

Page

21 December 1988

PRIME MINISTER

MAIN EVENTS

mf

TUC General Council

EC: Internal Market Council, Brussels

Herr Klein, West German Minister of Development visits ODA

PUBLICATIONS

HMT: Treasury and Civil Service Committee report on the Autumn Statement 1988

SIO: Report of HM Chief Inspector of Prisons Annual Report for Scotland 1987

PARLIAMENT

Commons

Questions: Scotland; Foreign and Commonwealth; Trade and Industry

Business: Official Secrets Bill: 2nd Reading
Motion to take note of EC Documents relating to Structural Funds. Details will be given in the Official Report

Adjournment Debates: Nurse regrading in the Greater Glasgow Health Board (Mr S Galbraith)

Select Committees: COMMITTEE ON PRIVATE BILLS
Associate British Ports (No 2) Bill
North Killingholme Cargo Terminal Bill

Lords: Starred Questions
Debate to call attention to the problems of the preservations of the country's historic buildings and treasures
UQ to ask HMG what progress is being made toward the privatisation of British Rail

MINISTERS - See Annex

PRESS DIGESTMain News

21 year-old Newport man in court charged with policeman's murder in Coventry; his companion in crime who shot himself had a secret hoard of weapons.

John Stalker, in Express, explains why we need to arm the police in the light of the Coventry incident. Writing has been on the wall for some time.

You resist pressure for tougher controls on guns in the wake of Monday's fatal shooting in Coventry and say we should wait to see the effect of new firearms controls which come in next year (Times).

22 year-old girl murdered by sex fiend near South West London station. Mail leads with this and talks about the crime crisis.

London Underground to get more police and radio network to fight crime.

Animal Liberation Front says more fire attacks on stores are on the way after one fire destroys Plymouth store. Letter bombs sent to 7 people - believed to be the work of Black activists. Star leader wonders who the real animals are.

Appeal Court in Belfast orders new inquest into shooting of 3 unarmed IRA terrorists and 3 RUC officers to give evidence in person to it.

Attorney General likely to ask Irish to bring charges against Patrick Ryan.

Several MPs - Tim Devlin, Richard Body and Teddy Taylor - want Edwina Currie reinstated after being "hounded out of office" by egg lobby. Sun, Express and Mail call for her early return.

Telegraph says a growing number of Tory MPs believe she has been vindicated by scientific evidence.

Welcome for Government decision in ordering a new tank for Army. Telegraph says it is entirely correct that the initial grant of funds should be tied to evidence of progress and if progress is not demonstrated the Government should be ready to buy abroad.

Even the Guardian says the choice is right politically, economically and commercially and, if Vickers rise to the occasion, militarily.

PRESS DIGEST

FT Lex column observes that Vickers shares nevertheless fell 7.5p - partly an anti-climax to leaked news. Leader asks why the Government could not have reached its decision sooner. Why it has taken 20 months for a Solomonic judgement is a mystery. It also argues for close collaboration on defence projects within NATO.

Huge rise in air travel predicted up to 2005 - threefold increase likely.

Some of the pops - notably the Mail - put the worst interpretations on the OECD report on the UK economy.

Labour Party claims families could face a £50 a month increase in costs in New Year through higher mortgages, water bills, rates and rail fares.

Community Insulation Programme may collapse because of a lack of unemployed people to work the scheme, leaving tens of thousands of elderly people and families on supplementary benefit without adequate home insulation (Independent).

1,000 workers of JCB to get £800 Christmas bonuses each.

Plessey abandons its court action aimed at blocking GEC's take-over bid (FT).

British Rail's station catering subsidiary sold to management.

Italian authorities hope to send 3,000 drums of toxic waste to Britain within next few weeks (Independent).

Government will announce today it has ratified an international agreement aimed at restricting the use of CFC's which destroy the ozone layer (Times).

Council house rent arrears have increased by an average of 37% between April and September, according to AMA, blaming housing benefit cuts.

Football Association claims the true cost of introducing a national membership card scheme is £65million - nearly twice as much as first thought.

Colin Moynihan, in Mail, retorts that one firm is prepared to introduce a system for nothing.

PRESS DIGEST

Football grounds arrests league table published in Telegraph - 6,147 last season, a rise of 11%.

Mail notes that nearly 30% of Asians in Britain between ages of 16 and 24 are in higher education, compared with 10% of whites.

Researchers claim Kinnock and you ducked 59 and 56% of questions put to you during General Election.

Having just said it would vote against uprating, Labour yesterday switched tactics and designed to abstain on social security benefits to avoid misrepresentation that it was against raising pensions (Times).

Government pressing for 10% cuts in Training Agency, according to Guardian, within a day of its commitment that there would be no redundancies arising from privatisation.

Greenpeace and Friends of the Earth claim big rises in membership since your environment speech.

Your Christmas message to the Noel Edmonds show leaks out.

Spain signs deal for Thyssen collection.

Shamir denounced by Likud's right after deal with Labour (Times).

EGGS

Sun leader advises its readers not to eat another egg until someone gives you a cast iron guarantee you cannot get salmonella poisoning. It is better egg producers go bust than innocent people die from poisoning. And Jimmy Reid in his column says Edwina Currie was right (but a fool to take on farmers): a Government's first responsibility is to the consumer.

Express leader headed "Edwina must return soon" says every day throws up more signs that the Tory Party now realises how badly Edwina Currie has been treated. She should be brought back at the next reshuffle. Jean Rook, on Edwina Currie, says we can't afford to lose "this good egg".

PRESS DIGEST

Mail leader headed "Come back Edwina" says as the days have passed the salmonella infection has been looking worse than it first supposed. There is a growing feeling Mrs Currie had to go not because she did anything wrong but because she offended the egg lobby. You would not be sorry to have her back and it is hard to believe that this talented lady will be on the backbenches for long.

Telegraph says the £19million grant to the poultry industry which declares it is grossly inadequate, has infuriated many who now perceive Mrs Currie as the martyred champion of the consumer rather than the victim of an error of political judgement.

In Independent interview, David Mellor strongly defends Edwina Currie and refuses to backtrack on her warning about salmonella poisoning.

Independent - A quarter of processing plants supplying feed to the poultry industry were found by MAFF to be infected with salmonella last year. But there were no prosecutions, production was not halted and none of the infected feed was destroyed.

Times - Tory MPs split over her resignation. Several regret she has gone.

CRIME

Express says it is hard to believe that 16 months after Michael Ryan's Hungerford rampage other unstable crackpots, like the Coventry raider who shot himself, can amass illegal weapons. Home Secretary's promises remain just words. How much longer must we wait before he delivers?

Editor of 'Guns Review' says new legislation has failed to reduce number of illegal guns (Independent).

OECD REPORT

Today - Britain faces years of high inflation and crippling interest rates.

Express - Britain's battle to keep bringing down unemployment will become harder next year.

Mail - Britain will fail to close the trade gap - it will get worse in next 2 years. They also forecast continuing inflation and rising unemployment.

PRESS DIGEST

Independent - OECD warns Britain on trade gap and inflation in its latest biannual report. It says deficit will widen to £16.5 billion by 1990 and inflation will average 5.45% in the same year.

FT - Britain is one of several industrial countries where fiscal policies will have to be restrained next year to combat inflationary pressures, according to OECD. It also projects a further deterioration in current account balance of payments. Leader says that however cloudy OECD's crystal ball, it appears that a number of quite modest changes in policy - fiscal adjustment in the US, continued monetary caution outside the US, renewed efforts to liberalise markets - might restore to the world a long period of sustained economic growth.

Times - OECD says inflation likely to be higher than forecast at 6.25%.

SECRETS BILL

Independent - Justice, British section of the International Commission of Jurists, says Secrets Bill is fraught with danger and could contravene the European Convention on Human Rights.

Independent leader laments the fact that the Secrets Bill contains too few checks and balances to the power of the executive. If Mr Hurd would trust the people, he would reduce the temptation for public servants to stray. Unfortunately he cannot bring himself to do so.

MEDIA

Independent - Reforms threaten regional TV. Government would allow overseas programmes to swamp local productions.

Independent - Six broadcasting journalists begin legal challenge to Government order banning tv and radio interviews with terrorist organisation and their supporters.

PRESS DIGESTPROPORTIONAL REPRESENTATION

Times - You reject proportional representation on grounds it leads to weak government. Leader says you have transfixed Opposition parties "as a mouse might be in the baleful stare of a cat. Labour is held in terror not by the unfaceable reality that, in its present condition, it is unelectable but by the growing horror of the sinister legend" that you are invincible. If Labour advocates of a pact and PR really want power they should concentrate on helping to get their party in a condition that makes it worthy of office.

SOVIET UNION

FT - Moscow tries to clear air over devaluation of rouble, indicating the measure would only apply to purchases of hard currency by Soviet enterprises.

FT - Gorbachev is still imposing strict limits to media freedom, according to International Press Institute.

MIDDLE EAST

Times - Britain prepares its own peace initiative in the Middle East. William Waldegrave will go to Tunis for a probable meeting with Yasir Arafat and on to Israel for talks with the Foreign Minister. He will attempt to break the impasse caused by Israel's refusal to pick up the olive branch extended by Arafat. There is concern that by the time President Elect Bush could order an initiative the moment will have passed.

MINISTERS (UK VISITS, SPEECHES ETC)

- DH: Mr Clarke attends the Great and the Good dinner, Dorchester Hotel, London
- DEM: Mr Lee visits Colchester
- DTp: Mr Portillo meets Cumbria County Council, Carlisle, about the Settle/Carlisle Railway
- HO: Mr Patten addresses meeting of Spitalfields Task Force
- MAFF: Mr Ryder attends UK Association of Frozen Food Producers AGM and luncheon, London
-

MINISTERS (OVERSEAS VISITS)

- DTI: Mr Maude attends Internal Market Council, Brussels
-

MINISTERS (PRESS INTERVIEWS)

- DES: Mr Baker interviewed by Granada TV
- FCO: Sir Geoffrey Howe interviewed on Capital Radio's "Capital Gold" programme (prov)
-

TV AND RADIO

- "Today": BBC Radio 4 (6.30)
- "You and Yours": BBC Radio 4 (12.00)
- "Business Daily": C4 (12.30)
- "The World at One": BBC Radio 4 (13.00)
- "Dispatches": C4 (20.30)
- "The World Tonight": BBC Radio 4 (22.30) followed by "The Financial World Tonight" and "Today in Parliament"
- "Newsnight": BBC 2 (22.30)
-