

6 March 1989

PRIME MINISTER

MAIN EVENTS

The Queen and Duke of Edinburgh attend a centenary reception given by the Association of County Councils, St James's Palace, London

The Prince of Wales attends dinner for heads of delegation attending the World conference "Saving the Ozone Layer", British Museum, Bloomsbury, London WC1

EC: Industry Council, Brussels

EC: Agriculture Council, Brussels (to 7 March)

EC: Informal Employment Ministers meeting, Seville (to 7 March)

House of Commons Select Committee on Home Affairs visit The Hague (to 8 March)

Western European Union seminar on "Changes in Public Perceptions of European Defence", Lancaster House, London (to 7 March)

STATISTICS

DTI: Retail sales (Jan-final)

DTI: Credit business (Jan)

PARLIAMENT

Commons

Questions: Social Security; Transport; Wales

Business: Self-Governing Schools etc (Scotland) Bill: 2nd Reading and Money Resolution
Motions relating to Scottish Community Charge Regulations
Details will be given in the Official Report
Motion on the Access to Personal Files (Housing) Regulations

Adjournment Debates: Community care for the elderly in Dundee (Mr J McAllian)

Select Committees: **PUBLIC ACCOUNTS**
Subject: Heart Disease
Witnesses: Sir Christopher France KCB
Permanent Secretary, Department of Health, Mr W K Reid, CB, Secretary Scottish Home and Health Department, Sir Richard Lloyd Jones, KCB, Permanent Secretary, Welsh Office

ENVIRONMENT

Subject: British Waterways Board
Witnesses: British Waterways Board

Lords: Starred Questions
Companies Bill (HL): Committee (6th Day)
Elected Authorities (Northern Ireland) Bill: Report
UQ to ask HMG whether attempts to prevent the distribution in the
UK of Salman Rushdie's book "The Satanic Verses" constitute
unjustified restraint of trade and, if so, what powers are available
under the Fair Trading Act 1973 or other legislation to frustrate those
attempts

MINISTERS - See Annex

PRESS DIGESTMain News

MORI poll shows that belief in Government's ability to improve the economy is declining with support falling from 11 points lead over Labour a month ago to three points now (Times).

Driver of Littlehampton train which clipped back of Horsham train in Purley admits he went through a red light, but a lot of evidence of severe brake application before red signal.

5 dead in crash; 94 injured, 10 seriously. Survivors say experience was like being in a cement mixer.

Rail unions demand black box journey recorders on all trains.

Pictures of your visit to hospital; I know how tragedy changes you life, you tell injured (Today).

Much comment on BR's need to restore confidence in rail transport.

Paddy Ashdown in conference speech says railway safety has suffered from Government cuts but BR says investment has doubled since 1983.

Seven more countries agree to sign Montreal protocol in positive first day of ozone conference.

Soviets resist call to ban CFCs by end of century; they seek more proof.

Your remark that people should delay buying a fridge until CFC substitutes become available widely reported; and some try to suggest you are again at odds with Nicholas Ridley, this time over the timescale for introducing substitutes. Fridge manufacturers critical of you.

Liberal Party to be relaunched to add to confusion in so-called centre of British politics.

SLD has a cash crisis; recruitment has fallen below expectations.

Paddy Ashdown says Owen should be "dumped in the dustbin of politics" if he doesn't agree to a by-election truce. Express says Ashdown has a strange way of doing business.

PRESS DIGEST

Ashdown calls for a tax on land values, no subsidies for nuclear power, a fibre-optic national communications network and urban curbs on private motorists in a "coalition of ideas" (Independent).

Labour MPs defy Kinnock to launch black caucus.

Patrick Minford urges Chancellor to cut taxes by £10 billion in Budget since he is on course for £20 billion surplus.

Express leader says trade gap needs over time to be brought down but it is nonsense to panic.

Chancellor set to ignore City suggestions that he should abandon the idea of tax cuts in the Budget, after the heavy selling of the pound last week (Times).

Time to tighten monetary policy, writes Sam Brittan in FT, who says the Treasury has underpredicted real growth and inflation.

Manpower says 1 in 3 firms expect to take on more staff this spring.

Rushdie Affair

Star lead with Queen top of death list drawn up by followers of Khomeini.

Popular Front for Liberation of Palestine vows to kill Rushdie.

Pope condemns "The Satanic Verses" as offensive and advises Catholics not to buy it.

Benazir Bhutto says Moslem fundamentalists have boosted sales of Rushdie's novel.

Times leader, under the heading "Playing with Holy Fire", looks at the dilemma facing Benazir Bhutto in Pakistan over the Rushdie book. By calling for a boycott of all Penguin books, she has done more than the minimum required to protect lives. It is not a good advertisement for her proclaimed belief that Islam is a "religion of liberation and tolerance".

French actress throws down gauntlet by reading book on TV.

Writer in Telegraph calls for formation of an international action group to press the interests of hostages and campaign for their release.

PRESS DIGEST

Independent leader says that Rushdie's apparent lack of gratitude to the Government is odd, though it could understand it if he wished to criticise the Vatican's disgraceful preference for condemning the novel rather than the death threat against him.

Guardian prints a page full of Ayatolla writing on threats to Islam.

Pravda attacks the Times saying it has committed a "sacrilege" and an "outrage" against the Soviet Union by depicting Lenin in a Nazi uniform in a political sketch.

You take charge personally of privatisation of water industry (Sun).

Britain threatens to take France to court over Nissan quota.

Labour Party say Government will on Thursday admit the failure of the ET scheme when Norman Fowler announces a widening of the scheme to include those unemployed for three months (Independent).

Halifax Building Society says house prices picked up a little in February after falling in January.

5% overall increase in house prices forecast for this year.

Ministers to expand £3billion package for inner-cities revival (Times).

Conservative backbench pressure mounts for scrapping of National Dock Labour Scheme.

Your anti-litter campaign gathers sway with the introduction of a Private Member's Bill requiring firms to keep frontages clear; 8 soccer clubs start anti-litter campaign because psychologists argue squalor breeds hooliganism.

Bar today launches its campaign of opposition to Government proposals to reform legal profession (Times).

National Consumer Council says ordinary people get a raw deal from Britain's antiquated legal system.

Today leader says that a barrister can be crassly incompetent but whatever his failings you cannot sue him for negligence. Lord Chancellor must have the courage to sweep away this nonsense.

PRESS DIGEST

Government has been warned by OFTEL that its plans for cable television will be disastrous for investment in the industry.

British Telecom has agreed to reinstate Chatline on the ordinary telephone network.

Douglas Hurd announces a modest drop in the crime rate.

Complaints "flood in" (Express) to MPs over a Home Office sex survey, asking women if they have ever been raped and whether their husband has assaulted them.

Independent Labour councillor wants Greenwich to rename General Gordon Square Gaddafi Square in honour of the 20th anniversary of the Libyan revolution. Sun offers him a single ticket to Libya.

Guardian leader says that while the going is more difficult for Government it does not amount to the sort of turning point wishful thinkers claim to discern. Labour has gained only modestly and the Government has a wealth of levers to pull. We also have a continuing crisis of opposition.

Peter Hennessy's Independent column looks at the Office of the Prime Minister and says that a new three year survey by Professor Anthony King, of Essex University, will be the first comprehensive study for 30 years.

Archbishop Runcie regrets Tory and Government attacks on Church of England.

Church and Tories clash with Bishop Sheppard and Archbishop Warlock in letter to Times accusing right-wing critics of the Churches of urging selective morality on church leaders by calling on them too speak out only about personal morality.

Geoffrey Dickens MP admitted to hospital with severe leg pains.

John Tower crisis scuppers visit to US by George Younger, showing British acknowledgement of the disarray in the Bush administration over stalled appointments (Independent).

11 killed and more than 100 injured when police open fire on pro independence demonstrators in Lhasa.

William Waldegrave calls on Arafat to condemn raids of PLO radicals (Times).

PRESS DIGEST

Shevardnadze set to propose 15% military cuts in NATO and Warsaw pact troops at Vienna conference (Times).

Sudanese Prime Minister buys time with a promise of peace, by announcing a new Government and saying it is prepared to consider peace talks with the rebels of the People's Liberation Army (Independent).

OZONE CONFERENCE

Star page 4 - Seven year race to save world! Europe bans deadly gases.

Sun small piece on page 2 - Freeze buying new fridge for a year, you advise.

Mirror has a Q&A on why we must stop depleting ozone layer, and how to do so.

Today page 2 - Don't buy a fridge this year, says Green Maggie. Leader says that as soon as replacement devices are available old style fridges and other CFC producers must be banned. The crisis is too urgent for anything else.

Express page 2 - Warning as ozone hole grows as big as America. Thatcher is shocked by scientists' green report.

Mail - Maggie's ozone tip - wait to buy a friendly fridge she tells shoppers. Firms suggest you are putting thumbscrews on them to come up with substitutes quicker. Mail also expects victory in Budget for its campaign against leaded petrol; it forecasts an 11p a gallon price incentive for unleaded.

Telegraph page 1 - Mori urges CFC cash for Third World. Devotes page 9 to the conference.

Guardian page 1 - EC official pledges to speed up ozone fight in personal move.

Independent devotes whole page to the conference, highlighting scientists' calls for the quickest possible phase-out of CFCs. You are criticised by the Refrigeration Industry Board for urging people about to buy a fridge to wait for 'ozone friendly' models.

FT - Proposals to provide EC aid to developing countries who need substitutes for CFCs put forward by the EC Environment Commissioner.

PRESS DIGEST

FT devotes a page to the ozone conference and leads with Moi's appeal for the Third World to sign the Montreal Protocol. You call for stricter targets. John Hunt criticises the conference organisation which kept journalists away from representatives.

You appear to be at odds with Nicholas Ridley over protecting ozone layer. You urge delegates to put off decisions to buy a new refrigerator for another year until new models are available without CFCs. But Mr Ridley tells Press Conference that he saw little prospect of new models being on sale for some years (Times).

RAIL CRASH

Star says travellers must be encouraged to go by rail in this crowded island, so it is vital for BR to make their services safe and better. Paul Channon will need to produce a bold, imaginative plan to drag the railways into the 21st century.

Sun says that in a curious way we shall all breathe a sigh of relief if human error is revealed as the cause of the crash.

Mirror says driver's frankness raises more questions than it answers - were the signals he went through working properly and were all safety systems working properly. They can only be answered by an inquiry.

Today - One disaster is a tragedy; a second disaster is inexcusable. Whoever is responsible must be traced and punished. The dead deserve this last act of justice.

Mail leader says this repeated tragedy cannot but shake public confidence in rail travel. It finds distasteful indecent haste of John Prescott and Paddy Ashdown to make opposition capital out of the tragedy. What you cannot do, if you are a responsible figure in public life, is to pounce on every rail and Tube death to make unsubstantiated anti-Government smears.

Telegraph says the string of appalling accidents in recent months can scarcely have failed to arouse deep anxieties in the travelling public. A responsible society needs to act on those warnings.

Independent - Safety campaigners step up their calls for spending on tougher carriages while opponents of the Channel Tunnel line say the crash will intensify their determination to see the plan halted.

PRESS DIGEST

FT - The Opposition has linked the Purley tragedy with your stance on rail spending even though investment of £4.2 billion over the next 5 years has been approved. Above all passengers want assurances on safety of the network.

Times page 1 - Picture of you talking to one of injured. Express driver says he passed red signal and investigation find no evidence of signal or braking failure. MPs of all parties demand inquiry into rail safety.

WATER

Sun leader says there may be sound economic and political arguments for selling off water but the Government has not convinced us yet. It will be tragic if fears over water undermine confidence on electricity privatisation.

Mirror - Thatcher set to walk on water. You take charge personally of the sell-off.

Mail, in a twist to water story, says you have declared war on 29 private water firms for giving the industry a bad name as privatisation approaches by raising bills by up to 40%.

Telegraph - Michael Howard dismisses suggestions that he has been publicly rebuked by you. He plans nationwide tour after Easter to drum up support.

Independent - Government plans PR campaign on water privatisation as concern grows about its falling popularity. But Ministers are determined to resist calls to slow down its legislative programme.

Independent adds that your remarks on water privatisation perpetuate the impression of a Prime Minister semi-detached from her own cabinet. Leader says the muddle over your comments has added to the Government's disarray. Your activist tendency threatens your electoral popularity.

FT - Water leaders agree with you that Ministers have failed to 'sell' privatisation. An intense Ministerial campaign in support of privatisation will now happen.

MINISTERS (UK VISITS, SPEECHES ETC)

- DOE: Mr Ridley and Lord Caithness attend HM Government dinner on Environment, British Museum
- DTI: Lord Young and Mr Clark meet Mr Berecz, Hungarian Minister of Industry
- DTp: Mr Channon addresses Imperial College engineering faculty, London
- LCD: Lord Mackay addresses Westminster conference on "green papers"
- DES: Mrs Rumbold visits the DES Ideal Home Exhibition stand, London
- DES: Mr Jackson gives address and makes presentation to the rector of Imperial College, International Association for the Exchange of Students for Technical Experience, London
- DH: Mr Mellor opens Braintree Community Care Alarm System
- DOE: Mr Gummer meets delegation from Litchfield D.C. re Rate Support Grants
- DOE: Mr Trippier visits Birmingham and speaks at 10th Glassex seminar on "Construction"
- DTp: Mr Portillo attends working lunch with Association of British Chambers of Commerce, London
- DTp: Mr Bottomley attends Civil Engineers' "Congestion" seminar, Westminster, London
- HO: Mr Renton speaks at National Union of Civil and Public Servants Immigration conference, Birmingham
- MAFF: Mr Thompson visits Maplehurst Deer Farm, Horsham
- MAFF: Baroness Trumpington attends County Councils centenary reception, London
- MOD: Mr Hamilton addresses Western European seminar on "Changes in Public Perceptions of European Defence", and hosts reception: both at Lancaster House, London
- SO: Lord James Douglas-Hamilton performs Keep Scotland Beautiful ceremony, Central Hotel, Glasgow
- SO: Mr Forsyth launches Supplementary Aids and Drug Misuse campaign in Scotland, New St Andrew's House, Edinburgh
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MINISTERS (OVERSEAS VISITS)

- DEM: Mr Fowler attends EC Ministers informal meeting, Seville (to 7 March)
- FCO: Sir Geoffrey Howe addresses Conventional Forces in Europe conference, Vienna
- MAFF: Mr MacGregor and Mr Ryder attend Agriculture Council, Brussels (to 7 March)
- WO: Mr Walker attends European Commission Agriculture Committee dinner, Brussels
- DTI: Mr Clark visits Austria (to 8 March)
- ODA: Mr Patten visits Egypt (to 9 March)
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MINISTERS (PRESS INTERVIEWS)

- WO: Mr Grist interviewed by BBC Wales re NHS White Paper
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TV AND RADIO

- 'Same Difference' Ch 4 (18.30) looks at difficulties of disabled people trying to get university places
- 'Watchdog': BBC 1 (19.30)
- 'The Education Programme' BBC 2 (19.40) research shows that assisted placed in independent schools are being taken by the middle class
- 'World in Action': Thames (20.30)
- 'Panorama': BBC 1 (21.30) destruction of the rainforests and the death of Chico Mendes
- 'The Nuclear Age': Thames (22.35) tells the story of the MX missile
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