

14 February 1989

PRIME MINISTER

MAIN EVENTS

The Queen holds an Investiture at Buckingham Palace

EC: Political Co-operation Council, Madrid

John MacGregor speaks at NFU AGM

Official visit to UK by President Ershad of Bangladesh (to February 18)

HSE Conference on the problem of violence to local authority staff from the general public

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STATISTICS

BoE: International banking statistics (4th Qtr)

OPCS: Hospital in-patient enquiry trends (1979-1985)

OPCS: Population projections (Mid 1987-based)

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PUBLICATIONS

HO: Police (Central Services) Bill

HMT: Spring supplementary estimates

NAO: Prosecution of Crime in Scotland: Review of the Procurator Fiscal Service

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PARLIAMENT

Commons

Questions: Employment; Health; Prime Minister

Business: 10 Minute Rule Bill: Poll Tax (Restoration of Individual Privacy)  
Local Government and Housing Bill: 2nd Reading and Money  
Resolution  
Motions on the Farm and Conservation Grant Regulations and  
Scheme

Adjournment Debates: Tolls on the Severn Bridge (Mr Roy Hughes)

Select Committees: MEMBERS' INTERESTS  
Subject: Parliamentary Lobbying  
Witness: Contract Cleaning and Maintenance Association



PARLIAMENT (Cont'd)

Lords: Starred Questions  
Companies Bill (HL): Committee (3rd Day)  
Access to Personal Files (Social Services) Regulations 1989: Motion for  
Approval  
Access to Personal Files (Social Work)(Scotland) Regulations 1989:  
Motion for Approval  
Access to Personal Files (Housing) Regulations 1989: Motion for  
Approval  
Local Authority Social Services (Designation of Functions) Order 1989:  
Motion for Approval

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MINISTERS - See Annex

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PRESS DIGESTMain News

Food still dominates the news, after John MacGregor is seen as backing down from banning French cheese in listeria scare and Kenneth Clarke contradicts him, in saying he believes banning of soft cheeses was being considered. French claim damage to exports has already been done.

Kinnock seeks to exploit situation writing to you about the "shambles".

Sun MORI poll finds 90% want tougher controls on food production and more consumer information about health hazards.

French thinks listeria scare is a plot to sell more British cheese (Mail).

Mail and Independent revive idea of a Minister for Food & Consumer Affairs.

Institute of Environmental Health Officers call for powers to prosecute food retailers who store food in refrigerated areas at the wrong temperature (Times).

The Queen launches lead-free petrol campaign. But Today says the campaign is phoney - it ignores at least five other harmful chemicals. It wants us to go for catalytic converters.

Prince Edward describes litter strewn West End as "revolting".

Company responsible for outbreak of Legionnaire's disease in West London may never be traced (Independent).

Post-Chernobyl aerial survey indicates there are still peak-levels of caesium over a wide area, MAFF said yesterday (Times).

Signs that Government's high interest rates are curbing spending.

Shares lose £6billion after fall in retail sales and Chancellor's warning about inflation. Rising manufacturers' costs "pile on the agony" (Express).

FT's Lex column argues that yesterday's economic figures were in some ways genuinely worrying. The fall in retail sales must surely be an exaggeration and the inflationary rise in output prices looks ugly. Producers are still enjoying enough of a boom to be able to widen their margins and may find wage inflation hard to resist.



PRESS DIGEST

Andrew Alexander, in Mail, says the message from the RPI on Friday will be that since you came to power prices have doubled; purchasing power of pound has halved in 10 years.

Times leader says Chancellor has still not found the pass-key to the enigma that so puzzled and defeated his predecessors - how to create monetary and fiscal conditions which decouple high growth from unsustainable consumer booms, balance of payments crises and high inflation.

Brussels figures show that unemployment is falling faster in Britain than in any other Euro country.

Employment Secretary is expected to give go-ahead to community charge being included in RPI calculation, after independent RPI Advisory Committee concludes that charge should replace rate element of calculation (FT).

Jock Bruce-Gardyne, in Telegraph, says cure for inflation lies more with British employers and movement of interest rates abroad.

Commons told preferred Chunnel link route will be announced next month.

Department of Transport reject demands for a public inquiry into high-speed rail link for Channel Tunnel (Times).

Private water companies reconsidering proposed big price increases (Telegraph).

National Power is to build Britain's first new canal in 84 years in South Yorkshire - to transport coal to Eggborough Power Station (Times).

High Court will rule today on whether GEC can be forced to sell to Plessey its half interest in their joint venture telecommunications company GPT (FT).

Government is cutting number of ET places by 10% because not enough people have joined the programme. Only 137,000 have signed on since last September's launch, well short of DE's monthly enrolment target of about 45,000 (FT).

Environmental pressure groups say DTp review of goods vehicle licensing threatens rights of local residents to object to busy lorry depots which damage the environment (Independent).



PRESS DIGEST

Treasury becomes first Government Department to provide child-care facilities (Independent).

Haringey to cut 600 jobs in direct labour department which has run up £7million debts.

Knives out for Douglas Hogg over death of Belfast solicitor at hands of Ulster protestant extremists for saying that some Northern Irish lawyers are "unduly sympathetic" to terrorists. Today says it is ridiculous to blame Mr Hogg.

Mail says Anglo-Irish relations were at a new low last night after Haughey calls for the greatest care over statements.

Kevin MacNamara urges Douglas Hogg to consider his position. Independent leader criticises Mr Hogg for his remark and urges British Ministers to behave with scrupulous propriety over the integrity of lawyers.

Man charged in London with conspiracy to cause explosions after investigation into Clapham bomb factory.

Star features the exploitation of child slaves in India making carpets for sale in Britain - children as young as 6 working in cramped, inhumane conditions for up to 14 hours a day, it says.

ITV Association claims Channel 4 could lose big audience share if independent television cross-promotions were stopped (Times).

Sir Trevor Sheet finds a ready response for Guardian Angles when he asks them to patrol the Bedford-London line on which a gang of "steamers" caused terror over the weekend. One man arrested after incident.

British Rail under increasing pressure to beef up security on trains. John Gorst wants panic buttons.

Express wants guards on trains with radio or portable phones.

Kenneth Baker booed and hissed by teenagers at British pop music awards event; Cliff Richard tells audience to "grow up" and gets booed himself. Sun applauds Richard for standing up for common decency.

Ted Heath joins 13 other Tory rebels in vote against guillotining of Official Secrets Bill. Campbell-Savours banned for a day for arguing with Speaker.



PRESS DIGEST

Guardian devotes a leader to the beleaguered Mr Kinnock.

John Patten says that none of the religions has a theology appropriate to the present climate of success.

30 Tory MPs have criticised the church for failing to give a moral lead and for meddling in politics (Times).

Ministers give a rough ride to EC plan for minimum withholding tax on savings (FT).

John MacGregor urged EC Agriculture Council to take urgent steps to combat the growing problem of fraud and corruption under CAP (Times).

Spain says it will accelerate debate on the withholding tax on savings to achieve agreement - or otherwise - at Madrid Council. You may be forced to use your personal veto (Independent).

ODA will today announce that £1million will be given to World Wildlife Fund for Nature for use in conservation of tropical rain forests (FT).

Bonn keeps US guessing on modernising missiles. No sign of an end to the disagreement as West Germany gives contradictory signals over its intentions (Independent).

Pakistan threatens to ban all books from the Satanic Verses publisher unless it withdraws the book from world sale and destroys all copies (Independent).

Heavy damage in storms over the North of England and Scotland overnight.

US to press Greece about terrorism and future of bases during stopover by James Baker. Danish Foreign Ministers urged him not to press west Germany for an early decision on modernising NATO's short range nuclear missiles (Times).

You welcome the opening of the first Jewish cultural centre in the Soviet Union for 41 years. You described the Solomon Mykhoels Jewish Cultural Centre as a step on the road to the restoration of individual rights (Times).

You are seen as key figure in Arab-Israeli peace process - interview with Moshe Arens (Times).



PRESS DIGEST

Pressure builds up in South Africa for P W Botha to retire early and for a general election within the next six months (Independent).

Lawyer acting for Winnie Mandela resigns from her service over activities of her bodyguard.

FOOD

Star - Frogs turn sour in cheese crisis - a reference to their belief that, although the Government says it is not going to ban soft cheeses, the damage to exports has already been done.

Sun page 2 - 9 out of 10 demand action on food bugs. MORI reveals that most people want tougher controls and more information about health hazards.

Mirror page 2 - Tories bungle over listeria hysteria.

Today page 2 claims 1 in 12 eggs from 3 farms tested for salmonella was infected during investigation into outbreak; one farm had stamped them salmonella free. Confusion over on-off cheese ban.

Express page 2 - Ministers get in a pickle on cheese. You are becoming increasingly alarmed by the row over soft cheese. Warned that Government Departments appear at odds.

Mail page 1 lead - First it was salmonella, then it was listeria. This time it's foot in mouth disease. Furore reaches new heights of farce as two Cabinet Ministers contradict each other. Kinnock determined to exploit disarray as you get increasingly angry. Leader headed "Running round like headless chickens" says confusion reigns supreme in the Tory Cabinet - after the egg shambles the cheese fiasco. The interests of MAFF and Department of Health conflict and at the best of times this is a recipe for Ministerial muddle. There must be one Cabinet Minister alone in charge of food - a new Department of Food & Consumer Affairs under Kenneth Clarke.

Telegraph page 1 lead - Ministers at odds over listeria row "hysteria". Row seems certain to dominate questions. You believe the issue has been blown up out of all proportion by media. Sir Richard Body MP claims that bacon and pork will be the next infected food scandal. Agriculture and Food Research Council to launch a task force to study food quality and organisms responsible for food poisoning.



PRESS DIGEST

Guardian page 1 - Ministers at odds on food crisis. Inside Whitehall officials described the atmosphere as "blind panic" with Ministers desperately anxious to be seen to be acting but with little apparent thought of co-ordination.

Independent - France counter-attacks on cheese. Mr MacGregor fails to placate EC counterparts in Brussels and must today face angry British farmers at the NFU annual conference. The French Pasteur Institute says France does not have a serious salmonella problem though it admits to official concern about listeria infection from various food products, including cheese.

Leader, under the heading Whitehall's failed cheese omelette, says the Government has succeeded only in spreading confusion where information and commonsense were needed. It calls for more communication between experts, more public discussion of the known facts, and above all, the creation of a Department of Consumer Affairs.

FT - Peace move in cheese row. John MacGregor tries to soothe French anger, assuring his counterpart that Britain has no plans to ban the sale of products made from unpasteurised milk. In London, MAFF stresses that it had never suggested there would be a ban, only that the position was to be examined.

Times - Attempts to calm concern over food safety were in confusion last night after conflicting Ministerial statements. The Minister of Agriculture and the Health Secretary appeared to be at odds over banning the sale of soft cheeses. French farmers are threatening legal action. Neil Kinnock has written to you claiming the Government has been "totally inept" in its handling of the situation.

Times leader headed MacGregor's cheese sauce has provided MAFF with a welcome opportunity to demonstrate its concern with public health at minimal political cost. The risk from salmonella is immeasurably greater. It should be containable at the point of production - yet months after the extent of contamination became known there is no comprehensive information about which flocks are infected and what has been done.



MINISTERS (UK VISITS, SPEECHES ETC)

- DH: Mr Clarke meets Hugh Dykes MP to discuss the Royal National Orthopaedic Hospital
- DTI: Lord Young addresses the World Energy Business conference on 1992, Lancaster House, London; later pays courtesy call on President Ershad of Bangladesh, Intercontinental Hotel, London
- DTI: Mr Newton visits Wolverhampton
- MAFF: Mr MacGregor attends National Farmers' Union, annual general meeting, London
- WO: Mr Walker addresses Civic Trust Seminar on the programme for the Valleys, Merthyr Tydfil; later visits Atlantic College, Llantwit Major and opens Wales Gas Centre, Aberaman; also attends Understanding Industry Trust reception, London
- DEM: Mr Lee opens Best Western Hotel Group's international trade fair, New Connaught Rooms, London
- DEM: Mr Nicholls addresses HSE's 'Violence in the Workplace' conference QEII Conference Centre, London
- DEN: Baroness Hooper addresses Electrical Contractors Association annual dinner, Grosvenor House, Park Lane, London
- DES: Mr Jackson visits University of Birmingham
- DH: Mr Freeman attends Look After Your Heart/pasta promotion press conference, London
- DOE: Mr Chope visits Barnsley Town Hall (green belt)
- DTI: Mr Maude addresses Prudential - Bache on 1992, London
- HMT: Mr Brooke launches £2 commemorative coin, House of Commons
- ODA: Mr Patten hosts dinner for President Ershad of Bangladesh, London
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MINISTERS (OVERSEAS VISITS)

- FCO: Sir Geoffrey Howe attends POCO, Madrid
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TV AND RADIO

'The Open Learning Business': C4 (13.00)

'Power to the Parents': C4 (18.30). A parent's guide to the 1988 Education Act. Examination of the rights of parents and the role of teachers and schools governors under the Act

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