

7 March 1989

PRIME MINISTER

MAIN EVENTS

International Ozone Conference concludes with Prime Minister's speech and press conference

The Queen holds an Investiture at Buckingham Palace

Cecil Parkinson launches "Best Practice" programme

STATISTICS

DOE: Housing starts and completions (Jan)

DOE: Housing renovations (4th qtr)

OPCS: Legal Abortions (Sept Qtr 1988)

PUBLICATIONS

HO: Law Commission Annual Report

PARLIAMENT

Commons

Questions: Defence; Employment; Prime Minister

Business: 10 Minute Rule Bill: Control of Litter (Fines)
Estimates Day (1st allotted day) Class IV, Vote 3 so far as it relates to assistance to the Egg Industry
Details of the relevant Agriculture Committee Report will be given in the Official Report
Debate on Funding of Overseas Students on a Motion for the Adjournment. Details of the relevant Foreign Affairs Committee Report and the Government's observations will be given in the Official Report
At 10.00pm the Question will be put on all Outstanding Supplementary Estimates and Votes

Adjournment Debates: The Eastern Health Board's proposals for the replacement of Croft House for the elderly (Mr J Kilfedder)

Select Committees: EDUCATION SCIENCE AND ARTS
Subject: The Supply of Teachers for the 1990s
Witnesses: National Union of Teachers; National Association of Schoolmasters/Union of Women Teachers
at 5 pm (approx)

Lords: Starred Questions
Prevention of Terrorism (Temporary Provisions) Bill: Report
Football Spectators Bill (HL): Committee (2nd Day)

PRESS DIGESTMain News

Guardian average of polls cuts Conservative lead to 3% - 5% drop over February.

Reports of the third rail crash in 3 months - the second in 48 hours - reflects the incomprehension that this could occur.

Star - Another day, another disaster on British Rail

Mirror - Is there no end to it?

Today - Oh no, not another one

Express - How safe are our trains?

Times page 1 - Crisis grows over rail safety following Glasgow crash. Experts warn of tendency of drivers to jump yellow warning lights and proceed too fast through signals. Confidential report by BR's safety director shows dramatic increase in drivers going through red signal. In 1987 there were 792 incidents compared with 300 eight years earlier. Leader discusses all three rail crashes saying BR needs to look again at the sophistication of its signalling equipment. There will always be human error, but BR's duty to its customers is to ensure as far as possible that they do not lead to tragedy.

2 killed and 48 injured in Glasgow crash.

Sir Robert Reid calls on British Rail staff to make a massive effort to ensure safety at all times.

Unions put the blame on British Rail for cutting costs.

Princess Diana visits driver who drove past red signal in Croydon hospital.

Telegraph says BR's record compares well with rest of the world.

26 miners injured in pit train crash at Kellingley, Yorkshire.

Reports that up to two-thirds of Channel Tunnel link through Kent and South East London will go underground. "Heavily amended" version of Route 1 to cost additional £800million. Victory for political pressure on BR (Independent).

Times says BR's meeting with you has led to a more expensive but environmentally sensitive option.

PRESS DIGEST

Prince Charles thinks efforts to save the ozone layer may have come too late but says, at Ozone conference dinner, that even if we can stop the sky turning into a microwave oven we still face the prospect of living in a garbage dump. Times describes it as a direct attack on Government.

Express describes it as "the speech of his life".

He calls for immediate ban on CFCs. Soviets want more evidence of menace. China wants global fund to assist developing countries.

Mail lists 30 things we didn't know about the ozone layer.

Government Departments are flouting your public advice that people should delay buying refrigerators. ICI say it could take another 10 years before CFCs are replaced in all new refrigerators (Independent).

Hugo Young astonishingly praises your environmental approach in the Guardian and says it is more than hot air.

Study shows levels of poisonous chemicals near toxic waste disposal plan near Pontypool are up to 88 times higher than normal (Independent).

The Government is to force local authorities to hive off their waste management responsibilities into separate companies.

Iranian deadline for breaking off of diplomatic relations expires today.

Jimmy Reid, in Sun, accused Foreign Secretary of compromising free speech by regretting publication of The Satanic Verses.

Private lawyers, according to Mail, considers taking Rushdie to court for incitement to riot.

Soviet Union gives up any idea of acting as mediator between Britain and Iran in controversy over Rushdie book (Times).

Falling shop sales calm economic front and reduce pressure for higher interest rates.

Times says this increases hopes of a tax cutting Budget.

PRESS DIGEST

York University's Department of Health Economics want Chancellor to add 26p to tax on 20 cigarettes and impose huge increases in alcohol prices. Today leader agrees there should be big tax increases.

Guardian leader lists 3 defects in Government's approach to inner cities - refusal to incorporate local councils; failure to provide new money; and lack of coherent strategy.

The Queen's speech in November will contain major measures on the NHS, on breaking the Bar monopoly, and on broadcasting, as senior Cabinet Ministers are determined to press on with further radical reforms. The weight of forthcoming legislation could delay measures on embryo research and reforms to the criminal justice system (Independent).

Guardian says EC have refused to grant UK special exemption from water purity standards.

Peter Jenkins, in the Independent, looks at the Delors committee and fears it could lead to a two-tier Europe. He urges Britain to join the EMS exchange rate mechanism as the best way to head off a grand design for economic and monetary union with a practical programme for closer co-operation within the existing institutions.

Peter Brooke launches Government's counter attack on water privatisation, accusing Labour of lying and spreading fear about the policy (Independent).

James Goldsmith and Jacob Rothschild form powerful partnership to undertake corporate acquisition in UK (Times).

Express leader questions privatisation of water and whether adequate investment has gone in. It should do so from the public purse - before it is privatised.

The formula for charging for water will be based on the expectations of stock market investors, says the FT. Peter Brooke has accused Labour of spreading alarm and fear over privatisation.

Firemen at Britain's main airports lift strike threat at Easter - accept new pay arrangements.

Mail and Express reassured by Lord Chancellor's remaining unruffled by legal profession's campaign against reforms.

PRESS DIGEST

Lord Mackay calls on leaders of the Bar to keep an open mind on legal reforms (Independent). But Lord Hailsham talks of fear of elective dictatorship with the office of Lord Chancellor being replaced by a Minister of Justice sitting in the Commons. Leader says the Bar has reacted emotionally and not conducted its case against the reforms very convincingly.

Michael Grade to head Government campaign to counter fear of crime among British people.

Mail leader says this attempt to reassure would not be necessary if more thugs were being caught and jailed.

Star identifies a rich Asian who rakes in £100,000 a year from "a rat infested hotel for the homeless" in Bayswater.

Kenneth Clarke to draw up new contracts for GPs after secret talks with BMA fail (Times).

Another Legionnaire's disease outbreak in London; cooling towers at Science Museum and Imperial College shut down.

SLD councillor in Oldham faces sack as school governor for advocating giving pupils a clip on the ear - he is a retired schoolmaster.

Diane Abbott MP says Labour's plans for higher taxes are suicidal and would destroy election chances. "If Labour goes into next election as party of increased taxation it is doomed", she says.

Kinnock wins victory over Left: every member of Labour Party to have a vote in elections for leader and deputy leader.

Sun leader on the curious political behaviour of Paddy Ashdown at one stage wooing Owen and at another dismissing him as a toytown politician.

Labour's policy review expected to float the option of using proportional representation to elect a second chamber but rule it out for any other elected bodies (Independent).

Councillors from Borough of Hammersmith and Fulham agree to set up special panel to scrutinise its financial affairs following its loan swaps on the money markets (Independent).

Colin Moynihan "bombarded with hate mail", according to Sun, over football national membership scheme.

PRESS DIGEST

Your visit to Sudan called off because of growing political uncertainty there.

The cancellation of your visit to Sudan because of the political uncertainty there may add to that uncertainty. Its announcement will not strengthen the new administration and may be interpreted to mean that Sudan's closest Western ally is not standing by the country's embattled leader (Independent).

George Younger postpones his visit to Washington because of Tower impasse. Tower wins support from a Democrat.

William Waldegrave says he has agreed with King Hussein that the UN Security Council has a special role to play in Middle East peace efforts.

Media pressure increases on President P W Botha to retire.

Edward Mortimer, in the FT, examines the case for a change in Britain's policy towards South Africa. He argues against preserving economic ties.

Soviet Union offers massive conventional arms reductions in Europe and elimination of battlefield nuclear weapons. Foreign Secretary urges USSR to show courage and imagination and scrap much of their armoury.

Guardian leads with "Bloody rioting sweeps Lhasa".

Northern Ireland is becoming an issue in this year's election for Mayor of New York. Britain fears that an Irish hardliner will become the next Mayor (Independent).

BRITISH RAIL

Star front page comment says there is a crisis of public confidence. The public say the service is unsafe, unreliable and uncomfortable. They say the staff are untidy, unhelpful and uncaring.

Mirror leader - Is there no end to it? It says Paul Channon's putting it down to bad luck won't satisfy anyone. Tory MPs blaming extra pressures on system caused by increasing number of suburban passengers are ducking the issue. But Labour charge of cuts in maintenance and reduced safety standards has yet to be proved.

PRESS DIGEST

Independent leader detects a mood of complacency at BR and asks how to motivate its workforce. It believes management needs to instil more pride but feels that a change in attitude will not come about without more imaginative measures than safety inquiries on their own.

Guardian leader: This is becoming an epidemic. If there is a choice between a safe or a more profitdable railway there is not much doubt which way the British public would vote.

FT leader suggests that a redrawing of the line between cost efficiency and safety may be overdue. Kevin Brown, in the FT, writes that whatever the outcome of the Purley inquiry there will be demands for BR to adopt technological advances whatever the cost.

CHUNNEL LINK

Star says British Rail have chosen Route 1 which carves through Kent countryside with track curved to miss populated areas and more tunnelling. Leader says Government must make sure Route 1 is the best that can be done.

Sun - Chunnel rail link may go underground in an attempt to buy off protestors.

Mirror - Two thirds of Chunnel link will be underground, according to reports.

Express - Chunnel link tunnels "to save homes and jobs". Local MPs sceptical that two-thirds will go underground.

Independent leads with "Most of Tunnel link likely to be underground".

MINISTERS (UK VISITS, SPEECHES ETC)

- DSS: Mr Moore visit North Fylde Central Office, Blackpool
- DTI: Lord Young addresses Hillier Parker conference on "1992", QEII Conference Centre, London
- HMT: Mr Major attends a British Rail Property Board presentation, Hamilton House, London
- WO: Mr Walker visits Kronospan Ltd, Chirk; later visits Robertson Research Group plc, Llandudno
- DH: Mr Mellor speaks at Adam Smith Institute one-day conference on the NHS Review, St James Court Hotel, London; later speaks at British Red Cross Security Branch Presidents annual conference, BRC National Training Centre and at Association of British Pharmaceutical Industries dinner, London
- DH: Mr Freeman visits Mental Illness Treatment Unit, Aylesbury; later dines with Mental Health Commission, London
- DOE: Mr Moynihan addresses Recreation and Management seminar on football, water recreation and sponsorship at Wembley Conference Centre
- DTI: Mr Forth addresses Data Broadcasting conference on "Information Technology"
- DTI: Mr Maude addresses the City Forum on "Insurance", London
- DTp: Mr Portillo meets Dial-a-Ride Users Association, London
- MAFF: Mr Thompson attends Northern Poultry conference, Manchester
- MAFF: Baroness Trumpington addresses Temperton Fellowship for Poultry Research and Development, London
- OAL: Mr Luce speaks at Sandford Heritage awards ceremony, Cambridge
-

MINISTERS (OVERSEAS VISITS)

- DES: Mr Jackson attends EC Science and Technology Commission, Paris, France
- DTI: Mr Clark visits Austria (to 8 March)
-

MINISTERS (PRESS INTERVIEWS)

- DTI: Lord Young interviewed by John Jay, Sunday Times
- DEM: Mr Nicholls lunches with Andy Smith of the Western Evening News
-

TV AND RADIO

'Open Space': BBC 2 (20.00). Britain is short of 140,000 skilled craftsmen. The programme asks why the workforce of Liverpool cannot be trained to repair the city's listed buildings

'The Radio 4 Debates': R4 (20.00) Students at Glasgow University debate: That the time has come for Scotland to have self government

'Concerning Cancer: Ch 4 (21.00) looks at China's efforts to reduce death rate from smoking
