

13 December 1988

PRIME MINISTER

MAIN EVENTS

Owen Carron appeals against extradition in Irish High Court
? Patrick Ryan extradition response

Arafat speaks at UN in Geneva - Sir Crispin Tickell attending
? Statement on Scottish Block Vote

EC: Industry Council, Brussels

EC: Economic and Social Committee, Plenary, Brussels (to 15 Dec)

EC: Health Council, Brussels

STATISTICS

OPCS: Legal abortions. June Qtr 1988

OPCS: Fatal accidents occurring during sporting and leisure activities 1987

PUBLICATIONS

DES: Computer Board for Universities and Research Councils Report for
period 1 April 1985 to 31 March 1988

PARLIAMENT

Commons

Questions: Education and Science; Defence; Prime Minister

Business: Electricity Bill: 2nd Reading (2nd Day), Money Resolution and
Ways and Means Resolution
At 10.00 pm the House will be asked to agree the Civil and
Defence Votes on Account and the Winter Supplementary
Estimates
Afterwards, Motion relating to the Social Fund Cold Weather
Payments (General) Amendment Regulations

Adjournment Debates: No fault compensation (Mr E Morley)

Select Committees:

MEMBERS' INTERESTS

Subject: Parliamentary Lobbying

Witnesses:

1. At 4.30 (aprox) National Union of Railwaymen
2. At 5.00 (approx) Confederation of Health Service
Employees
3. At 5.30 (approx) Transport and General Workers
Union

PARLIAMENTARY COMMISSIONER FOR
ADMINISTRATION

Subject: Health Service Commission

Annual Report 1987-88

Witness: Health Service Commission

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2.

PARLIAMENT (cont'd)

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

Lords: Starred Questions
Atomic Energy Bill (HL): Second Reading
Debate to take note of the White Paper "Broadcasting in the 90s:
Competition Choice and Quality" (Cm 517)
UQ to ask HMG what measures are being taken to ensure
satisfactory standards of care for the infirm elderly in the
community

MINISTERS - See Annex

PRESS DIGESTMain News

Two tragedies - the Clapham rail crash and the Armenian earthquake - dominate the press today, with the rail crash displacing Armenia from front pages.

A faulty signal is widely blamed for the worst rail crash in 20 years - showing green when it should have been red. One driver left cab to talk to signal box. BR accept full responsibility.

36 dead, well over 100 injured, 32 seriously. Toll could have been more but for guard who halted a fourth train as it approached crash.

You order public inquiry.

Warm editorial praise for rescue workers and hospitals. Hundreds rush to give blood.

Rail unions issue warning that commuters face risk of further catastrophes if BR fails to solve overcrowding.

500,000 survivors of Armenian earthquake homeless in bitterly cold weather. Death toll put at 50,000. Builders may be charged over bad construction. Another air crash adds to death toll.

Soviet press criticises the rescue operation. Moscow appeals for more equipment and drugs. British public have given well over £1million.

Cost of rebuilding Armenia's stricken cities put at £4.5billion.

Soviet Union plans to shut down its nuclear power station in Armenia in an apparent concession to long-standing anti-nuclear feeling in the area.

Irish Government expected to announce today that it has rejected extradition of Ryan.

Signs that retail spending is cooling off and that Chancellor's medicine is beginning to work. Eases fears of higher interest rates.

Cecil Parkinson dismisses Labour's "nuclear tax" claim.

NFU to demand "tens of millions of pounds" in compensation for damage to the egg industry (Times).

PRESS DIGEST

You are considering an advertising campaign costing £500,000 in national newspapers to allay public anxiety over salmonella in eggs. No response to NFU compensation claims from last night's meeting at No 10 attended by Kenneth Clarke, John MacGregor and John Major (Independent).

Government will this week launch nationwide advertising campaign to try to calm public fears over health risks of eating eggs (FT).

Telegraph says the salmonella scare has produced a mountain of 300million eggs, worth £25million.

Rolls Royce denies reports that plans to develop HOTOL have foundered in a dispute with a fund-raising consortium.

Vauxhall is to invest £56million in a new paint shop at Ellesmere Port (FT).

Most workers in Post Offices ignored their union's call for a 24-hour strike yesterday. No effect on Christmas mail.

Express says Alan Tuffin, postal union leader, should get the message: cynical strikes against the public are not on.

Labour co-ordinating Committee says Kinnock made a serious tactical error in asking Labour MPs not to vote against the Prevention of Terrorism Bill last week: it promoted images of disunity.

Government will today publish pamphlet on community charge claiming that nearly 60% of families will be better off when rates are abolished (FT).

Legislation to be brought in this week will require people to go looking for work to qualify for dole.

About 3,000 academic staff, in addition to the 5,200 already agreed, will have to go to keep university pay costs constant, in real terms, according to confidential figures from UGC (Independent).

ILEA identifies 22 schools whose performance is causing concern.

Jersey, with one of the highest car ownership rates in Western Europe, considers rationing of new car registrations (Times).

Judge strongly criticises Sun for publicising its £1million libel settlement with Elton John before the court had approved it.

PRESS DIGEST

Hattersley accuses Government of eroding the freedom of Britons to walk the streets without fear of attack and questions Douglas Hurd's "political will" to bring in the necessary reforms (Times).

Management study shows recruitment crisis in the legal profession is driving up City solitictors' salaries at a rate which neither regional firms nor the public sector can match.

John Patten attacks teachers who refuse to teach crime prevention.

MPs effectively rule out both BBC and established independent television companies as contenders to televise the House (Times).

Government frontbenchers have set up a series of secretive party committees designed to ensure that the Whips tighten their control over parliamentary performances when the television cameras come in. Tories say Labour have set up identical committee (Independent).

Gonzales, according to Guardian, issues a thinly veiled warning to you that you will not be allowed to slow down moves towards united Europe.

David Jenkins, British Olympic athlete living in the USA, jailed for 7 years for supplying illegal anabolic steroids to athletes.

Three paintings by Van Gogh, worth £75million, stolen from Dutch museum.

Arafat's main aim in Geneva address will be to influence the incoming US Administration (Times).

Guardian says Foreign Secretary may soon have direct talks with Arafat if he repeats three undertakings in Geneva today.

The senior Israeli UN official in Geneva said Israel would not negotiate with the PLO regardless of what Yasser Arafat tells the Geneva Assembly today (Independent).

UK refuses Sri Lankan request to send Gurkhas to help President Jayawardene defeat extremists (FT).

PRESS DIGESTRAIL COMMENT

The Post says the catalogue of rail accidents we have seen in recent weeks cannot be written off as a coincidence. The fact that they happened is evidence of something seriously wrong with safety procedures. The inquiry must be given the widest possible brief.

Star pays tribute to rescue services - both professional and amateur, and ordinary folk for offering blood.

Sun says signal failure seems certain to have caused the disaster.

Mirror - Whatever the cause is and wherever the blame lies, there can be only praise for those who so selflessly risk their own lives to save others.

Today says our accidents in Britain are rarely pure acts of God, as in Armenia, and more often man-made. This is why the inquiry must be thorough and bring those responsible to book. Anyone who travels by train knows that sloppy, substandard conditions are the norm.

Express also notes the magificent professional response of the emergency services and is one of a number of newspapers calling for

the inquiry to look at overcrowding which almost certainly had a bearing on the numbers of casualties.

Mail says the suggestion is that the disaster was associated with the transition from old to new equipment. Is British Rail investing enough in safety?

Telegraph says many will be dismayed to see a disaster of this magnitude befalling the transport system so soon after Zeebrugge and King's Cross. Accidents are inseparable from human activity, but there must be concern whether a sufficiently high premium is being put on public safety.

Guardian notes that the calamity occurred when British Rail is speeding up its capital spending after decades of underinvestment. The signs of that spending are visible everywhere, not least in the South East.

Times leader attempts to put the accident in context: in 1987 there were only 20 collisions involving passenger trains on the entire rail network and only 10 fatalities. It suggests that no form of mass transport can be completely safe; there is always a

PRESS DIGEST

human element.

FT - BR officials reject overcrowding and cost-cutting as significant factors.

Independent leader says all forms of transport involve a degree of risk. It is the responsibility of management to ensure that the dangers are minimised, and of Government to provide public transport undertakings with the means to do so. An efficient public transport system is a national necessity. It cannot be bought cheaply.

MEDIA

Government expected to announce today radical changes to tax regime for ITV companies, moving from profits based to revenue based levy (FT).

GATT

Times leader looks at the failed GATT meeting in Montreal and concludes that it is the Community, rather than the Americans, which must think again. The CAP must be drastically reformed to release funds to finance the transformation of Europe's rural economy through non-farm investments.

EC

Times leader looks at the EC fisheries agreement and calls for a long-term solution to conserve fishing stocks to avoid a see-saw effect on the fishing industry. It also calls on the Government to provide assistance to affected fishing industry, possibly in the form of debt relief.

Police Chiefs meeting in London yesterday to discuss EC frontier proposals decided to step up liaison with foreign police forces. German police fear abolition of controls will increase crime (Independent).

MINISTERS (UK VISITS, SPEECHES ETC)

- DEM: Mr Fowler addresses CBI World of Change conference, London
- DTI: Lord Young and Mr Clark attend meeting and host luncheon for Mr Kamentsev, Deputy Chairman of the Council of Ministers of the Soviet Union
- DTp: Mr Channon appears before the Transport Select Committee
- HO: Mr Hurd attends Retail Consortium lunch on Sunday Trading
- MAFF: Mr MacGregor addresses meeting of County farmers, Woburn
- MOD: Mr Younger visits the Meteorological Office
- WO: Mr Walker opens Gainsborough Flowers new extension, Ynys Hir, Porth; later visits Castle Nails and Somerset Wire, Tremorfa; also attends lunch with Lyddon, Cardiff
- DEM: Mr Lee addresses Association of Multiple Travel Agents annual luncheon
- DEM: Mr Nicholls addresses Industrial Society on ET, London
- DEM: Mr Cope attends ET Promotional Day, Yorkshire and Humberside
- DES: Mrs Rumbold addresses the Council of Chartered Secretaries and Administrators
- DES: Mr Butcher visits Berkshire LEA
- DH: Mr Mellor addresses Help the Hospices conference
- DOE: Mr Chope visits London Borough of Harrow (planning)
- DOE: Mr Gummer meets Association of District Councils
- DOE: Lord Caithness meets Thamesmead Town Council (housing); later meets Environment MPs
- DOE: Mr Trippier addresses Public Finance Foundation conference
- DTI: Mr Forth addresses Coal Consumer Council and Bureau Veritas Quality International
- DTI: Mr Maude addresses British Export Food Council on 1992
- DTI: Mr Atkins addresses Federation of Manufacturers of Construction Equipment
- DTp: Mr Portillo announces better taxi facilities for the disabled; later, is guest speaker at the Parliamentary Road Passenger Transport Group annual dinner, London
- FCO: Mr Waldegrave addresses Foreign Affairs backbenches
- HO: Mr Patten addresses Crime and Policy conference, Sidney Sussex College

MINISTERS (Cont'd)

MAFF: Baroness Trumpington opens Cirencester Arable conference, Royal Agricultural College; later with Mr Thompson attends Milk Marketing Board's annual reception, London and addresses London Florists' Club, Christmas dinner, London

MAFF: Mr Thompson attends British Turkey Federation Charity Event, London

OAL: Mr Luce addresses opening of art exhibition, Barbican Centre, London

WO: Mr Roberts and Mr Grist attend 3M UK Ltd dinner, House of Commons

MINISTERS (OVERSEAS VISITS)

DTI: Mr Newton attends Industry Council, Brussels

DEM: Mr Lee attends EC Ministers Formal Tourism Council, Brussels (to 15 December)

ODA: Mr Patten attends bilateral discussions, Rome (to 14 December)

MINISTERS (PRESS INTERVIEWS)

FCO: Mr Eggar interviewed by BBC Caribbean Service

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)

'The Divided Kingdom': C4 (20.00). Images of Identity. Beatrix Campbell examines identities and the way their image is determined by London-based TV

'The New Professionals': BBC Radio 4 (20.00). The Management Consultants. Charts the rapid growth of management consultants and asks what is actually on offer and who benefits

'Moneyspinner': C4 (20.30)

'1988 Reith Lectures' BBC Radio 4 (20.45) The Rediscovery of Politics. Geoffrey Hosking. "The Paradox of Gorbachev's Reforms" Examines how the USSR's decline can be averted by the observation of the rule of law and respect for the individual

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

'Newsnight': BBC 2 (22.30).
