered by a group of Socialist Workers Party activists (Times).

Guardian - Angry students and Labour MPs accuse police of using unprovoked and unnecessary violence to break up demonstration against top-up loans proposals. 20 people needed hospital treatment.

Telegraph Police and Neil Kinnock blame violence on left-wing agitators who infiltrated what was planned as a peaceful demonstration. National Union of Students blame police for unnecessarily aggressive tactics including the mounted police charge. Worst violence involving the police since Wapping. Labour MPs call for inquiry.

Today leader says the violence could have been avoided if the demonstration had not been held on a weekday. For that the Home Secretary and the Police Commissioner are to blame.

EAST-WEST RELATIONS

Independent leader looks at today's visit by President Mitterrand to Moscow and observes that he is giving high priority to raising France's profile in Eastern Europe. It suggests his visit may come to be seen as the moment when his own diplomacy reverts to a more Gaullist one.

FT - Western States dismayed by French procedural objections over new talks on reducing conventional arms in Europe.

FT - France expected to finalise today a \$2billion package of credits for the Soviet Union.

MINISTERS (UK VISITS, SPEECHES ETC)

- DEM: Mr Fowler addresses National Training awards, QEII, London
- DES: Mr Baker visits William Beamont City High School and Sir John Deane's Sixth Form College
- DOE: Mr Ridley opens rural housing scheme, Harbottle, Northumberland
- DTI: Lord Young opens Atlantic Computers new offices, Staines
- HMT: Mr Lawson presents award to Midlands Variety Club Businessman of the Year, Birmingham; later addresses Peat Marwick Conference on Going Public, Birmingham
- LCD: Lord Mackay officially opens Norwich Combined Court
- SO: Mr Rifkind addresses Institute of Directors, Gleneagles Hotel, Gleneagles, Perthshire
- DEM: Mr Cope addresses EROPMI (NFSE) conference speech, London
- DH: Mrs Currie visits NNEB College, Leicester
- DOE: Mr Moynihan addresses County National Westminster conference on water privatisation
- DOE: Mr Howard opens CEGB Plant, Dungeness
- DTI: Mr Maude addresses Warwickshire in 1992; later addresses the Coleshill and District Christian Aid Committee
- DTp: Mr Bottomley visits Merseyside unleaded petrol regional week
- DTp: Lord Brabazon visits Humberside Port; later addresses the annual dinner of the Port of Goole Shipping and Transport Association
- FCO: Mr Eggar attends FPA Centenary Ball
- MAFFBaroness Trumpington visits Cambac JMA Research Ltd open day, Reading
- SO: Mr Forsyth addresses Association of Colleges of Further and Higher Education, King James Hotel, Edinburgh; later opens AMJECT Ltd Premises, Beta Centre, Stirling University
- WO: Mr Grist opens Rank Hovis Mill, Barry; later visits Coronation Ward, Cardiff Royal Infirmary; later attends Welsh Sports Ball in aid of Welsh Sports Aid Foundation, Cardiff
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TV AND RADIO

'Today': BBC Radio 4 (6.30)

'Kilroy': BBC 1 (9.20)

'Analysis': BBC Radio 4 (11.00) Reforming the Official Secrets Act

'The Parliament Programme': C4 (12.00)

'Business Daily': C4 (12.30)

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

'The Friday Report': BBC 2 (20.00) The Funding of Oxford University

'Any Questions?' BBC Radio 4 (20.20) with Baroness Blackstone, Mary Baker, David Willetts and Paul Foot

'Newsnight': BBC 2 (22.30)

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