

22 March 1989

PRIME MINISTER

MAIN EVENTS

New PTA legislation comes into force

Prime Minister presents Daily Star Gold Star awards

The Duchess of York opens the newly restored Royal Nurseries at Osborne House, Isle of Wight

STATISTICS

BSA: Building Societies monthly figures (Feb)

CSO: Cyclical indicators for the UK economy (Feb)

DOE: Construction-new orders (Jan-prov)

DTI: Manufacturers and distributors stocks (4th Qtr 1988 rev)

HO: Immigration Figures 1988

PARLIAMENT

Commons

Questions: Environment; Scotland; Foreign and Commonwealth

Business: 10 Minute Rule Bill: British Nationality (Honorary Citizenship)
Water Bill (Second allotted day): Progress on Remaining Stages
Motions on Legal Aid and Advice Regulations

Adjournment Debates: Metered water rates in the Grampian Region (Mr M Bruce)

Select Committees: FOREIGN AFFAIRS
Subject: Progress in Implementing the Euro-British Agreement of 1984 on Hong Kong
Witness: Sir Geoffrey Howe MP, Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs

TRADE AND INDUSTRY

Subject: Financial Services and the Single Market
Witnesses: Representatives from the Consumers' Association, Consumers in the European Community, BIFU and MSG

DEFENCE

Subject: AWACS, offsets
Witnesses: Ministry of Defence officials and Representatives from the Boeing Corporation

PARLIAMENT (Cont'd)Select Committees:

ENERGY

Subject: UK/USSR Energy Relations

Witnesses: The Central Electricity Generating Board
and the United Kingdom Atomic Energy Authority

AGRICULTURE

Subject: Land-use and Forestry

Witness: Forestry Commission

EMPLOYMENT

Subject: Part-time Work

Witnesses: Ms Linda Dickens, University of Warwick,
Ms Olive Robinson, University of Bath

FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Subject: Progress in Implementing the Euro-British
Agreement of 1984 on Hong KongWitness: Sir David Wilson KCMG, Governor of Hong
Kong

HOME AFFAIRS

Subject: High Police Training and the Police Staff
College

Witness: Home Office

TREASURY AND CIVIL SERVICE

Subject: 1989 Budget

Witnesses: Treasury officials

COMMITTEE ON A PRIVATE BILL

Avon Light Rail Transit

Lords: Starred Questions

Debate to call attention to the growth of non-elected bodies; to the patronate system used by Central Government for their selection; and to the effect of such bodies upon local government

Debate to call attention to the effects of Her Majesty's Government's social policies, particularly among young people, the poorly paid and the elderly

UQ to ask HMG what information they have received from the Trustees of the Victoria and Albert Museum about the recent reorganisation of responsibilities in the Museum and about the treatment of the curatorial staff who have been made redundant

PRESS DIGESTMain News

Paul Channon is felt to have done well yesterday - but that does not stop media calling on him to quit. And widespread doubts about his future.

Mirror repeats its allegation that he is a liar and challenges him to sue them.

John Wakeham says Mr Channon is "very sorry" he did not send out December 19 communication faster.

£5million plan to restore Lockerbie.

Will the price of a pint of beer fall as a result of MMC, endorsed by DTI, ordering breweries to reduce holdings of tied houses? Biggest shake up since 1917 after report condemns Big Six Brewers as monopolistic.

Brewers may have to sell a quarter of Britain's pubs (FT).

FT leader says MMC proposals on breweries look likely to promote consumer choice and achieve a better balance of power in brewing, wholesaling and retailing. It is refreshing to see the British competition authorities taking a tough stand in a monopoly case. It would be ironic if EC law were to stay Lord Young's hand.

Sun welcomes final breaking of power of brewers. Today: The day of the big brewer monopoly is well and truly over.

Times leader says Lord Young now has the tricky task of persuading the EC that the tied house is a bad thing five years after MAFF persuaded the Commission it was a good thing.

Elders proposed takeover of Scottish & Newcastle rejected by MMC.

Electricity charges to rise by 6.5% from April 1.

Hunterston A power station to close after 15 years because it is too costly to operate.

Commons Transport Select Committee suggests Greenham Common should become civil airport. Responsibility for air traffic control should be removed from CAA, and second runway should be built immediately at Gatwick.

Air traffic controllers say airport delays this summer will be the worst ever because of staff shortages.

PRESS DIGEST

Ambush of 2 RUC senior officers believed to have been set up at last minute; claims that number-spotting children help terrorists to plot movement of police vehicles.

Fears that the IRA have stolen secret papers about IRA operations and diaries after ambush.

Express says the murders raise the question of the worth of the Anglo-Irish Agreement.

RUC Chief Constable rules out IRA-mole-in-Garda theory.

Lord Whitelaw felt to have criticised Home Secretary over his handling of Pamela Bordes affair. Lord President says that she was vetted before she received Commons pass.

Commons authorities clear Tory MPs involved in providing pass for Pamela Bordes but order spot checks on bags and cases as part of general security tightening up (Independent).

Salomon Brothers have issued default notices to Hammersmith & Fulham, London, and Blackburn, Lancashire, councils for withholding payments (FT).

Government is believed to have reached agreement in principle on a management and employee buy-out of Harland & Wolff with John Parker, chairman of the state-owned Belfast company (FT).

ICL to close 3 plants with loss of 800 jobs in Letchworth and Reading.

Saatchi & Saatchi shares plummet 65p to 313p as analysts downgrade profits forecast.

BMA hires an advertising agency to put its case against NHS reforms.

You strongly denounce newspaper advertisement placed by Bar Council criticising Government's law reform proposals. Bar defends Saatchi & Saatchi advertisement saying it stands by what was said (Times).

Law Society repeats its broad welcome for legal reform but warns that application of market forces alone will not improve access to justice for ordinary people (Independent).

House sales have slumped 40% since last summer.

PRESS DIGEST

Independent leader gives two good reasons for supporting Norman Fowler's proposals on the closed shop: the closed shop principle is an unattractive restrictive practice, and it is an infringement of personal liberty as well as being an invitation to corruption.

French Navy may have located deadly pesticide container in the Channel.

Employment Select Committee will today publish report saying existing controls on air-conditioning water cooling towers are not working amid fears that West End Legionnaire's outbreak could have been caused by a new, more dangerous strain of the bacterium (Independent).

Bishop of St Albans calls on Viking Penguin to withdraw The Satanic Verses; they have made money at expense of Moslems' hurt feelings.

Star under heading "Blunder by Bishop" says the damage was done by hot heads in Moslem community who forgot they were living in Britain.

David Owen resigns as patron of Neighbourhood Watch in a row over the organisation's new booklet which urges the public to fight back against muggers.

Express diary column speculates that Sir James Goldsmith is to buy Daily and Sunday Telegraph. Black prepared to sell for £400million.

Press says George Russell, IBA chairman, threatened to quit if his proposed scheme for allotting franchises is not accepted.

[NB - George Russell was set up by the FT at press conference]

Express news feature about the handover of your old handbag for charity.

John Hoskyns to renew his onslaught on the EC today in a speech at the Institute of Economic Affairs (Times).

Trident missile explodes 4 seconds after launch in its first US sea test.

Mirror reports that Mr Thatcher missed a chance to see his grandson when he went to Houston.

PRESS DIGEST

Archbishop Runcie expected to announce in his Easter Day sermon that he is to visit the Pope in Rome, probably in the autumn (Times).

Foreign Secretary's visit to Pakistan has been cut amid fears of further protests over Rushdie's book (times).

Delors Committee have scheduled extra meeting in April in an attempt to resolve differences between members. Latest draft report strongly criticised by Herr Pohl and Robin Leigh Pemberton (FT).

International conference on hazardous waste remained deadlocked yesterday. Africans are stressing that countries which produce waste should remain responsible for its ultimate disposal. Treaty due to be signed today. If adopted and ratified by the 110 countries attending manufacturers will find costs of handling special wastes greatly increased (FT).

In Tokyo two big whisky importers are to reduce prices after major tax reductions are implemented next month (FT).

President Husak, of Czechoslovakia, about to step down, according to rumours.

Bob Hawke weeps on Australian television as he admits to earlier infidelity to his wife (Independent).

PAUL CHANNON

Star page 2 - You won't make me quit, says Channon. Rides out storm threatening his career.

Sun page 2 - Channon: I didn't leak bomb secrets. I'm astonished at interpretations of what I've said. Leader says it does not call Cabinet Ministers liars. It leaves that kind of abuse to newspapers desperate to serve a party cause. But he did make generous errors of judgment and he should quit.

Mirror leads with "You are still a liar, Mr Channon" - now sue us if you dare. Joe Haines says political editor of Guardian (Ian Aitken) called him "supershit", "disgusting" and guilty of a "great betrayal".

PRESS DIGEST

Today - Channon hits back at Lockerbie liar claims. Leader says its story was obtained through the Lobby system and unlike some other newspapers it has no intention of dishonouring the system by saying any more. But it stands four square by its account of last Friday and it does not believe Mr Channon when he says he was astonished by their report.

Express page 1 - short piece headed "Channon rallies". Weathers Lockerbie storm. Labour MPs disappointed Kinnock appeared not to listen to Channon's statement and asked questions which had already been answered. Some MPs angry with journalists for deliberate breach of Lobby rules. Leader says in the absence of any evidence why should anyone believe the Daily Mirror, which has been faithfully poodling along at Prescott's heels, rather than Transport Secretary. It suggests Julia Langdon was the source of the Mirror's accusation. She should now come forward and report on the record what Paul Channon said. Mirror must substantiate or withdraw.

Mail - Channon wins reprieve, but for how long? Puts up dignified Commons performance convincing MPs he has acted with honour. Leader headed "Channon lives to quit another day" says whatever flaws, he does not lack pluck. But it would be surprised if he had not discreetly offered his resignation. And it feels he has been economical with the truth over his briefing of journalists. While it feels no animus against him he should be discarded in next reshuffle.

Telegraph - Channon beats off "unfair accusation of lesser men". Tory MPs say he did much to rebuild his credibility.

Bruce Anderson, in Telegraph, suspects Lobby journalists may not find it so easy to entice Ministerial guests to the Garrick in future. He says there is always a certain area of ambiguity in briefings. Joe Haines did not agree, but the question remains whether, after his experience during the Wilson Premiership, Haines could recognise an honest Minister or a good man. Paul Channon however is disabled by being a toff and above all is unlucky. If he falls it will be a defeat for the forces of decency in public life.

PRESS DIGEST

Guardian - Channon rides storm. Thatcher rallies Tory MPs to beleaguered Minister. He appears to have survived the biggest crisis of his career. Leader headed "Questions that still need answers" says he left at the end of the day substantially stronger than he could have done had he not made the statement. What achieved that change was the cool, confident, even chirpy manner in which he faced his critics, together with a sense of outrage provoked by Prescott. But it rejects the idea that reports of his lunch were manufactured.

Independent - Channon's future in doubt as he survives debate. Despite widespread Tory backbench praise for his performance, speculation about his future persists. A well-informed Government source says he is regarded as a weak link, and that yesterday's performance would not turn your reshuffle judgment in his favour.

Independent predictably suggests Paul Channon's lunch with Lobby journalists will have an impact on the Lobby system, and that ministers will be less willing in future to lunch with political journalists.

Independent leader says it is unfair if the badgering of Mr Channon leaves the impression he had contributed to the loss of 270 lives. But he can be accused of being unduly secretive, and he was unconvincing in claiming to be astonished at the interpretation of his lunchtime briefing. The effect is to reinforce the impression of Government incompetence. Mr Channon must expect a fate similar to that of Edwina Currie before long.

Paul Channon survives ordeal by fire in Commons to remove immediate doubt about his future. Labour challenge him now to sue paper which said he was the source of the leak (Times).

Paul Channon yesterday made a strong defence of his handling of aviation security and sought to rebut allegations that he had leaked sensitive information about the Lockerbie investigation. You underlined your support for him by saying he was the victim of unfair accusations by "lesser men" (FT).

POLITICS

Edward Pearce, in Express on Kinnock's 2000 days in the wilderness, reserves judgment on him. He has been very brave, long winded, sensible about moderating policy, long incapable of being taken seriously and he has now just hit a vein of wise and elegant wit. The reviews are mixed and the jury is taking its time.

PRESS DIGEST

In an Independent interview, Hattersley says at least six major Bills on civil liberties will be included in next Labour manifesto. They would include Freedom of Information, control of the Security Service, right of reply, right of privacy, and a criminal justice Bill, establishing a separate Department of Justice.

Peter Jenkins, in the Independent, looks at Kinnock's new voice of moderation but believes it does not sound like a winning ticket. On the other hand, he has staked out a position which at least may not condemn Labour to lose, if the economy goes badly wrong and "Thatcherism" becomes exposed as an outmoded dogma.

MINISTERS (UK VISITS, SPEECHES ETC)

- DEN: Mr Parkinson addresses Office Revolution conference, QE11 conference centre, London; later addresses Middle East Association's annual lunch, London
- DTI: Lord Young addresses European Movement dinner, London
- MAFF: Mr MacGregor attends BBC's 60 years of Agricultural Broadcasting dinner; London
- DEM: Mr Cope addresses National Federation of Demolition Contractors annual lunch, Grosvenor House Hotel, London
- DEM: Mr Lee tours Pilgrims Way, Canterbury
- DEN: Baroness Hooper addresses Paper Industries Research Association annual lunch, Stationers Hall, Blackfriars, London
- DES: Mr Jackson visits Glasgow University and Veterinary School
- DH: Mr Freeman meets delegation led by Bernie Grant MP about the closure of acute services at St Anne's Hospital, Haringey
- DOE: Lord Caithness visits Peabody Trust (housing)
- DOE: Mr Chope addresses District Planning Officer's Society on planning
- DOE: Mr Trippier meets Lady Porter, Westminster City Council, on homelessness
- DTI: Mr Forth addresses London Regional Rail Passengers Committee, Romford, Essex
- DTI: Mr Forth launches Church "linking-up" scheme, Church House, London
- MAFF: Baroness Trumpington opens 1992 Horticultural conference, London
- MAFF: Mr Thompson attends John Innes Institute seminar, Norwich
- OAL: Mr Luce visits Colchester, Essex (arts)
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MINISTERS (PRESS INTERVIEWS)

MAFF: Mr MacGregor interviewed by Farming Week radio programme on
MAFF centenary

TV AND RADIO

'Dispatches': Ch 4 (20.30)
