

20 December 1988

PRIME MINISTER

MAIN EVENTS

? Announcement on tanks

The Princess Royal attends an evening gala, Joy to the World -  
A Celebration of Christmas, Royal Albert Hall

? Announcement British Transport Police

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STATISTICS

CSO: Cyclical indicators for the UK economy (Nov)

DTI: Stocks 3rd Qtr revised

HO: Fire Statistics UK 1987

OPCS: Deaths by cause, registrations, June Qtr 1988

OPCS: Deaths from accidents and violence, registrations, June Qtr 1988

OPCS: Sudden infant death syndrome 1985-1987

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PUBLICATIONS

NAO: Management of Administrative Telecommunications

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PARLIAMENT

Commons

Questions: Health; Education and Science; Prime Minister

Business: Motions on Social Security Up-rating and Re-rating Orders.  
Details will be given in the Official Report  
Motion on the Scottish Affairs Select Committee  
Motions on the Welsh Rate Support Grant Report and  
Supplementary Reports  
Motion on Ministerial and other Salaries Order

Adjournment Debates: The dangers of inhalation of aerosols (Mr P Fry)



PARLIAMENT (cont'd)Select Committees:

## MEMBERS' INTERESTS

Subject: Parliamentary Lobbying  
Witnesses: "Keep Sunday Special" and  
"Sort out Sunday", opponents and  
supports of the Shops Bill [Lords] 1986

## COMMITTEE ON PRIVATE BILLS

Associated British Ports (no. 2) Bill  
North Killingholme Cargo Terminal Bill

Lords:

Starred Questions

Consolidated Fund Bill: All Stages

City of Glasgow District Council Order Confirmation Bill: Third  
Reading

Children Bill (HL): Committee (2nd Day)

Ministerial and Other Salaries Order 1988: Motion for Approval

Agriculture Improvement (Variation)(No 2) Scheme 1988: Motion for  
Approval

ROYAL ASSENT

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MINISTERS - See Annex

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PRESS DIGESTMain News

Britain declared winner of tank battle - Vickers to get order, subject to satisfying specifications.

One policeman shot dead, another severely wounded, in bank raid in Coventry which netted only £600. One robber shoots himself when cornered; another gives himself up. Chief Constable speaks of the "unalloyed courage" of his men.

12 arrested in raids in South London after murder and rape rampage in Surrey; at least 2 men to be charged with murder.

Toll of 17 police murdered in 8 years brings renewed calls for return of capital punishment.

Big row over "astonishing decision" by two High Court judges to allow a former prisoner to retain firearms certificate.

Firebombs found in several stores in London and Cardiff; a Plymouth store wrecked by fire. Are animal rights campaigners to blame?

Letter bomb sent to West Midlands Chief Constable.

Government planning crackdown on violent crime on London's Underground - Home and Transport Ministers meet.

Scotland Yard confidential survey shows most young blacks would never consider joining the police, two out of three considering the police are racially prejudiced.

£19million shell out for Edwina's nine words, as Star puts Government's rescue of poultry farmers. Some Tory backbenchers dissatisfied with package.

More writs - now 16 in total - against Edwina Currie from egg producers.

Housewives told to throw away icing and marzipan if it has been made from raw eggs.

Kinnock urges Army families to stand firm against IRA threats during fact-finding visit to province.



PRESS DIGEST

IRA car bomb attack on Armagh housing estate in fourth major attack on security forces' homes in six weeks and follows three previous bombings where soldiers lived with their families (Independent).

11 charged in Northern Ireland with conspiracy to murder security forces after discovery of bomb; they include a 65 year-old woman and two of her adult children.

Two-thirds of Britain's estate agents say house prices are either static or falling, according to RICS survey.

Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors warns that number of homes repossessed by building societies is likely to increase substantially as interest rate increases bankrupt more families (Independent).

Halifax Building Society is joining debt counsellors in warning consumers to control Christmas spending and borrowing in preparation for mortgage increases early next year (Times).

DTI intends to order loan companies to print warnings on their documents pointing out the burden of repayment (Times).

Chancellor appears set to rule out as impracticable and too expensive any big tax concessions to encourage personal saving in next March's Budget (FT).

Natwest's City arm to be investigated by Government for its role in Blue Arrow's takeover of an American group.

Executives' pay has shot up by 30%, including tax cuts, in last 12 months, according to Hay Management Consultants survey.

Some trains will be running on Boxing Day for first time since 1979.

Vauxhall to offer dual fuel vehicles in New Year - able to run on leaded or unleaded petrol.

1,000 Fleet Street members of EETPU vote 7-3 to join SOGAT - biggest setback yet for electricians' union.

Claims that there have been double the average number of leukaemia cases around Hinckley Point since nuclear power station was built.

Virtually 5million now reported to be covered by private health care - number increasing by 1,000 a day.



PRESS DIGEST

Traffic jams cut speed of 999 services by half in central London (Times).

National Council for Civil Liberties drops its opposition to random breath testing (Independent).

No more urban development corporations to be established before 1992, says David Tripper; Guardian says it is a retreat from a central plank of your Action for Cities programme.

Conservatives retain Hampshire Central in EuroParliament in record low turnout of 14%.

David Owen calls for new pact among Opposition parties to stop Conservatives dominating Euro elections next year.

Labour launches pre-Christmas campaign for urgent reform of CAP, claiming millions of people unable to afford celebrations this year (Independent).

Home Office report said to sound death knell for many race relations advisers - a £100million industry (Mail).

John Selwyn Gummer raises a storm by saying poor and old are being killed by Camden's rate increases.

University College, London, already facing debts, needs to find extra £2million for job cuts compensation following Treasury decision on reimbursements on redundancy costs for re-engaged staff (Independent).

Bristol and Bath Universities, together with Bristol Polytechnic, announce plans for a £520million business park next to the M4 near Bristol.

Lecturers' union says planned 37-hour week would hit research and general academic work as their members' working week is more than 44.5 hours (Times).

EC appoints troika to open talks with PLO as Arafat predicts an independent Palestinian State within five years (Independent).

Likud and Labour Parties in Israel form a coalition after all.



PRESS DIGEST

PLO rebuff the idea of bilateral peace talks floated by Shimon Peres and announce that Palestinian attacks against Israeli military targets will continue until the Palestinians achieve a homeland (Times).

Express says Gaddafi is mass producing poison gases.

George Bush announces that new administration will undertake a major review of current strategy for tackling Third World debt (FT).

Premadasa takes lead in Sri Lanka election poll count.

POLICE MURDER

Star, retailing the catalogue of violent crime in recent weeks, says MPs, in their refusal to permit capital punishment, don't seem to care about real people - more about "principles" and "ideals".

Mirror leader deals with judges allowing a convicted criminal to have a shotgun licence against police opposition and even though he had been sentenced for assault. In the name of sanity, what do judges think they are up to?

Today leader says police need the full weight of legal backing in their battle against the men of violence. What they don't need is the sort of weakness shown by two judges yesterday. All guns should be locked up under police control and taken out only for agreed and specified reasons.

Mail leader headed "The resolve needed to conquer violent crime" states that in 1988 Britain is a country where many citizens are afraid to leave their homes partly because they feel little is being done to protect them by politicians. You must exert your will to meet the crisis in crime. More managerial competence is needed in the police and greater use could be made of "specials". The British people need action and leadership to roll back the tide of crime.

Telegraph leader on the sense of frustration felt by police and public over the judges' ruling and the shootings in Coventry. It is clear minority of criminals prepared to use weapons is on the increase. And it is clear MPs and public favour much stiffer penalties to deal with men.



PRESS DIGEST

Guardian leader headed "Chicago in Coventry" says more people are killed in individual American cities each year than in the whole of the UK. But armed robbery has become a serious problem. Capital punishment will not stop offenders. It urges change in Criminal Justice Act which made sentence for carrying a gun same as that for using it.

Yesterday's shootings in Coventry will raise fresh debate about arming the police and bring into question yet again the availability of shotguns (Times).

EGGS

Brian Hitchen, Editor of the Star, in his column, says that if anyone should have resigned it is the Agriculture Minister whose inspectors did not spot what was going on at the feeding end of the battery business.

Sun leader says every day Edwina Currie looks more and more correct. And everyday the Tory backbench hit squad who forced her out of office looks more and more daft.

Mirror says Tory Backbenchers had been expecting a £40million package.

Today admires the speed with which the egg industry has winkled £19million out of Government. For quick results it's still best to belong to a powerful lobby like the NFU. That is an outfit which could teach ordinary unions a thing or two.

Express leader headed "MacGregor chickens out" says that fears that the Government is only interested in protecting the egg producers in the salmonella crisis were more than substantiated by Mr MacGregor's inept performance yesterday. He muffed the chance to give clear guidance on the issue and failed to seize the chance to show MAFF is on the side of the consumer. Indeed, he went a long way to confirming that Mrs Currie was essentially correct. There can be no more handouts to egg farmers.

Teddy Taylor MP, in Mail says that sadly, despite all his qualities, John MacGregor seems to have lost the battle with agriculture. He has become a virtual prisoner of NFU interests. You have shown time and again you are prepared to confront head on vested interests which are crippling the country. You must now face up to the most monstrous scandal of all.



PRESS DIGEST

Independent - Package strongly criticised from all parts of the House, and some Conservative supporters of the farming lobby say it does not go nearly far enough. But London Food Commission says MAFF is putting interests of farmers before health of the public. Leader calls John MacGregor's measures a feeble package. It not only fails to address the root of the problem. It does not even treat the symptoms effectively. In questions whether Mr MacGregor can provide the necessary leadership to control his Ministry's tendency to act as the uncritical friend of the producers.

Times - Department of Health figures show that up to middle of November 26 deaths have been linked to salmonella poisoning in both poultry and eggs.

Times - Farming industry reacts cautiously to £19million payout package welcoming the emergency measures but arguing that more is needed to prevent companies going out of business. Mixed reaction from Conservative MPs. Many criticised plan as inadequate while others went along with Labour saying too much attention was being paid to farming lobby at expense of consumers.

ARMENIAN EARTHQUAKE

Independent - 77 countries, including Bangladesh and Uganda, came to aid of Armenian earthquake victims. TASS says Soviet Union received £56million. The largest donation of money came from Britain (£5million) and Japan (£4.5million). The French sent 13 relief flights and provided some 500 specialist personnel.

Times leader says the televised presence of so many rescue teams and the daily reports of western generosity and Soviet gratitude may cause people in the Soviet Union to question whether the world is really as hostile as their textbooks and political commentators have led them until recently to believe. It may never be as easy as it has been for Soviet leaders to convince their people that the West is a natural enemy.

SECRETS BILL

In an Independent commentary, Peter Jenkins looks at tomorrow's 2nd Reading of the Secrets Bill. Conceding that the Bill represents a major liberalisation of the 1911 legislation, he goes on to complain about the lack of press freedom, saying that the entire debate is premised not on the idea of freedom but the need for secrets.



MINISTERS (UK VISITS, SPEECHES ETC)

- DEM: Mr Fowler addresses Association of British Chamber of Commerce, Birmingham
- MAFF: Mr MacGregor, Baroness Trumpington, Mr Thompson and Mr Ryder attend Captains of Industry Party, London
- DOE: Mr Trippier attends opening of Stonebridge Park Bus Garage, London, by the Prince of Wales
- DSS: Mr Lloyd attends Disability Organisation reception
- DTI: Mr Clark addresses Latin American Advisory Group, London
- DTp: Mr Bottomley attends opening of Boulton Bridge, Manchester
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MINISTERS (OVERSEAS VISITS)

- HO: Lord Ferrers visits UN Drugs Convention Vienna
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MINISTERS (PRESS INTERVIEWS)

- DES: Mr Baker interviewed by Hugo Young, The Guardian
- FCO: Sir Geoffrey Howe interviewed by Dutch TV
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TV AND RADIO

- "Today": BBC Radio 4 (6.30)
- "Kilroy": BBC 1 (9.20)
- "Business Daily": C4 (12.30)
- "The World at One": BBC Radio 4 (13.00)
- "The Divided Kingdom": C4 (20.00). Europe - A New Identity. Final programme. Is Britain's break-up into constituent nations and regions becoming more likely as the 21st century approaches?
- "Moneyspinner": C4 (20.30)
- "The Modern Mandarin": BBC 2 (20.30). Sir Robin Butler, Head of the Civil Service, talks about relations between politicians and mandarins, and imminent changes in the Civil Service
- "The World Tonight": Radio 4 (22.30) followed by "The Financial World Tonight" and "Today in Parliament"
- "Newsnight": BBC 2 (22.30)
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