

22 December 1988

PRIME MINISTER

MAIN EVENTS

Houses of Parliament rise for the Christmas break

STATISTICS

HO: Prison Statistics: England and Wales 1987

PUBLICATIONS

DES: National Curriculum Council Orders on Maths and Science

DTI: Companies Bill

PARLIAMENT

Commons

Business: Timed Christmas Adjournment Debates until 3.30 pm

Lords: Starred Questions

Civil Aviation (Air Navigation Charges) Bill (HL): Second Reading

Merchant Shipping (Safety at Work Regulations)(Non-UK Ships)

Regulations 1988: Motion for Approval

Social Security (Contributions and Allocations of Contribution)(Re-rating) Order 1988: Motion for Approval

Social Security Benefits Up-rating Order 1988: Motion for Approval

PRESS DIGESTMain News

All 258 passengers die as Pan Am jumbo falls on Lockerbie; more feared dead on the ground. Britain's worst air disaster.

Much speculation over the possibility of sabotage as aircraft "just falls out of the sky".

Many pages of coverage.

An IRA Christmas bombing war in London apparently fortuitously foiled after a man shoots a youth trying to break into his car in Battersea. Nationwide hunt for gang.

Mother of shot youth says that because of him we can have a safe Christmas.

Picture of wanted man published.

Today - Panic of IRA gunman led police to bomb factory.

Claims that Irish beef unfit for human consumption has been made into beefburgers in Britain; at least 25 consignments uncovered. John MacGregor assures consumers the meat is not in the food chain.

2 million said to be suffering from Asian 'flu.

1,000 new jobs to be created in Northern Ireland after French firm decides to invest £90million in DeLorean car plant to make car engine components. Largest initial investment in Northern Ireland by a foreign company.

Treasury Select Committee says Chancellor is treading a dangerous tightrope with his policy of raising interest rates to curb inflation. If high interest rates choked growth too suddenly, unemployment would rise. If they acted too slowly, there could be a run on sterling and accelerated inflation (Times).

High Court rules that Bradford City Council's plans for a £5.8million cuts and privatisation package was not unlawful (Independent).

Thames Valley Eggs lays off 60 workers and puts remaining 600 on short time because of fall in demand.

PRESS DIGEST

Express launches its "Edwina is innocent OK" T-shirts and claims Government have found evidence of extensive continuation of poultry feed; 21 of 83 processing plants affected by salmonella.

Telegraph reports that not one egg infected with salmonella has been found during several thousand tested by Government laboratories.

And John MacGregor, in Telegraph, has leader page article rebutting the idea that MAFF is in the pockets of farmers.

Edwina Currie to be invited by Agriculture Select Committee to explain why she made the comments about salmonella (Times).

RSPCA has whole page advert in Times asking for money in fight against battery farming under the heading "Their lives will turn your stomach even if their eggs don't".

Mother and stepfather of a 16 month-old girl each jailed for 12 years for her manslaughter. Mail says we need direct action to protect children at risk. Girl too frightened to cry. Southwark Council identify series of errors, omissions, mismanagement and inexperience among social services staff on the case.

20 year-old man charged with murder of a 57 year-old hairdresser near M25 in Surrey.

Investors in Barlow-Clowes can expect to get back between 35p and 45p for every £1 invested, according to liquidators' report (FT).

British Telecom to offer 150,000 workers the chance to share their jobs in an attempt to recruit thousands of women.

One-third of railway track workers have left British Rail's Network SouthEast (including Clapham) this year.

ICI, among other companies, fined £4.2million by EC for price fixing.

Dockers' leaders call for indefinite strike to defend Dock Labour Scheme if Government moves to abolish it.

High Court clears way for water authorities to invest in private water sector (FT).

Local industry in Scotland and Yorkshire to receive EC investment totalling £592million to encourage private development.

PRESS DIGEST

PAC accuses MOD of sustained mismanagement over the privatisation of the Royal Dockyards at Devonport and Rosyth (Times).

Senior Conservative MPs condemn EC proposals for reducing speed limits on passenger commercial vehicles Community-wide describing it as a "Brussels Christmas joke" bound to aggravate traffic congestion (Times).

EC signals end of TV and radio listings monopoly enjoyed by Radio Times and TV Times (Times).

British scientists find long-sought link between smoking and lung cancer (Times).

BMA promise support for Private Members' Bill for random breath tests to be introduced by John Home Robertson MP in the New Year.

Protection of Privacy Bill to be introduced by John Browne MP next year has a strong chance of succeeding as concern grows among MPs of all parties at the invasion of privacy and the plight of victims of unfair reporting by the media (Times).

Cabinet considering adapting Continental system of examining magistrates to comply with European Court ruling because it is wary of giving sensitive information to judges. Douglas Hurd expected to indicate this morning that Britain will comply with the letter of the ruling (Independent).

Britain threatening to freeze newly revived relations with Iran unless diplomats are allowed to see two Britons held in jail without charges (Mail).

Shevardnadze leaves Tokyo with little to show for a visit designed to defrost the Soviet Union's relations with Japan, pave the way for a peace treaty and possibly even fix a date for Gorbachev to visit next year (Times).

AIRCRAASH TREATMENT

Every newspaper leads with the Pan Am/Lockerbie tragedy.

Star - 258 die as jumbo jet hits town. 'Plane blows up in 300ft ball of fire. Inside a piece on "Scandal of airliners that aren't fit to fly - a fault every 11 days".

Sun - 258 dead. Jumbo hits houses. Terror bomb fear.

PRESS DIGEST

Mirror - Jumbo crashes on town. 300 die in fireball. The horror everyone dreaded.

Today - Jumbo fireball. 258 killed as Xmas jet hits petrol pumps in Scots town.

Express - 281 die in Jumbo jet fireball.

Mail - Up to 300 dead - many killed on the ground. Fireball hell as jumbo jet hits town.

Telegraph - Pan Am jumbo crashes into Scottish town. Heavy casualties on ground as exploding jet hits houses. 258 feared dead in flight 103 to US.

Times - Up to 300 die as jet hits town - crashes on Scottish homes in huge fireball. Aviation experts say crash could only have been caused by massive structural failure, or bomb. The jet was one of the oldest jumbos still flying having flown 72,000 hours and made 33,000 take-offs and landings, but well inside accepted service limit. [Radio said this morning that it had been completely rebuilt and strengthened a year ago to be used for military purposes in the case of emergencies].

Guardian - 259 killed in jet crash. More feared dead in Scots town after worst UK air disaster.

FT - Pan Am jumbo crashes on to Scottish town. You express schock at "this terrible disaster" and send deepest sympathy.

EGGS etc

Today leader says slowly and frighteningly the dangers of factory food production are beginning to emerge - first eggs now Irish hamburgers. You should turn your dislike for subsidies and featherbedding on to agriculture.

Express leader headed "MacGregor's men haven't cracked it" says evidence of MAFF's mishandling of the salmonella threat accumulates by one minute. What is so special about poultry feed producers and egg farmers? Their cosy relationship with the Men from the Ministry - that's what. The Ministry must reform itself or be reformed.

PRESS DIGEST

Mail leader says coming so soon after the trouble over eggs it is alarming to learn that some meat imports from Ireland are infected. The case adds to the impression that the rights of the producer take precedence over the rights of the consumer. That is in direct conflict with the basic philosophy of Thatcherism.

Independent leader says MAFF has become an anachronistic embarrassment. After public expenditure approaching £100 billion since the war on agriculture, self-sufficiency should no longer be the supreme objective. MAFF's function could now be carried out by the Health & Safety Executive, Environment, Treasury (on the financial side) and DTI (for international negotiation).

TRANSPORT

Times leader under the heading "Movement in Marsham Street" says that in the New Year Paul Channon must steel himself to go to his Cabinet colleagues for a re-examination of the limits on London Transport spending as applied both to LRT and BR. This is not for the sake of a single year's investment programme but to ensure that from 1989 onwards a phased spending plan is in place to deliver equity between rail-users and the myriad indirect beneficiaries of improved London transport.

FT leader headed "The politics of congestion" says that what presently masquerades as a transport policy is a series of ad hoc responses to particular local difficulties. It argues for looking at London's transport as an organic whole; and an aggressive use of the price mechanism to charge motorists for the congestion costs they impose on others.

WEST GERMANY

FT - You are expected to visit Chancellor Kohl's home during the next Anglo-German summit at the end of February - partly designed to challenge the idea that you do not like each other. You will also press Bonn on the need to decide quickly in favour of modernising short-range nuclear weaponry.

ANNEX

TV AND RADIO

"Today": BBC Radio 4 (6.30)

"Business Daily": C4 (12.30)

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

"Open Space": BBC 2 (20.00) "Licence to Kill". The Campaign against Drinking and Driving and its fight for changes in the law

"Newsnight": BBC 2 (22.30)

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

"The City Programme": Thames (22.35)

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