

2 March 1989

PRIME MINISTER

MAIN EVENTS

EC: Environment Council, Brussels

PUBLICATIONS

BoE: Capital issues and redemptions (Feb)

DSS: SSAC Research, report on "Credit, Debt and Poverty"

HMT: UK official reserves (Feb)

PARLIAMENT

Commons

Questions: Home Office; Northern Ireland; Prime Minister

Business: Debate on Housing on a Motion for the Adjournment

Debate on a Motion to take note of EC Documents on the Annual Report from the European Court of Auditors for 1987 and related matters. Details of these and the document relevant to the debate will be given in the Official Report

Adjournment Debates: The role for consultants within the NHS (Mr S Bell)

Select Committees: STANDING ORDERS
Subject: King's Cross Railways Bill

Lords: Starred Questions
Companies Bill (HL): Committee (5th Day)
Police Officers (Central Services) Bill (HL): Second Reading

MINISTERS - See Annex

PRESS DIGESTMain News

Eggs and pound main stories today, but neither is on the front page of the pops.

After third worst trade figures on record, Government seen to be skating on thin ice over interest rates. Bundesbank, meeting today, could exacerbate problem by raising its rates.

Sun warns of 2 years of misery on home loans.

FT says City economists believe Chancellor wants base rates to remain at 13%.

Guardian leads with you intervening in Chunnel link and ordering BR to make substantial amendments to route and increase compensation terms.

Peter Sissons given an armed guard after receiving a death threat from Muslim fanatics following his interview with departing Iranian Ambassador.

(Black Liberation Front threaten to kill Geoffrey Dear, Chief Constable of West Midlands).

Kenneth Baker warns Muslims in speech in Bradford to stay calm and against denying others freedoms that had drawn them to Britain.

World's authors back Rushdie's right to publish in statement published today in 16 countries.

You announce all new fridges must be ozone friendly and every new car must run on unleaded petrol by 1990 in BBC programme tonight.

Express leads with Britain leads ozone battle - Thatcher crusade to clean up cars and fridges. Mail leads with "Maggie to ban fridge danger gas".

Prince Philip says all the powers of science will be required to make good the damage the human race has inflicted on the earth.

Government launches significant public relations initiative for its environment policy by publishing a series of leaflets (Times).

You tell BBC's "Nature" programme that you intervened to prevent financial cuts which would have prevented the British Antarctic survey team from discovering the hole in the ozone layer (FT).

PRESS DIGEST

FT leader, broadly welcoming Ozone Conference, says that only 31 of 50 participants at Montreal have ratified its protocol; and hopes that the 85% target for emissions can be increased to 100% in London next week.

Government committed to "lean burn" engines for small cars rather than advanced emission control equipment fitted to exhausts, Lord Caithness said yesterday (Independnet).

Several articles in Independent on the environment; the alternatives to CFCs; how the oceans affect the weather; the effects of pollution on the air.

You snub Hague conference on the global environment which you believe wants to set up an autonomous ozone monitoring body with self-designated powers to penalise countries which pollute beyond accepted limits (Independent).

Independent leader says voters in the past have found it hard to adjudicate between ministers who declare all is well and environmentalists who claim we shall all perish in the near future. If the two sides can cnverge on the task of working out which measures we have to take and at what cost, the chances of postponing the end of the world will improve.

Agriculture Select Committee condemns all and sundry in its report on salmonella.

NFU to go ahead with its damages claim against Edwina Currie.

Star, Today and Mail have a go at the Committee over its report in quite disparaging terms.

Which? magazine finds 127 hygiene deficiencies in survey of 20 caterers' kitchens.

British Aerospace reveals it is planning a £10billion successor to Concorde.

Major expansion of North Sea oilfields will create up to 3,000 jobs.

Electricity privatisation could flop unless responsibility for nuclear waste and decommissioned power stations remains in the public sector, according to a leaked document from CEGB (Independent).

PRESS DIGEST

Government plans to double number of exchanges via secondments between civil servants and business people over the next year (FT).

Lord Plumb calls on Sir John Hoskyns to resign after his "scurrilous" attack on EC.

Mail says EC Commission may sue Hoskyns over his speech.

Trade union leaders attack speech as a smoke-screen designed to hide the inadequacies of British industry (Times).

Times leader discusses the speeches of Lord Young and John Hoskyns on 1992 saying it does no harm to emphasise, even at the risk of exaggeration, that the difficult questions about what kind of Europe will exist after 1992 have not yet been resolved. Sir John's heresies may yet become tomorrow's orthodoxies, if the Commission loses sight of the Single European Act's capitalist logic of open competition.

Sir John Hoskyns will address the German Chamber of Commerce on 1992 at lunchtime today (FT).

Gas prices likely to rise by more than 6% according to OFGAS because of higher costs in North Sea.

Kinnock is pictured in the Times taking a sample of water from Regent's Park Canal, Islington after claiming pressures on private water companies to make profit would bring further risks of pollution.

Today leads with criticism of Air Miles sales promotion vouchers claiming that an individual would have to buy £68,000 worth of goods to earn a return ticket to New York.

Hundreds of postmen have been fined up to £300 by their union for refusing to go on strike last summer (Sun).

9,000 patients in Exmouth have been supplied with microchip medical cards as part of a year long experiment funded by DOH (Independent).

Professor says half adults in Britain face heart disease because of dangerously high levels of cholesterol.

Council tenants owe £226million in rent; Brent worst offender. All but one of 10 leading councils for arrears are in London; other is Liverpool.

PRESS DIGEST

Sun says all LAs planning big rate rises in advance of community charge should be rate-capped.

Fulham Council may have acted illegally in some of its money market dealings according to District Auctioneer's report.

Telegraph leads with another council's transactions - Ogwr in Mid Glamorgan - being investigated.

More than 80 Tory MPs are backing a Commons campaign to give war widows whose husbands died before 1973 the same basic pension as those widowed since then (Independent).

Paul Channon examining plan to put another lane around the M25. Guardian says he supports idea.

Government survey to be published later this month will show that three-quarters of motorway and trunk road bridges have been so badly damaged by salt that they need urgent repairs (Times).

3 young men killed last night at Hounslow when their car is hit by joyriders being chased by police.

Paul Foot, in Mirror, claims that days after Lockerbie the entire security plan for Heathrow was put out to private printers and sent back to wrong BAA address.

St George's Hospital surgeon warns off Royalty and leading politicians visiting seriously injured people in hospital immediately after disasters but he admits there is a good side.

26 Bolton Wanderers fans arrested in a dawn swoop on soccer hooligan gang; large number of weapons seized. 21 charged with violent disorder and affray.

Privatisation of remand system could put 1,000 bobbies back on beat (Express).

John Stalker, in Mail, wants to know who will police the (crooked) private police forces.

Launch of Robert Maxwell's new European newspaper indefinitely postponed.

PRESS DIGEST

BBC publishes new guidelines for broadcasters with crackdown on sex, violence, bad language and sexism. Today says there's nothing wrong with them but they aren't worth the paper they are written on because they won't be observed.

BBC admits its £3,500 payment to a conman broke new rules.

Tory peers united behind a powerful Government attack last night on Lord Windlesham's report on "Death on the Rock" (Independent).

Survey suggests ITV programmes are a turn off for affluent young viewers who are turning to BBC for more up-market entertainment.

Independent editor Andreas Whittam-Smith is set to become a multi-millionaire (FT).

Cyril Smith refused to attend a meeting at which Paddy Ashdown outlines his approach to Owen; Smith says there is room for only one party of the centre.

Right-wingers battling for control of the Young Conservatives claim that they are heading for victory in the ballot to be declared tomorrow evening (Times).

Ronald Butt, Times, and Hugo Young, Guardian, critical of Government's handling of issues at home and in EC.

UK to get £3.5billion in EC and up to 1994.

Guardian devotes a page to EC food fraud costing £17.25billion over last 8 years.

Express diary thinks Speaker's tenure of office is coming to an end.

Mail says you want Norman Fowler to be next Tory Party chairman, but others think Lord Young is the only candidate.

Israeli Prime Minister gets strong support in local elections for tough line over PLO.

Independent political party planned this year in Soviet Union (FT).

South Africa promises to release 300 out of 850 prisoners detained without charge within the week (Independent).

PRESS DIGESTFOOD/SELECT COMMITTEE

Star page 4 - Edwina roasted on eggs. She and Kenneth Clarke blamed for plunging industry into crisis. Leader says it is time to lay off Edwina. The Select Cttee can hardly blame Mrs Currie for treating them with contempt. A scrambled verdict.

Sun page 2 - You're all bad eggs (Mrs Currie, John MacGregor and Kenneth Clarke all "guilty") - damning report on poison row.

Mirror page 2 - All guilty. Ministers rapped in eggs row. Leader says the report does not properly answer the question: are eggs safe? Some of its conclusions are contradictory and some of its comments ludicrous. Its recommendations fall short of what is needed.

Today page 2 - Egg on their faces - farmers sue as report slams Ministers on salmonella scare. Leader says the report proves only what fun insignificant Backbench MPs get from taking pot shots at their betters. And they can't even make up their minds on salmonella. You must come down on Mrs Currie's side.

Express page 2 - Currie is the target of egg men's revenge. Poison scare farmers are set to sue for millions. Leader says you can tell that the Committee has produced a good report because the Government hates it. It wants codes of practice for egg producers to be made compulsory and compulsory monitoring of flocks.

Mail page 1 - Writs fly in egg row; Government facing multi-million pound court action. Leader: Cluck, cluck, cluck goes this unanimous and uniformly critical report by Backbench MPs who seem so aware of the failings of everybody else and so sure of their own patronising superiority. It says the health risk was under-played and Mrs Currie overreacted. But better that than keeping the lid on it.

Times page 1 - Kenneth Clarke takes unusual step of issuing statement rejecting criticism by the Select Committee of his conduct in salmonella egg row as ridiculous. Edwina Currie stays silent but Robin Cook says report is one of the most blistering he has seen from any select committee. It exposed a remarkable record of delay, procrastination and sins of omission; leader is critical of Mr Clarke's immediate response saying he still appears to be misjudging the situation. The committee's report is one of the most categorically critical of the Government since the system was established. It is clear, concise, non-partisan and needs to be taken more seriously than Mr Clarke affected to do.

PRESS DIGEST

Telegraph page 1 - Highly critical report blames Mrs Currie for causing undue public alarm. Leader says MAFF can be accused of allowing Government to drag its heels. The hardest question raised by the report is how a Ministry is to judge the right moment to sound the alarm.

Guardian page 7 - Ministers "failed to act" in eggs crisis. Leader says the report's main strategy is sensible.

Naivety and misjudgement are the key criticisms made of Ministers in the Agriculture Select Committee report published yesterday (Independent). Demands for a separate food ministry will grow unless departments co-ordinate their efforts better.

MPs attack Government on handling of egg crisis. Commons Agriculture Committee blames whole Government for failing to correct Edwina Currie's statement of December 3 (FT).

ECONOMY

Star - Lawson to get tough in Budget. Tax cuts remote possibility.

Sun page 2 - 2 years of misery on home loans.

Mirror page 2 - Mortgage rate fear as trade debt soars.

Today page 2 - Lawson props pound in home front battle. Fighting a desperate battle to avoid higher mortgage rate.

Express page 4 - Lawson fights to hold rates. Leader says the City did well to keep its cool yesterday. Chancellor's right in resisting pressure to raise interest rates. Far better to let pound take strain if necessary.

Mail page 2 - Lawson struggles to hold interest rates. Leader says there are profound differences between present difficulties and those in '60s and '70s but these are dangerous times for the authority of your Government. Chancellor had better be right about the efficiency of high interest rates.

PRESS DIGEST

FT Lex column says equity market is behaving as if there is no risk of another point or two on base rates, and perhaps it is right. But January trade figures are far from encouraging with import volumes growing more quickly than exports. Leader believes the figures offer the Chancellor the worst of both worlds - not bad enough to justify higher interest rates but not good enough to avoid further downward pressure on inflation. Sam Brittan's assessment is that inflationary pressures are still very much with us.

Times - Foreign exchange markets will be watching closely for the outcome of today's Bundesbank meeting for guidance on whether to continue selling sterling.

Telegraph page 1 - Trade gap widens to £1.7billion. Leader says the Chancellor has to convince foreign fund managers that he will not be deterred by signs of slowing down economy from raising interest rates to whatever levels may be needed to stop pound slipping.

Trade gap puts Lawson on trial: no rise in interest rates despite deficit of £1.7billion (Independent).

Guardian leader says trade deficit is disastrous. It is the predictable result of Budget tax cuts on top of consumer spending boom. Instead of raising interest rates Chancellor should have increased VAT.

Sir Alan Walters said to have returned to London to take up his post as economic adviser. It is said he will give you a new edge over the Chancellor in any future scorpion-dance (Independent).

MINISTERS (UK VISITS, SPEECHES ETC)

- DEM: Mr Fowler addresses Equal Opportunities Commission conference on Work and the Family, QE11 Conference Centre, London
- DH: Mr Clarke presents the Health Service Journal awards, Pointers Hall, London
- DTI: Lord Young presents Young Entrepreneur of the Year awards, London; Mr Cope (DEM) attends
- LCD: Lord MacKay addresses Surrey Magistrates AGM on reclassification of offences (prov)
- DEN: Mr Morrison visits Northern Offshore Federation offices, Sunderland and other oil industry companies in the North East
- DES: Mr Butcher visits Langley College of Further Education, Slough
- DH: Mr Freeman meets Alcohol Concern, London
- DH: Mr Mellor attends Queen Charlotte's Hospital Thanksgiving Service, Westminster Abbey
- DOE: Mr Gummer is guest lecturer at Local Government Training Board conference on "Local Government"
- DSS: Lord Skelmersdale attends all party group on pre 1973 war widows reception, London
- DTI: Mr Clark meets Mr Rwegasim, Tanzanian Minister for Industry and Trade
- DTI: Mr Forth addresses Paper Industry Research Association on "recent developments in waste paper processing"
- DTp: Mr Bottomley launches new General Accident Childrens' Highway Code, London
- DTp: Mr Portillo visits the Port of Southampton; later attends lunch at Southampton University
- HMT: Mr Brooke opens the Automatic Vending Association of Great Britain Avex '89 Exhibition, London
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MINISTERS (OVERSEAS VISITS)

DOE: Lord Caithness attends Environment Council, Brussels

MINISTERS (PRESS INTERVIEWS)

DTI: Mr Maude interviewed on BBC local radio, on the Single Market and Consumer Choice

TV AND RADIO

"9-11-5": BBC 2 (20.00) Report on changing environment on the production line. Looks at new experiment in factory working which breaks down some divisions

"Nature": BBC 2 (20.30) "The Greening of Mrs Thatcher" Prime Minister talks to Michael Buerk about her own attitude to the environment and the Ozone conference

"This Week": Thames (20.30) In run up to No Smoking Day, it examines the "extraordinary momentum building up for bans and restrictions on smoking in public places"

"Question Time": BBC 1 (22.00) with Elizabeth Filkin, Rt Hon Lord Hailsham, Rt Hon Roy Hattersley, Tim Melville-Ross

"The City Programme": Thames (22.35)
