

PRIME MINISTER

10 January 1989

MAIN EVENTS

Parliament resumes

---

PARLIAMENT

Commons

Questions: Defence; Employment; Prime Minister

Business: Social Security Bill: 2nd Reading and Money Resolution

Motion relating to the Social Fund Cold Weather Payments  
(General) Amendment Regulations

Adjournment Debates: Amusement arcade addiction among young people  
(Mr P Thompson)

Statement on Midlands Plane Crash (Secretary of State for Transport)

Statement on Lockerbie Disaster and issue of AAIB Interim Bulletin

---

MINISTERS - See Annex

---

PRESS DIGESTMain News

Extensive coverage of the M1 air crash deals mostly with Kegworth's lucky escape and tales of heroism especially of the pilot; 44 dead, including (it is believed) 3 sisters flying to their father's funeral.

Concern over 100million-to-one chance of both aircraft engines failing. Claims that the engines lack a reliable reputation.

Warm praise for all the rescue and hospital services. Pictures show how the plane came down 500 yards short of the runway.

Also pictures of you at the scene of the crash - and your disbelief at so many tragedies in such a short time reported. Prince Charles to visit scene.

Peter Viggers missed the flight by arriving too late.

War veterans of the Far East denounce Prince Philip's visit to Hirohito's funeral but Mail and Telegraph say it is the right decision - though Telegraph news report says it will be a blow to Christians because he will be drawn into Shinto ceremonies.

General Electric in USA being sued for improper inspections of valves in this type of engine.

GEC takeover bid - which has yet to materialise as firm offer - to be investigated by OFT. GEC shares rise 19p to 221p.

William Rees-Mogg, non-executive director for GEC, explains why he is determined to see the Plessey-led hostile takeover bid fail.

Mail sees the developing battle as a classic Europe v America test case for Government.

Two distinct consortia, one headed by Plessey and the other by General Electric, of USA, are stalking GEC.

EC says it expects shortly to receive a submission from potential bidders and to make a ruling within a week on the GEC/Siemens offer for Plessey. FT Lex column says that for GEC's shareholders there is poetic justice in the idea of finally getting hold of the cash mountain at the expense of Lord Weinstock's departure. FT leader argues that the issue for institutional shareholders is quality of management. For Government, the immediate task is whether to refer the GEC/Siemens bid for Plessey to the MMC.

PRESS DIGEST

Treasury is thought to be considering scrapping legal backing for pre-emptive rights issues, under which a company's existing shareholders have first option on any issue of new shares. Treasury describes idea as a "live issue". (FT)

Labour opens its onslaught today against electricity privatisation by warning that taxpayers could face hidden costs amounting to billions of pounds (Times).

Mail leader on the Chancellor's "tantalising pickle" over his next Budget. Money is no problem. But what can he do with his golden hoard? It advocates encouraging the working poor, stopping penalising savers and encouraging lead-free petrol.

Kenneth Clarke rules out legislation to limit junior doctors hours but to see the BMA again in a month; health districts being asked to reduce hours worked.

Health authorities are to be questioned over their failure to meet government targets for increasing the number of consultants in general medicine and surgery.

Government proposes a limited form of regional pay for both NHS nursing and white collar staff.

NUT wants "golden hello" payments of up to £7,000 to attract people to the profession and creches for children.

NUR offering cheap mortgages to its members.

Labour Party predicts 10% rail fare increases for years.

British Rail appoints Lazard Brothers and Coopers & Lybrand to help draw up an internal blueprint for privatisation (FT).

University vice-chancellors warned by don's union not to take action over exam boycott (Times).

Tesco launches 'green' range of products such as bio-degradable plastic containers and phosphate-free detergents and cleaners, all of which will be identified by a new logo (FT).

Members of Abbey National will receive free shares in its proposed flotation (Independent).

PRESS DIGEST

Eric Hammond appointed by Chancellor to NEDC; TUC calls it provocative. Times says this ends TUC's automatic right to all trade union seats. FT says TUC future involvement in NEDC is in doubt.

Peter Dawson, leader of Professional Teachers' Association, wants you to intervene in battle against vandalism in Britain's schools.

Two girls made legal history yesterday when they went on closed-circuit television in courts in different parts of the country to tell juries how they had been the victims of alleged sexual crimes (Times).

BBC has decided not to challenge in the courts the Government's ban on broadcasting interviews with terrorists and their supporters.

Report shows that elderly watch 37 hours of TV a week (Times).

Sir Nicholas Bonsor MP confirms that you have made a "substantial" private donation to Cyclotron Trust (Times). In a letter to the Times three consultant radiotherapists from Hammersmith Hospital explain why they are critical of Cyclotron.

Express says William Waldegrave's warning to Iran that there can be no further improvement in our relations until our hostages are freed is overdue.

Mail says Iran promised to help free the hostages.

Guardian says Mr Waldegrave was disappointed at Iran's attitude.

Only 54 of 700 applicants in Hong Kong for British citizenship after loyal service to Crown have won the right.

World Bank forms international committee to co-ordinate flows of development aid to Nigeria.

Third World rushing to acquire chemical weapons even as they spoke at Paris chemical weapons conference denouncing them (Independent).

Confusion in Montevideo over planned Falklands ferry service - Uruguay says it can go ahead only with Argentine agreement (Independent).

PRESS DIGESTAIRCRAASH COMMENTARY

Star considers the possibility not of mechanical failure but of tampering with fuel.

Sun says that but for the pilot's skill and courage no-one would have emerged alive from the wreckage and many would have died on the ground.

Mirror wants urgent answers as to why both engines of the aircraft failed and a feature asks if there was something wrong with the fuel.

Today notes the equality in death of all those from Northern Ireland, including British soldiers protecting them.

Express says the evidence points to an alarming flaw in a new generation of engines. It also notes "the extraordinary collective dignity with which we seem to be able to cope with the most appalling disaster".

Times leader praises the pilot for his expertise in averting a much worse disaster and says that the professionalism, courage and industry of the emergency services has once more earned thanks from Whitehall and elsewhere. The case is not proved, for example, for founding a new government department or national "squad" to superimpose a central bureaucracy on the emergency services in the various regions. Disasters need instant decisions by people with local knowledge. There may be gaps - but these need to be filled not covered by a Whitehall blanket. One area of concern is information about casualties and there is also a strong case for founding a national data bank.

FT - UK operators ground Boeing 737-400s. Compensation for victims and families could well exceed statutory limit of about £77,000. Although there are no official totals yet, there were at least 1,200 deaths in civil aviation accidents worldwide last year. Previous worst year was 1974 when 1,299 died.

Guardian says the disaster was a failure of technology and that brings no comfort.

Independent leader says during disasters the excellence of our public services becomes conspicuous. Public figures should remember their general obligation to recognise how much public service matters.

PRESS DIGESTHIROHITO COMMENTARY

Star editor describes Prince Philip's visit to funeral as "nonsense".

In Today David Owen explains why the Queen is right to pay her tribute to Hirohito. No other course when she visited country in 1975 and Prince and Princess of Wales have been there.

Mail says that given that a representative of the Queen is obliged to attend Hirohito's funeral the choice of Prince Philip is shrewd. As a war veteran who fought in the Far East he can be relied upon not to kow tow.

Telegraph says it seems plain with hindsight that a member of the Royal Family should have gone to Lockerbie. But it seems right for the Duke of Edinburgh to go to Tokyo. Otherwise it would have been widely misinterpreted elsewhere. Buckingham Palace's wise decisions remind us how often the Royal Family strikes exactly the right note in public life.

MINISTERS (UK VISITS, SPEECHES ETC)

DES: Mr Baker presents award to Young Woman Engineer of the Year  
DH: Mr Mellor Meets London Consultants  
DSS: Lord Skelmersdale visits Doncaster Inner Cities Taskforce  
MAFF: Baroness Trumpington addresses National Farmers Union, Leeds

---

MINISTERS (PRESS INTERVIEWS)

DES: Mrs Rumbold launches Paper Engineering Competition on the BBC Education Programme

---

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 Open Learning Business': C4 (13.00). 1. 'The Business Benefits.' New Open College series. Examines the benefits which Open Learning offers all companies to help them become more effective and more competitive

'Moneyspinner': C4 (20.30)

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

'Newsnight': BBC2 (22.30)

---