

12 January 1989

PRIME MINISTER

MAIN EVENTS

The Prince of Wales opens an Exhibition of Italian Art in the 20th Century, Royal Academy of Arts, London

Prime Minister meets Herr Diepgen, Governing Mayor of Berlin (photocall) and Chief Buthelezi (photocall)

STATISTICS

BOE: Quarterly analysis of bank advances (Nov)

PUBLICATIONS

DES: Final circular on Charging for School Activities

PARLIAMENT

Commons

Questions: Northern Ireland; Agriculture, Fisheries and Food; Prime Minister

Business: Debate on a Motion to approve the Chancellor of the Exchequer's Autumn Statement

Adjournment Debates: The policing of prostitutes in Streatham (Sir W Shelton)

Select Committees: EMPLOYMENT
Subject: Legionnaire's Disease in the Working Environment.
Witness: British Aerospace

MINISTERS See Annex

PRESS DIGESTMain News

Blame for East Midlands air crash now shifts to electrical problems after chairman of British Midland complained of a rush to judgment; wrong fire alarm may have gone off.

Peter Snape, Shadow Transport Minister, blames Paul Channon for "crucifying the pilot" by creating confusion.

BALPA also critical of Transport Secretary.

CAA grounds 29 more British 737s for special checks; USA orders similar checks.

Reports that pilot flew past East Midlands airport before turning back.

Guardian suggests cause was improperly fitted oil caps which popped out under pressure causing oil to spill and engine to seize up.

Bank of England warns Chancellor not to cut taxes in the next Budget. Express says the Governor's advice should be ignored.

Pound rises to highest level against mark for nearly 3 years.

Governor of Bank of England tells NEDC that levels of investment and investment plans have not yet been damaged by high interest rates and that exports are still competitive (FT).

Eggs again: Chief Medical Officer denies most of Britain's egg production is affected by salmonella but that there is an epidemic of salmonella related to eggs.

Head of Poultry Federation says raw eggs are still safe. Problem was produced by media.

Government launches campaign to cut food poisoning.

25 % of a test sample of pre-cooked chilled meats bought from four leading supermarkets found to contain Listeria (Independent).

Lazard Brothers work overtime to try to put together a consortium bid for GEC in the next few days. GEC shares fall another 7p to 213p. Lord Young is expected to announce his decision on a referral of the GEC/Siemens bid for Plessey, possibly today (FT).

PRESS DIGEST

24 policemen face prosecution over riots at Murdoch's Wapping plant 2 years ago.

Speculation mounts in Dublin that British Government will shortly announce its intention to seek prosecution of Ryan in Irish courts (FT).

Major delays expected at Britain's airports again this summer. Paul Channon urges people to use regional airports.

British Rail to buy £54million worth of new Sprinter trains.

Mail leader wonders whether it is worth privatising water after all in view of all the curbs and protections involved.

FT's Lex column says Government's policy towards water industry is getting murkier by the day. Having decided to return the industry to the private sector in order to stimulate competition, it is now taking steps to protect private sector monopolies.

300,000 acres of beautiful countryside will be at risk if Water Privatisation Bill is not amended, according to Government's own advisers (Independent).

UKAEA and Rolls Royce are developing a new small nuclear reactor based on existing pressurised water technology and housed underground. First may be built at Winfrith. Could attract companies eager to break into power generation after privatisation (Independent).

FT Leader judges that electricity regulation proposals show Government has learned from its mistakes in sales of gas and telecommunications. Ministers now see that in large monopoly industries competition will remain feeble unless the regulator combines strong powers with external vigilance.

Staff of Horizon Travel and Orion Airways face redundancy after takeover by Thomson.

Paul Channon gives go-ahead to build a dual carriageway across site of Naseby battlefield.

5million Abbey National customers will share £1billion in free shares if they agree to flotation.

House price increases slowed to 1% last month; by only 1.6% in Greater London in last quarter of 1988.

PRESS DIGEST

Peter Lloyd rejects criticism for advising old folk to buy warm clothes at second-hand sales.

Great Ormond Street reaches its appeal target of £42million a year ahead of schedule.

Sir Raymond Hoffenberg, president, Royal College of Physicians, calls on David Mellor to withdraw £6million grant made to cyclotron. NAO to be asked to investigate grant.

BMA critical of Government's refusal to appoint select committee to conduct a comprehensive review of the handling of medical negligence cases (Times).

£400million expansion of nursery education called for by Select Committee.

Government is planning to expand child care provision to encourage women back to work to ease the skills shortage facing Britain in 1992. John Patten keen to see children cared for in their communities rather than in workplace nurseries (Independent).

DES denies that it had been approached for extra finance to fund pay increases for academics (Times).

Torbay likely to be forced to hold a second ballot in selling its stock of council houses.

Lord Gifford calls rates of pay by Bar to trainee barristers a moral disgrace and urges other chambers to adopt his purse-sharing arrangements (Times).

You are to muster your troops today for an assault on the weather (Today) - a reference to your meeting on climate.

Body Shop increased profits by 55% last year as more people chose to buy "green".

You have pencilled in February 23 for Cleveland by-election (Mail).

Special Branch is investigating discovery of a bugging device in hotel where Young Conservatives held a conference last weekend.

Church of England considering toughening up its policy on sacking clergy who fail to perform their duties effectively.

PRESS DIGEST

TV coverage of sporting events throughout Europe is being investigated by EC because of alleged anti-competitive practices involving leading broadcasters (Times).

Former Japanese POWs begin sending back their medals, in protest at Duke of Edinburgh going to Hirohito's funeral, according to Express.

President Bush to attend funeral.

Government to get computerised communication system "PINDAR" so you can be briefed in more detail than has previously been possible as any conflict unfolds (Independent).

Lord Glenarthur says there is no question of British immigration laws being altered to allow Hong Kong nationals the right of abode in Britain (Times).

German officials concede that West German firms were involved in building Libyan chemical weapons plant, according to Express.

West Germany's Defence Minister continues split in Bonn Cabinet by stating unequivocally that he supports modernisation of US short-range nuclear missiles in Europe (Times).

President Reagan goes out on a high note of achievement with his farewell broadcast to the nation. He began with aim of changing nation and has also changed the world.

US meat companies are offering to supply EC with "natural beef" without added hormones - undermining Washington's position (Independent).

Hungary opens the way for the formation of opposition parties.

Kaufman has 3 hour meeting with "jovial" Arafat.

Shamir acknowledges for the first time a possible role for the UN in hosting Middle East peace talks. But his aides say he still rejects the idea of a UN-sponsored international peace conference (FT).

PRESS DIGESTEAST MIDLANDS CRASH

Star - The actions of Paul Channon must be called into question. Why did he say "I cannot rule out the possibility of pilot error?" This, the Star says, was a clear message from the top man that human failure probably was a factor in the crash. Why did Mr Channon shoot his mouth off before he knew the full facts?

Today notes that American Government officials were yesterday said to be putting all the blame on the pilot and saying that Boeing and General Electric would come out clean. This underlines the importance of establishing the same.

Times - CAA and FAA in US order urgent checks to be made on all similar 737s. Leader says reluctance of airlines and CAA to re-examine the case for rear-facing seats on airlines is most unsatisfactory. There is no certainty that this would have saved lives in latest tragedy but the issue needs to be re-opened, and the views of doctors, engineers, politicians and passengers themselves should all be heard.

Independent - Head of Air Investigation branch has implicitly rebuked crash investigator for issuing a misleading report on M1 crash which gave rise to widespread speculation that pilot error could be to blame.

EGGS

Sun - Egg poisoning is now an epidemic. Edwina was right, says Maggie's top medic.

Mirror - Double alert on egg and chickens peril. Leader asks which should be put first in public health warnings - the dangerous chicken or the poisonous egg. New fears were whipped up yesterday by the Government itself and by its Chief Medical Officer. It all makes Edwina Currie's repeated refusal to give evidence to the Committee even more curious.

Today - It is time Edwina Currie spoke up to her own defence. There is less and less for her to be ashamed of or hide. It now seems clear that she was right in principle about salmonella in eggs. What she said does not seem wild compared with the claims and counter-claims of egg producers.

PRESS DIGEST

Express says Chief Medical Officer's comments did not stop far short of Edwina Currie's remarks. What is fast transpiring is that Mrs Currie was right and the only scandal was the absurd over-reaction of MAFF. It hopes Mrs Currie, in refusing to go to Select Committee, is not being gagged.

Mail - Poisoned eggs cases now an epidemic, MPs are warned.

Telegraph - Salmonella risk in eggs "a serious health problem". Leader says it becomes increasingly important to establish the facts because of the way in which the matter was handled by MAFF. It thinks Edwina Currie is mistaken in not giving evidence. By keeping silent she may expect to earn the gratitude of Downing Street which would like the affair to be forgotten but she should accept it is in her interest to see the facts are on record.

Times - Chief Medical Officer casts serious doubts on whether Edwina Currie had evidence to support her remark about eggs.

Independent - Chief Medical Officer told Select Committee yesterday that Edwina Currie was wrong to say most egg production was infected but egg poisoning was still a serious public health problem.

Guardian - Acheson says salmonella eggs "serious problem".

MINISTERS (UK VISITS, SPEECHES ETC)

- DH: Mr Clarke meets Israeli Ambassador, London
- MAFF: Mr Macgregor attends Thoroughbred Association Annual Awards luncheon, London
- DH: Mr Mellor meets Registered Nursing Homes Association
- DH: Mr Freeman meets representatives of the National Council of Women
- DSS: Lord Skelmersdale visits Plymouth Local Office
- HMT: Mr Lamont receives the worlds largest cheque; BT's Corporation Tax for the year
- MAFF: Baroness Trumpington addresses Avon and Somerset British Food and Farming Breakfast, Bristol University
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MINISTERS (OVERSEAS VISITS)

- FCO: Mr Waldegrave visits Tunisia (to 16 January)
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MINISTERS (PRESS INTERVIEWS)

- FCO: Sir Geoffrey Howe has interview with London office of Japanese Asahi Shimbun
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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)
- '9-2-5': BBC2 (20.00). New series about the changing world of work. Includes feature on how companies cope with traffic congestion in London
- 'The North Sea': BBC2 (20.30). Neptune's Children. Second of six programmes on the use and misuse of the North Sea. Moves to clean up coastal waters off Scarborough

TV AND RADIO (Cont'd)

'This Week': Thames (20.30). 'Israel Alone'. Examines how Israel has coped with its international isolation and asks how will it respond to the Palestinian proposal for a state on the West Bank

'Face the Facts': Radio 4 (21.05)

'Forty Minutes': BBC 2 (21.30). 'The day I met The Queen'. Memorable meetings between subjects and their monarch

'Question Time': BBC 1 (22.15). With Sir Russell Johnston MP, Maeve Sherlock, Chris Smith MP and Norman Tebbit MP

'Newsnight': BBC 2 (22.30)

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

'The City Programme': Thames (22.35)
