

16 February 1989

PRIME MINISTER

MAIN EVENTS

? Pay Review Body Reports published

Prime Minister meets President Ershad of Bangladesh

Dumfries & Galloway Police brief press on Lockerbie, at 3.00pm

Prince of Wales visits United States (to 20 February), St Lucia (to 22 February) and Venezuela (to 24 February)

Princess of Wales attends performance of Verdi's Requiem, Barbican Centre, London

Richard Luce launches Child Care initiative - St James Park

EEC/ACP Ministerial Council, Brazzaville, Central Africa (to 17 February)

STATISTICS

DEM: Labour market statistics: unemployment and vacancies (Jan - prov); average earnings indices (Dec - prov) employment, hours, productivity and unit wage costs; industrial disputes

DTI: Provisional figures of vehicle production (Jan)

DTI: Capital expenditure by the manufacturing and service industries

HMT: Public Sector Borrowing Requirement (Jan) (4th Qtr - prov)

HO: Probation statistics - England and Wales 1987 (prov)

NAO: Department of Transport: Bus fuel grants

PARLIAMENT

Commons

Questions: Agriculture, Fisheries and Food; Treasury; Prime Minister

Business: Official Secrets Bill: Conclusion of Consideration in Committee

Adjournment Debates: Rate support grant on Derbyshire County Council Services (Mr D Skinner)

Select Committees: EUROPEAN LEGISLATION
Subject: Control of Mergers
Witness: Department of Trade and Industry Ministers

PARLIAMENT (Cont'd)

Lords: Starred Questions
Law of Property (Miscellaneous Provisions) Bill (HL): Report
Children Bill (HL): Report (3rd Day)
Farm and Conservation Grant Scheme 1989. Motion for Approval
Farm and Conservation Grant Regulations 1989. Motion for Approval

MINISTERS - See Annex

PRESS DIGESTMain News

Conservative lead cut to 1.5% according to latest Gallup poll in Telegraph.

Government has failed to convince public NHS is safe in its hands.

Mob of 6,000 throws stones at British Embassy in Iran as Ayatollah puts a £2million price on Salman Rushdie's life.

Rushdie in hiding.

Home Secretary rules out deportation of British Moslem leader who backs Khomeini's order but West Yorkshire police studying leader's remarks.

Plans to publish a French edition of Satanic Verses dropped.

Foreign Office rejects any connection between the fate of Roger Cooper held in Iran and that of Iranian prisoner convicted in Britain for conspiracy to plant a car bomb (Times).

Kinnock decides to lead Opposition attack in Commons next week on Government's handling of food and water issues. Shadow Cabinet expects you to respond personally.

Kinnock underlines Labour's conviction that they have the Government on the run on this issue (Independent).

Sir Richard Body MP accuses MAFF of putting business before public health.

Farmers attack Government for cutting cash for research into salmonella.

Environmental Health Officers claim that 500 hospitals are breaking cook-chill regulations.

BMA and BVA to meet next month to discuss improved collaboration on food hygiene issues (Times).

Angry scenes at NFU conference as dairy farmers call for an immediate ban on hormone which boosts cows' milk output because risks cannot be taken where purity of food is concerned (Times).

Department of the Environment concede that an alarming number of water authorities will not be able to comply with existing EC regulations for drinking water until 1995 at the earliest (Times).

PRESS DIGEST

EC plans to set up task force to evaluate drinking water standards in Britain (Independent).

New £1million kitchen built at the Wakefield hospital after 18 patients died there in 1984 is still considered a listeria risk and is still not open (Independent).

Derek Jameson's Radio 2 listeners called for the return of Edwina Currie to Government as Minister for Food.

Paul Foot, in Mirror, claims that at least 10 cooling towers in buildings in central London have been found to have Legionnaire's disease bug.

NatWest's financial bulletin forecasts a 0.5% cut in interest rates at the time of the Budget; bank rate will be back in single figures next year.

More than 2.5million package holidays being cut by tour operators because of a fall in demand.

Express feature demands that the Chancellor press on with tax cuts in Budget.

You have had to ask Chancellor for extra £1.2million for refurbishing No 10.

Professor David Lock says your economic miracle is creating uncontrollable forces in South East; he calls for positive planning.

Speculation that awards by pay review bodies, to be announced today, will be less than level of inflation. Today says nurses' pay rise will be cut to the bone. Review body recommends 10% but Kenneth Clarke wants to cut them back.

Cheltenham & Gloucester Building Society cuts mortgage rate from 13.5% to 12.75% for which Express has three cheers.

National Savings Bank tells staff not to accept deposits of under £5 because of rising administrative costs. David Alton MP and pressure groups up in arms - so is Mirror.

Airport fire officers strike ballot result will be known on February 27.

PRESS DIGEST

UK loses out in space deal as orders worth £1.8 billion go to three French and one German companies (Times).

Plans announced for easing transition to business rate which will benefit North.

Business rate proposals set off a chorus of protest. CBI accuses Government of showing "another inflationary own goal" (FT).

Sir Geoffrey Littler tells members of the Euro Parliament that Chancellor's attempt to peg sterling to the German mark led to problems of monetary management.

OFT said to be conducting a wide ranging inquiry into Rupert Murdoch's media empire.

Political row developing over water industry's £30 million pre-privatisation TV promotional campaign.

Britain overtakes Italy and Spain to become biggest importer of cheap electricity from the network of 50 nuclear power stations in France (Times).

Tiny Rowland joins exclusive club of directors with £1 million salaries as he gets 55% pay rise (Times).

FT leader calls for abolition of National Dock Labour Scheme and pre-entry closed shops. Both, it argues, are rather outdated diversions from the real problems which face the labour market in the 1990s - Skill shortages and training.

Norman Fowler says drink problems are costing industry and society at least £700 million a year.

Paul Foot, features your remarks on Oxy's safety record (at Flotta) during your visit in 1980 - the company, Foot says, which gave us Piper Alpha.

Relatives of victims whose bodies have not been recovered from Piper Alpha accuse Cecil Parkinson of "just not caring" after he meets them.

Equal Opportunities commission claims Government's failure to provide a coherent policy on child care provision prevents women from participating more fully in society and denies them access to jobs.

PRESS DIGEST

Special squads of railway police set up to tackle "Steamers" on trains.

Farmer whose land is overlooked by Nicholas Ridley's home loses appeal to build 4 houses on it.

Claims that companies are being forced into paying thousands of pounds to recruitment experts who are little more than amateurs.

Britain facing its worst plague of rats for years because of mild winters easily available waste food and shortage of money for eradication programmes (Express). Morning Star has rats spilling out of sewers because, according to AMA report, LAs and water authorities have had to slash their rodent control budgets.

Telegraph says serious doubts are emerging over whether Chunnel highspeed link is necessary.

Today accuses Paul Channon of trying to wash his hands of responsibility in their exposure of a breach of Heathrow security.

Labour to re-question Transport Secretary over lack of warning of Lockerbie disaster.

Kenneth Baker urges universal education until age 19; More than a third of university researchers have no entitlement to redundancy pay. Jack Straw says Grant Maintained Schools Trust is a Tory front organisation and should not be given charitable status or public funds (Independent).

Lord Lane delivers blistering attack on Lord Chancellor's plans to reform legal profession saying the Green Paper is the most sinister ever to emanate from Government (Times).

Dr Crockett, whose name has been linked to offering £10,000 for a kidney donor, denies any involvement in trade in human organs (Times).

New budgets for family doctors could be related to number of people with private health insurance in their area (Times).

Bryan Gould, in Mail, rebuffs Owen's overtures to a Labour Party which renounces unilateralism. He says if any one person is responsible for your free ride in the '80s it is Owen.

PRESS DIGEST

Labour produces another leaked document claiming that it shows that the Government was suborning the Civil Service for party political ends. Bryan Gould has copy of briefing document prepared on 30 January for Lord Young so that he could rebut points made in Labour report on Single Market published that morning (Times).

Conservative peers being sounded out on possibility of John Wakeham being appointed by you as next leader of House of Lords (Times).

Crackdown on bad language, sex and violence on TV which takes particular account of the offence caused to women is outlined by Broadcasting Standards Council (Times).

Independent - Fraud Squad asked to investigate document alleged to record Young Conservative strategy meeting in January urging an extreme right-wing campaign by YC activists.

Times leader supports Andrew MacKay's Sunday horse-racing Bill saying professional sport on Sundays has become a familiar part of the British weekend.

Sinn Fein councillor shot dead on Tuesday was named as IRA terrorist in the House last June (Independent).

Further progress is expected next week towards the long-awaited establishment of a joint parliamentary body linking Westminster and the Dail. Steering committee of Irish MPs is to visit Westminster on Monday (FT).

Arts Council to consider going into market place to supplement its subsidy from the Government.

Arens praises you as a firm friend of Israel. You tell him they must come to terms with PLO. He encourages you to step up peace role in Middle East.

Independent says his talks with Foreign Secretary were described as depressing.

One of Winnie Mandela's bodyguards arrested in connection with murder of boy.

Winnie Mandela now linked to three murder cases. Leader says her team of bodyguards have gone too far. But her action is just an illustration of the damage inflicted by apartheid on the blacks as a whole (Independent).

PRESS DIGEST

Now claims that Japanese guards fed human flesh to POWs on Burma railway.

Last Soviet soldier leaves Afghanistan. Mail leader on public withdrawal says such honesty in the Soviet media is unprecedented and it doubts whether Gorbachev can gauge its impact on the Soviet system or Russian soul.

Pravda admits that the sending of Russian troops into Afghanistan was a mistake (Times).

US Secretary of State Baker discovers that the NATO alliance at present resembles a badly rehearsed orchestra. The differences in pitch emerged most audibly in Bonn, where the US and West Germany are still far apart on how to modernise short-range nuclear missiles in Europe (Times).

West German Government, shaken by international outcry over Libyan CW plant, announces plans to impose jail sentences of up to 15 years on any German who helps make chemical or biological weapons abroad.

West German defence ministry threatens to use a separate radar system for its own models of the European Fighter Aircraft if the Ferranti-led consortium, favoured by Britain, wins the £2billion contract (FT).

SALMAN RUSHDIE

Star says Moslem fanatics do not care about free speech and democracy but it is a tiny minority of zealots who abuse their rights as immigrants too this country. We don't want them here.

Sun says it is not possible to have dealings with a country led by a homicidal maniac and Britain, like the USA, should treat Iran as an international pariah until Khomeini dies or is kicked out.

Today leader headed "Moslems must be called to book" says this is a familiar story. The Moslem leader in this country who has supported Ayatollah's call should be charged immediately with incitement to murder.

Express says those who threaten Mr Rushdie's life or vow to help or support would-be killers should be charged and where appropriate deported.

PRESS DIGEST

Times page 1 - Britain to press Iran to explain Khomeini's order that Salman Rushdie should be killed as Iranian cleric offers £1million for his assassination. Mr Rushdie cancels US tour and goes into hiding. Our Charge d'Affairs calls for police protection as Tehran Embassy is stoned.

Mail leads with Iran's price on Rushdie's life - million dollar bounty as author goes into hiding.

Telegraph - 3million dollar Iran price on Rushdie's head. Leader says Rushdie must have known he would arouse the wrath of Islam, especially when Iran is led by a demented fanatic. Khomeini's behaviour is barbaric. Ending of diplomatic relations, however, would not diminish the threat to Rushdie but would remove tenuous influence over moderate Iranians. Meanwhile police should leave militant Moslems in no doubt about our laws.

Guardian leads with relations with Iran in balance.

FT leader headed "A Satanic Warrant", argues that the pragmatic camp within the Iranian leadership can only prevail if Britain and its European partners take a firm stand on the principle that Iran cannot expect Western help until it adheres to the minimal norms of civilised international relations.

Independent - Protesters damage British Embassy; Government faces strong pressure today to pull Britain's diplomats out of Iran, though the relatively small crowd of demonstrators appears to indicate only limited response to the Rushdie controversy. Penguin confirms plans to go ahead with paperback versions in this country, though printing is suspended in France and Italy. Leader says the disgraceful events in Tehran over the last 48 hours have destroyed hopes of a mutually advantageous exchange of Ambassadors shortly. If the British Charges meeting with the Iranian Foreign Ministry this morning is unsatisfactory, there would be no reason for him to remain in Tehran.

MINISTERS (UK VISITS, SPEECHES ETC)

- DH: Mr Clarke meets TUC Health Services Committee
- DTI: Lord Young meets Indian Minister for Energy; later addresses Westminster and City Programmes on "Companies Bill", Intercontinental Hotel, London
- FCO: Sir Geoffrey Howe addresses Foreign Press Association lunch, Savoy Hotel, London
- MOD: Mr Younger hosts lunch to launch the Armed Forces Parliamentary Scheme, House of Commons
- WO: Mr Walker attends lunch with DC Gardiners, London
- DEM: Mr Nicholls and Mrs Bottomley (DOE) attend Ministerial group on womens issues, Home Office
- DES: Mrs Rumbold addresses Theace Green comprehensive school, Berkshire on "The Role of the Industrial Governor"
- DES: Mr Butcher presents "Learning from Industry" awards, Royal Society of Arts, London
- DOE: Mr Trippier visits Newcastle
- DTI: Mr Clark meets Mr Han, Korean Minister for Trade and Industry, Lancaster House, London
- DTI: Mr Atkins visits engineering firms in the West Midlands
- HO: Mr Renton addresses Royal Television Society dinner, Bradford
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MINISTERS (OVERSEAS VISITS)

- DOE: Lord Caithness attends European Parliament, Strasbourg
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TV AND RADIO

- 'Nature': BBC2 (20.30). Includes a look at pollution in the Irish Sea
- 'This Week': Thames (20.30). 'The Secret Missions of Codename 'Adam''. Examines the role of an Israeli official in Irangate
- 'Question Time': BBC1 (22.15). With Teresa Gorman MP, Prof. Ben Pimlott, Professor of Politics, Birkbeck College, Arthur Scargill, and Mary Ann Sieghart, Assistant Editor, The Times
- 'The City Programme' Thames (22.35)
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