

9 March 1989

PRIME MINISTER

MAIN EVENTS

Westminster and City Programmes conference on OPB Report (to 10 March)

EC: Informal meeting of Interior Ministers, Seville (to 10 March)

EC: Konigswinter Conference, Germany (to 11 March)

EC: Political Committee, Madrid (to 10 March)

First anniversary of Inner Cities Initiative - Prime Minister attends Northern Businessman of the Year dinner in Newcastle upon Tyne

House of Lords Select Committee on Science and Technology visits Paris

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STATISTICS

CBI: CBI/FT survey of distributive trades (Feb)

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PUBLICATIONS

DTI: Information Technology White Paper

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PARLIAMENT

Commons

Questions: Northern Ireland; Agriculture, Fisheries and Food; Prime Minister

Business: Debate on the Royal Air Force on a Motion for the Adjournment

Adjournment Debates: EC licencing proposals for volunteer mini-bus drivers (Mr J Arnold)

Select Committees: COURT OF REFEREES

Lords: Starred Questions  
Official Secrets Bill: Second Reading  
Unfair Dismissal (Increase of Limits of Basic and Special Awards)  
Order 1989: Motion for Approval  
Unfair Dismissal (Increase of Compensation Limit) Order 1989: Motion for Approval  
Employment Protection (Variation of Limits) Order 1989: Motion for Approval  
Local Elections (Variation of Limits of Candidates' Election Expenses)(Northern Ireland) Order 1989: Motion for Approval  
UQ to ask HMG what action they propose to take to protect the training of veterinary practitioners in the United Kingdom and to promote British veterinary practices in Europe

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PRESS DIGESTMain News

SLD reject idea of standing down in Vale of Glamorgan in favour of SDP.

Democrats get rid of £20,000 a year chief executive - ex-Labour MP Michael Ward - because they are hard up.

British Rail gets a bad press today with Sun attacking Sir Robert Reid for his "arrogant" replies to its questions on safety; Mirror leading with claims that BR bosses are cutting corners to get trains running; driver says signals often flicker on and off or fail.

Mirror finds a bitter revolt in Tory heartland of Kent as Chunnel link route is confirmed. And who is going to foot the bill for the additional £500million of environmental work?

British Rail admits that Channel Tunnel high speed rail link may not now open until the year 2000 (FT).

Mail leads with report of a nationwide investigation into alleged bribery and corruption over British Rail contracts; 500 questioned; 12 members of BR staff suspended.

Gang of armed men hold up train stopped at red light in Surrey and take away mail bags; police say they altered a signal to red. Today calls it the Great Train Bungle.

Bank of England Governor warns that the number of personal borrowers defaulting on their debts is likely to rise this year as higher interest rates take their toll (Times).

Sir Alan Walters will dissect Budget in two speeches in London next week (Independent).

2 soldiers killed and six injured by roadside bomb near Londonderry last night.

IRA thrown into disarray when Gerry Adams appeared to condemn Coagh shootings and Home Secretary warns that a small, skilled, very dangerous IRA unit is at large in Britain with substantial supplies of Semtex (Times).

Today says 50 armed guards are protecting you amid fears of IRA mortar attack on Conservative Council conference.

PRESS DIGEST

Express says IRA "mole" led to discovery of arms dump near Scarborough.

Mail reports a race against time to find bomb hidden in the resort.

Today leader on Ireland says from unemployment to terrorism Ireland has got accustomed to letting Britain take the strain. It is time Ireland looked after its own.

Police are confident there is no bomb at Scarborough (Independent).

Select Committee headed by Hugh Rossi MP call for a national commission to safeguard the environment, especially from toxic waste tipping.

Mail says there are more than 5,000 licensed dumps in Britain.

EC environment commissioner calls for strict car pollution standards along US lines (FT).

FT diary claims ODA and FCO have bowed reluctantly to your fiat against attending The Hague environment conference.

Telegraph says Sellafield and Dounreay have been picked as underground nuclear storage sites.

Leaders of Amazon nations tell West to mind its own business over endangered rain forests (Mail).

30 Iranians to be kicked out of Britain after Iran breaks off diplomatic relations; and Iran ordered to close consulate in Hong Kong within 2 weeks; Express says Moslem fanatics have threatened to bomb police stations and murder policemen.

Today wants all but genuine Iranian refugees kicked out.

Japan's Foreign Secretary cancels trip to Iran and Iraq citing "domestic and external" factors and British Muslim Action Front begin proceedings against Rushdie for blasphemous libel (Times).

Teddy Taylor MP wants blasphemy laws extended.

ECGD says it is to retain short-term cover for British exports to Iran (FT).

PRESS DIGEST

Talbot workers reject 16% (£35 a week) pay offer over 2 years.

Rover to create more than 2,000 jobs this year.

CEGB forecast massive expansion of nuclear power programme and the virtual closure of the coal industry (Times).

Nearly 90% of Britain's abattoirs do not qualify for EC export licences; appalling conditions uncovered.

MAFF says they suspended export licences of 39 abattoirs between 1982 and 1988 for failure to comply with EC hygiene and inspection regulations (Times).

Alan Bond selling 19.8% share in Lonrho (Independent).

Record 15.7million tourists visited Britain last year:  
28.7million Britons went abroad.

Scottish Development Agency proposes establishment in Scotland of 9 area development companies to take over training responsibilities from the Training Agency as well as the functions of the SDA itself (FT).

America's biggest airline - Eastern - halted by strike, in danger of bankruptcy.

Reports that almost half the businesses started under the Enterprise Allowance Scheme fail within 3 years.

Mail claims state education is once more in crisis and quotes ex Head of Winchester as saying that the most democratic and just society would be one in which national schools were so well funded and resourced that no parent would wish to spend money on anything else.

Classroom vandals said to be costing education service £2million a week.

Haringey Tory councillors accuse council of undermining family values by allowing condom vending machines to be installed for 6th formers (Times).

Brent Labour councillors come to blows after hard Left sides with Tories and Liberals to block Labour's proposed 32% rates rises.

PRESS DIGEST

Driver who killed 5 in crash escapes with £500 fine for careless driving; he was reading a map instead of looking where he was going when he hit a minibus.

Douglas Hurd continues to get a poor press for his appointment of Michael Grade to head an inquiry into fear of violence and crime.

More than 250 Leeds GPs ready to resign if Government refuses to make radical changes to proposed reform of NHS (Times).

Government considering bringing forward its own legislation to reduce abortion time limit to 24 weeks (Times).

Old soldier on hunger strike for 19 days in protest against Prince Philip going to Hirohito's funeral says only you can now save him from death - he wants a public apology from you for sending the Duke.

Government appear to have ruled out concessions in Broadcasting White Paper to protect religious, children's, arts and social action programmes (Independent).

John Banham (CBI) tells John Hoskyns (IoD) to stop whingeing over EC.

Inner Cities programme is a public relations exercise hiding a failure to tackle destitution according to FOE (Independent).

You have defended Terry Dicks - "the race storm MP", as Mirror puts it.

Bruce Anderson, in Telegraph, believes you should take a break.

Paul Foot claims in Mirror that the Government has paid compensation to one of the boys sexually abused in the Kincora home.

Britain's army deal with Malaysia in jeopardy because of failure to solve airline landing rights (Express).

Britain has now overtaken Turkey in proportion of people it sends to jail.

Times says APV, a London food and beverage processing company, unwittingly, through US company, provides Argentina with an important component for a missile project which could alter radically the balance of power in the South Atlantic and threaten the Falkland Islands.

PRESS DIGEST

Lord Young says US programmes will not dominate our airwaves after deregulation nor will quality be eroded after creation of single European market (Times).

Guardian says UK to get lion's share of EC aid for jobs.

EC Budget Commissioner shaken by ferocity of reception when he unveiled his scheme to stamp out fraud within Community (Times).

GREEN MOVEMENT

Star says Green is all the rage now. And major pollution outbreaks just waiting to happen at sites all over Britain is a national disgrace. Action this day.

Today on the "dismal catalogue of failures", revealed by the Environment Select Committee says its solution - an environmental agency - is the right one. But Nicholas Ridley has already turned that down. He is wrong.

Express features Select Committee report under the heading "The dangers of living on this septic isle"; Another leader calls on Government to back Simon Burns' Private Members Bill which would impose on the spot fines on litter louts.

Times - Select Committee says we are sitting on an environmental time bomb in a "searing indictment" of the Government's record on toxic waste disposal. Leader says their apportionment of blame will not make happy reading for Nicholas Ridley who will rightly deflect criticism to local authorities. It adds that it may be that the MPs have been too influenced by the US. Their recommendations certainly would need to be subject to an audit, but nonetheless their idea for a powerful Environmental Protection Agency lends itself to serious assessment as a way forward.

BRITISH RAIL

Sun leader attacks Sir Robert Reid for his "insulting, pompous, arrogant" and terse replies to its questions about safety. He is not the man to run our railways.

Mirror says Britain's rail system was once the finest in the world. Now it is dirty, plagued with constant delays and cancellations and becoming increasingly dangerous.

PRESS DIGEST

Independent - Senior BR officials ordered the removal of crucial evidence from the Clapham crash site the inquiry was told yesterday. Meanwhile rail unions want an inquiry into whether BR cost cutting compromised safety.

Express says BR's altered route is a victory for grassroots protest. But a famous victory for democratic protest should not be paid for by the tax payer.

Mail says the hostility BR has roused over Chunnel link is deserved. But now the forcibly reformed sinner is offering a not dishonourable compromise between quality of life and pace of change. But incredibly we are nowhere nearer knowing who will contribute to cost. The cash implications cannot be buried.

Times - Tory MPs pledge to fight for more concessions after BR publish Chunnel rail link. They say they have gained nothing from the revision of original proposals. Labour call for public inquiry; leader says BR has gone much further than expected towards meeting environmental objections. There is now a good chance of the Bill succeeding adding there never was a very good case for a formal public inquiry; now, there is none at all.

Telegraph argues that the Government's refusal to become involved in financing is mistaken. It cannot distance itself from the consequences of the decision to build the Chunnel.

Independent - Government faces battle over who will put up £1.7 billion price tag as BR announce proposed route without saying who will pay. Bill is due to be published in November. Demands continue for public inquiry. Regions demand high speed links to Channel Tunnel.

Guardian says we are muddling our way towards the construction of a mere 70 mile length of Euro railway with nothing planned North of the capital. What is needed is statesmanship in place of dogma.

Independent leader says Paul Channon must say who is to pay for the rail link.

MINISTERS (UK VISITS, SPEECHES ETC)

- DEN: Mr Parkinson visits Yorkshire Electricity Board, Scarcroft
- DH: Mr Clarke speaks at Royal College of General Practitioners annual dinner; later meets Ms Papandreaou, EC Health Commissioner and meets the Zambian Health Minister
- DOE: Mr Ridley visits Newcastle (and 10 March)
- DTI: Mr Newton launches Action for Cities anniversary, QE11 Conference Centre, London; later visits North East (to 10 March)
- LCD: Lord Mackay addresses joint all party group of barristers on Green Papers
- MAFF: Mr MacGregor visits BT Sadler and Co farm (ice cream manufacturer) Manchester; later visits Chester (to 10 March) and holds official dinner
- DEM: Mr Lee visits Bradford (Action for Cities)
- DEM: Mr Cope attends Action for Cities anniversary press conference, QEII Conference Centre, London
- DEN: Baroness Hooper addresses National Cavity Insulation Association, House of Commons
- DES: Mr Jackson attends Institute of Economic Affairs Higher Education conference, Windsor Castle
- DH: Mr Mellor visits Celltech, Slough
- DH: Mr Freeman speaks at National Children's Bureau, London; later visits Mental Health Foundation, London
- DOE: Mr Chope receives delegation from Vale of White Horse DC about housing in rural areas
- DSS: Lord Skelmersdale launches Employers Information Packs, London
- DTI: Mr Maude visits Business Statistical Office, Newport and speaks on "Financial Services" to Birston Stock Exchange
- DTI: Mr Clark meets Mr Bennani Shires, Head of Moroccan CBI and hosts dinner at Lancaster House
- DTp: Mr Bottomley attends Inner Cities first anniversary press conference, London; later attends ministerial group on crime prevention, London
- FCO: Mr Waldegrave addresses Association of American Correspondents in London lunch, Browns Hotel, London



MINISTERS (UK VISITS, SPEECHES ETC) (Cont'd)

- HO: Mr Patten speaks at Action for Cities conference, QEII Conference Centre, London
- SO: Lord Sanderson opens Craigendarroch Hotel extension, Ballater; later addresses Tourism Marketing Seminar, Holiday Inn, Aberdeen
- WO: Mr Roberts attends Housing Corporation reception, London
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MINISTERS (OVERSEAS VISITS)

- HO: Mr Hurd attends informal meeting of European Ministers of Justice, Seville, Spain (to 10 March)
- FCO: Mrs Chalker attends Konigswinter conference, Germany (to 11 March)
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TV AND RADIO

- '9-11-5' BBC 2 (20.00) Reports from site of Piper Alpha tragedy on how technology is replacing coastguards
- 'Opinions': Ch 4 (20.00) Melvyn Bragg takes issue with the state of television as highlighted by the recent White Paper
- 'Nature': BBC 2 (20.30) report on toxicariasis which blinds 300 people each year
- 'This Week': Thames (20.30)
- 'Question Time': BBC 1 (22.00) with Stuart Holland MP, Helen Liddell, Lord Rees-Mogg, William Waldegrave
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