

3 March 1989

PRIME MINISTER

MAIN EVENTS

? DE response to RPI Advisory Committee report on
community charge

Closure of Wolverhampton, Leicester and Preston task forces

STATISTICS

DTI: Company liquidity survey (4th qtr)

PARLIAMENT

Commons

Business: PRIVATE MEMBERS' BILLS

Citizen's Compensation Bill: 2nd Reading. (Mr Lawrence Cunliffe)
Abortion (Amendment) Bill: 2nd Reading. (Miss Ann Widdecombe)
Data Protection (Amendment) Bill: 2nd Reading. (Mr Edward
Loyden)

Adjournment Debates: The death of Petty Officer John Black (Mr M Lathan)

MINISTERS - See Annex

PRESS DIGESTMain News

Gallup puts Conservatives and Labour neck and neck - 37.5/37.5/SLD 11.5%; SDP 8.5%. First time Tory poll has fallen below 40%. Gallup 9000 poll gives Tories lead of 4.6%, down nearly half in a month.

Telegraph says overwhelming majority (84%) of voters want Chancellor to increase spending on public services rather than cut taxes.

Iran reacts negatively to Foreign Secretary's remarks about Rushdie book which he says is offensive not merely to Muslims but also to Britain because it compares us with Hitler's Germany. But he defends free speech.

No talks can be held before withdrawal of death threat.

Home Secretary and Foreign Secretary added to pro-Iranian terrorists death list.

Peter Sissons' family under guard.

Mail agrees with you on refusing Iranian overtures to meet in Geneva until death threat is lifted. Ours is an honourable position. But Times leader feels remarks made by Foreign Secretary about Rushdie's book send out the wrong signal to the authorities in Iran. They are likely to be seen there as a victory for the politics of intimidation. It goes on to criticise Max Madden's motion describing it as a craven acknowledgement of the power of blackmail, and New Zealand and Japan saying Iran can be dealt with only by absolute clarity. Too many of the representatives of the free world have still failed to provide this.

European Court of Justice expected to rule next month in favour of UK over fish quota law (Times).

EC Ministers decide to ban CFCs by end of century - very exciting progress, says Lord Caithness. This is seen as a boost for your conference.

Mail headline: EC warms to Maggie's drive for a safer fridge. Now we must convince rest of world.

ICI say CFC alternatives several years away.

PRESS DIGEST

Labour say your claim that rivers and beaches will be clean by 1995 is "ludicrously stupid".

Dr Richard Laws, former director of BAS, confirms you intervened twice to save survey. Lord Buxton also confirms this in a letter to the Times taking Kinnock to task for his remarks that your memory was playing tricks on you.

Government urges new rivers watchdog to take harsh measures against companies that persistently poison the rivers (Times).

Telegraph says Bank spent an estimated £1 billion yesterday to prevent sharp fall in sterling.

Sterling and shares rise after intervention by the Bank (FT).

Telegraph says CSO six month study of national accounts next week will give Chancellor a boost by suggesting trade deficit has been greatly exaggerated by under-recording of exports.

You rebuke John Hoskyns over his Single European Market speech after Question in the House from Tony Newton's PPS, James Couchman (Times).

Charles Moore, in Express, says John Hoskyns was tactless but right in his attack on EC.

Telegraph leader says the more Europe seeks to insulate itself against competitive trade with the rest of the world the greater would be the opportunities for fraud.

Guardian leader says something similar - best way to reduce fraud is to tackle fact that European farm prices are still far higher than world prices. If that discrepancy were eliminated the scope for most of the finagling would disappear.

Sir John Hoskyns speech has aroused suspicion that he is leading a rearguard action for you against the way the single market has been developing (Independent).

Tory MPs warn Government to soften environmental impact of Chunnel rail link or face Commons revolt (Times).

Government softens line on water prices as Ministers are confident private companies will scale back their proposed increases by 10-20% (FT).

PRESS DIGEST

FT leader offers commiserations to Sid as British Gas and its shareholders are faced with a much tougher regulatory regime than many assumed would be possible. This, it says, is welcome evidence that limited powers and resources need not prevent a determined regulator from being highly effective. But the prospects for policing the electricity and water industries remain uncertain.

Training managers are experiencing bottlenecks in placing trainees with employers, according to preliminary results of survey by Centre for Alternative Industrial and Technological Systems (FT).

A fifth high-speed Chunnel rail link being proposed by private consortium with financial backing from Britain and overseas (Times).

Case of Dan Air plane which landed from Newcastle not at Aldergrove but at a disused wartime airfield 3 miles away.

A third council - Haringey - also in severe financial crisis because of interest rate swaps (Independent).

Lady Porter has ruled out resigning following vote of no confidence in her (Independent).

Linda Chalker believes that a common European currency should not be ruled out at some point after the creation of the Single European market in 1992.

Express leads with case of a house sold in 24 hours; MPs now demand general speed up. Owner refused to sell unless estate agent clinched sale in a day.

Survey suggests most commercial and specialist barristers will continue to practice at an independent Bar if legal reforms go ahead (Independent).

Express says a number of firms have withdrawn advertising from Today after its attack on Express's air miles voucher offer.

Murdoch's News Corporation plan new company to make large acquisitions in the media and communications business worldwide, particularly in Europe (Times).

20 seconds cut out of BBC TV drama because it may have defamed you (Times).

PRESS DIGEST

Mirror elevates Norman Tebbit's article in Standard last night into an attack on "inept" and "muddled" Tories. Today, on same basis, says Mr Tebbit warned Tories inept squabbling must stop.

Research suggests 1 in 3 switch off or walk out during party political broadcasts - Sun backs their being dropped.

Sun leader rejects idea Peter Walker has made the Welsh Valleys bloom; it has been achieved by enterprise of investors and skill and labour of Welsh people.

Last union member leaves GCHQ.

Two sisters accused of shoplifting in Tesco's clear their name in court but at cost of £20,000. Star, Mirror and Today say this is not justice; Star says judges must make awards in civil cases, not juries.

Telegraph reports a dramatic fall in crime in Battersea as a result of police action.

Rebuilding work costing £56million at Wormwood Scrubs may be shelved because the Home Office cannot hire guards to protect workmen (Independent).

Substantial number of prisoners serving life sentences in Northern Ireland to be freed later this year (Independent).

SSAC says 2million people have difficulty repaying debts and up to 200,000 saddled with multiple debts.

Row over war widow pensions - claim that your office wrote in 1983 supporting a scheme where all war widows would receive pensions: we have asked to see a copy of the letter (Independent).

Increase of 15-20p in NHS prescription charges expected to be announced next week.

Today leader on BMA's complaints about doctors having to become cost conscious, says the Government's new plans offer doctors a partnership in determining how resources will be spent. What on earth is wrong with that?

Findings of National Curriculum Council on teaching of grammar will disappoint Government; Mail leader says the Council still refuses to treat grammar as a necessary discipline. Kenneth Baker must not take no for an answer.

PRESS DIGEST

Kenneth Baker clashes with NCC over teaching of grammar to schoolchildren. If he rejects their advice in favour of more grammar, reading and writing he will have to explain his reasons to Parliament under the terms of the Education Reform Act and may face resignations from NCC (Independent).

Students Union may take legal action against universities if they fail to bring exam boycott to an end within two weeks (Times).

Select Committee says Gurkhas should be kept in British Army and used in Northern Ireland.

Britain is reluctantly being drawn into a compromise over a modernisation of short range nuclear missiles in Europe - the signs in London and Washington are that both have been persuaded not to push for a firm commitment to develop and deploy a successor to Lance for the next year at least (Independent).

Claims that a spy ring in West Germany broke into computer systems worldwide to obtain secrets for KGB. British secrets sold, Mail says.

Political sources at Khartoum believe Sudan's Prime Minister will dissolve his Government within next 48 hours to try to construct a broad-based coalition (FT).

P W Botha says he will resume duties after Easter. De Klerk calls for great gathering of races.

ENVIRONMENT

Star - Maggie pledge on ozone gap - race is on to find safe alternatives to CFCs.

Sun - Doom gases in Euro ban.

Mirror - You boobed twice yesterday over environment - you seek 85% cut in CFCs while EC moves to ban them; John Cunningham rejects your claim that rivers will be cleaned up by 1995 as "ludicrously stupid".

Today - Fridge men blast hole. Maggie's ozone ban - your words about rules against CFCs in new fridges contradict Nicholas Ridley.

Express - Victory in ozone battle "3 years off", according to ICI; probably 5-10 years before we can meet the requirements of all industries using CFCs.

PRESS DIGEST

Mail devotes a page to environment and EC action on CFCs.

Telegraph - Europe unites to ban CFC aerosols by next century.

Guardian leads with total ban on CFCs in Europe by end of century. Leader asserts UK remains dirty man of Europe. If Tories are to become the true conservationists, you will need to demonstrate a bigger shift in attitudes.

Times page 1 - EC environment ministers agreement to total ban of CFCs catches Government by surprise as they were expected to take lead at meeting by pressing for 85% reduction.

Independent - You indicate that all new fridges must have new solvents in them. Labour claims confusion in the Government's message about CFCs.

MINISTERS (UK VISITS, SPEECHES ETC)

- DEM: Mr Fowler opens new training premises at Cannock Engineering Group, Cannock, the Midlands
- DEN: Mr Parkinson addresses South Eastern Electricity Board management seminar, Hornsley Towers
- DTI: Lord Young addresses Market Research conference in Brighton on "1992"; later speaks to Single Market breakfast, Sussex branch of BIM, Brighton
- FCO: Sir Geoffrey Howe addresses Birmingham Chamber of Commerce on "1992"
- HO: Mr Hurd visits Nottingham, including visits to Radford Road Police Station, Nottingham University and HM Prison Nottingham re safer cities
- LCD: Lord Mackay addresses NACRO conference on "the race and criminal justice system", Royal National Hotel, London
- MAFF: Mr MacGregor visits Scotland
- DEN: Mr Morrison visits Shell, Chester
- DES: Mrs Rumbold addresses British Film Institute conference on 'Children and Television: What's Going On?', National Film Theatre, London
- DOE: Mr Gummer visits Leicester City Council re local government
- DOE: Mrs Bottomley meets Residuary Bodies Chairman, Manchester re local government
- DOE: Mr Trippier visits Preston Task Force on inner cities
- DTI: Mr Clark addresses the formal inauguration of the Metal and Engineering Organisation, London
- DTp: Lord Brabazon visits Teeside Airport
- OAL: Mr Luce visits Devon (arts)
- SO: Lord James Douglas-Hamilton addresses Institute of Housing conference, Aviemore, Perthshire
- SO: Lord Sanderson meets Scottish National Farmers' Union and visits Hannah Research Institute, Ayr; later visits Motherwell Food Park, Motherwell, Lanarkshire and Central Scotland Countryside Trust, Shotts, Lanarkshire, with Mr MacGregor (MAFF)
- WO: Mr Grist makes opening address at seminar and exhibition on services for the elderly and mentally ill, Cardiff; in the evening attends Building Employers Federation dinner, Swansea

MINISTERS (OVERSEAS VISITS)

DOE: Lord Caithness visits ICI, Brussels

MINISTERS (PRESS INTERVIEWS)

HMT: Mr Lawson gives general interview to ITN for broadcast on Budget Day

TV AND RADIO

'Analysis': Radio 4 (11.00). The Reforming Bear. Have the Russians genuinely given up global adventurism?

'Next Left': C4 (20.00) Redesigning socialism. Union decentralisation in West Germany. How welfare provision can be made less bureaucratic

'Any Questions?' BBC Radio 4 (22.05) With Sally Oppenheim-Barnes, Joan Ruddock, Mary Kenny, Dilys Cossey, chairwoman of Family Planning Association
