

17 April 1989

PRIME MINISTER

MAIN EVENTS

Scottish TUC annual conference, Aberdeen (to 27 April)

Amalgamated Engineering Union National Committee, Winter Gardens, Eastbourne (to 26 April)

EC: Agriculture Council, Luxembourg (to 18 April)

EC: ECOFIN Council, Luxembourg

Mr Cheney, US Secretary of State for Defence visits UK

Mr Lukanov, Bulgarian Minister of Foreign Economic Relations visits UK

STATISTICS

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

CSO: Index of output of the production industries (Feb)

DTI: Retail sales (Mar-prov)

DTI: Overseas trade statistics (Feb)

PUBLICATIONS

DES: HMI Information Technology Curriculum Matters reports

DSS: Treasury minute on quality of service to the public in DSS offices

PARLIAMENT

Commons

Questions: Social Security; Transport; Wales

Business: Dock Work Bill: 2nd Reading and Money Resolution
Motion relating to the Housing (Change of Landlord) Regulations
Motions relating to the Education (National Curriculum) (Attainment Targets and Programmes of Study in Mathematics) and (Science) Orders

Adjournment Debate: The Mersey Tunnels' Finances (Mr George Howarth)

PARLIAMENT (Cont'd)

Select Committees: PUBLIC ACCOUNTS
Subject: National Insurance Food and Social Fund: Quality
of Service at Local Offices of the Department of Social
Security
Witnesses: M J A Partridge, CB, Permanent Secretary,
Department of Social Security, G Holland, CB, Permanent
Secretary, Department of Employment

Lords: Starred Questions
Water Bill: Second Reading

MINISTERS - See Annex

PRESS DIGESTMain News

Police name 24 of 94 dead; they include two teenage sisters whose father tried to save them and a boy of 10. Most are teenagers. Two brothers, 28 and 30, who die leave six children.

Horror pictures on front pages of spectators crushed against wire fence.

Main headline is "Never again"; commentators turn their venom on the management of the game. Opening of gates by police also comes under spotlight.

Mail leads with "Who opened the gates?"

West Midlands police chief to conduct inquiry into the policing of the ground.

Police complain about being attacked and kicked by fans while trying to rescue injured.

Turnstile keeper, according to Sun, admits ticketless fans were let in after offering bribes up to £30 a time.

MPs call for an end to cages on football grounds; John Stalker, ex-policeman, in Express, calls for an end to terraces.

Roy Hattersley MP wants perimeter fencing abolished.

John Carlisle MP wants the membership Bill postponed pending preliminary inquiries; and David Alton MP calls for a new national stadium to be built to house in safety the vast crowds at the big matches (Times).

Criticism of lack of first aid facilities and stretchers.

Liverpool abandon all matches for the present.

Semi-final thought likely to be replayed elsewhere and the Cup competition to be completed. Disagreement among press over whether it should go ahead.

Donations to disaster funds total about £1million.

Times page 1 - Amid accusations of incompetence against the police, rescue services and ground staff, it became clear last night that any inquiry must look beyond Sheffield and into the whole organisation of football as a spectator sport.

PRESS DIGEST

CBI/FT survey suggests that widely-expected slowdown in consumer spending might not be as swift as previously thought (FT).

Delors Committee calls for progress towards economic union by 1990 (FT).

Government figures expected to show that the average employee in UK now produces 50% more per hour worked than the Japanese.

A radical plan is under consideration for privatising part of BR's South East network, including Waterloo, to help pay for the £1.7billion high speed Channel tunnel rail link (Independent).

Ron Todd tells dock employers that they can avoid the possibility of a damaging dock strike if tomorrow they begin "meaningful negotiations" (Times).

National Association of Estate Agents draws up new code of practice; but it would not outlaw gazumping (FT).

You are being urged to demonstrate support for the environment by stepping in with safeguards for scores of combined heat and power projects in Britain which are threatened by privatisation. Policy Unit is already thought to be strongly in favour of expanding CHP (Independent).

FT leader argues that Britain made a political mistake when it chose to espouse lean-burn engine technology in preference to the installation of three-way catalytic converters on all motor cars (FT).

University academics reject a 2 year 6.5% pay offer but lift exam boycott (Times).

Sir Hector Laing announces he is to stand down as chairman of United Biscuits.

A report on Whitehall efficiency, due to be published within the next few days, has cost the taxpayer nothing but could save millions in increased efficiency. It will give you credit for the premium placed on efficient management in the civil service since 1979 but will warn that without another boost of Ministerial and official priorities in a managerial direction plus a retooling of existing systems whole initiative could run into the sands. Key recommendations of the report include the replacement of paper based systems by information technology, strategic planning and political leadership (Independent).

PRESS DIGEST

British Telecom denies reports that it is to increase telephone charges by 3% from August (Times).

Government's green policy will be put to the test when road schemes affecting the White Cliffs of Dover and Winchester's last open hillside are decided (Times).

Rivalry between Cecil Parkinson and Lord Young has surfaced in a bizarre dispute over the project for the Russians to put the first Briton into space (Times).

Trainee barristers will receive a minimum income of about £6,000 a year throughout their initial 12 month training under proposals agreed by the Bar's ruling body (Times).

Head teachers call on Ministers to stop regarding them as the enemy over education reforms (Times).

Kenneth Baker is expected to announce later this week his first refusal for a school wishing to opt out of local authority control (Times).

Royal College of General Practitioners overwhelmingly rejects NHS reform proposals (FT).

Kenneth Clarke coming under strong pressure from Ministerial colleagues and senior Tory MPs to reach a swift settlement over GPs' contracts (Times).

Two-thirds of Tory MPs tell pollsters that responsibility for food should be switched from MAFF to Health (Times).

Child Poverty Action Group comes up with new figures which, it claims, show that the gap between poorest and rest has widened over last 10 years.

Louis Blom Cooper urges the newspaper industry to put its own house in order to avert growing demands for statutory controls - in the foreword to the Press Council's 35th annual report (Independent).

Government may ask Press Council to organise inquiry into media law (FT).

Sky television sheds half its advertising sales staff (FT).

PRESS DIGEST

Plain clothes policeman on surveillance duty at Birmingham drinking club murdered; 53 people, mostly West Indians, arrested.

Sir Philip de Zulueta dies, aged 64.

Foreign Secretary flies to Washington amid NATO disarray (Mail) over whether SNF should be modernised.

Bush administration is considering strategic nuclear arms proposals that could delay completion of a treaty with the Soviet Union (Independent).

Spanish Ambassador to Lebanon killed as shells and rockets blast Beirut.

Deep divisions in Hungarian Politburo revealed; Pozsgay at meeting of 600 activists who demand more reform.

Reports that South Africans have killed 9 more SWAPO in border clashes in Namibia.

An attempt will be made in Dublin this week to assess the prospects for court action against Ryan. Fine Gael is to seek a ministerial report on the Criminal Law Jurisdiction Act which could be used to try Ryan on explosives charges (Independent).

SHEFFIELD DISASTER/COMMENT

Star page 1 lead comment says the finest and most fitting memorial to the dead of Hillsborough is to order the immediate closure of the terraces for ever. Surely even our ostrich-like football directors do not need any more dead bodies to convince them that the cramped, antiquated, lethal concrete monstrosities behind the goals of our grounds have got to go.

Sun leader headed "Blame the game" wonders what else the police could do given that many might have been crushed to death outside the ground. It accuses clubs of putting making money before fans' safety. But sadly much of the cash spent on our ageing grounds goes on crowd control made necessary by hooliganism. Football is a great game but it is not worth dying for.

Mirror leader headed "Never, never again" says what was a cage for hooligans became a death trap for the innocent. There was no escape because provision for escape was inadequate. Rather than go ahead with soccer membership card scheme, Government should encourage clubs to move towards all seat grounds.

PRESS DIGEST

Today - The tragedy was at once unnecessary yet completely inevitable. The deaths and injuries were caused by man's negligence, carelessness and incompetence. The men who run football in England are almost without exception self-glorifying fools. They revel in the puffed up importance which their positions in sport bring but show little concern for the fans. It isn't as if English soccer is poor when £70million has been spent this season on transfer fees.

Express says the truth is that professional soccer in this country is played in antiquated pigsties, many of which were built before World War I. All seater stadia must become the norm. If clubs can afford £1million plus for new strikers they can certainly afford to contribute to making their grounds safe. Government must help financially too.

Mail under heading "The real truth about the tragedy" says the hell at Hillsborough was in part the unwitting result of determination to avoid violence - a lethal trade off between security and safety. You must take this on board. It exposes, though does not invalidate, the Football Bill.

Telegraph says there is a bitter sense of irony that the tragedy should come when soccer hooliganism seems in decline. Beyond the tragic failure of policing some other brutal terrors are apparent. It is no longer safe or socially tolerable for football supporters to be packed standing in huge crowds. All-seat stadiums must become the rule. And since clubs are not the best judges of their own affairs, they must be told what is and is not acceptable.

Times leader looks at the great British tradition of football saying that the British way of football has been given the benefits of many doubts. Too many. It suggests wire fences that could open on to the pitch or replaced by dry moats. Membership schemes could be enforced - although if the Government were serious about a searching inquiry into football, it would be worth postponing the piecemeal bill currently before Parliament. Stadiums could be fitted throughout with seats; "Stands" could become as much a part of the past as public executions. But, at the bottom of it all is the structure, organisation and psychology of the game. Reform costs money.

Richard Faulkner, deputy chairman of The Football Trust, discusses in the Times the steps that should be taken to make football grounds safer.

PRESS DIGEST

Guardian - a tragedy, individual acts of heroism apart, without any redeeming feature. It was a professional event organised by professionals and it was the most awful, dislocated, deadly botch. What matters now is the most fundamental investigation of safety at football grounds. Unless there is now a mighty response to refurbish our football grounds - and to accept that any additional risk of hooliganism will spell nemesis for the game - it will surely happen again.

Independent leader says suggestions are already being made about technical improvements which British stadia need. At least as important are the cultural improvements required from both authorities and fans.

YOUR VISIT

Star - Solemn picture under heading "Maggie's fund for victims".

Sun - Maggie near to tears on terraces of terror. "My grief for families".

Mail and Mirror ignore it.

Today front page picture of you behind the fatal fence and at bedside of boy with injured hands.

Express picture of you emerging from the caged part of the ground where the disaster occurred - "We feel for you so very deeply. Thatcher words of comfort for families left to face trauma".

Telegraph pictures you through the fence over heading "Cabinet likely to demand urgent stadium safety Bill. You praise schoolboy who told you now he helped to give mouth to mouth resuscitation before he collapsed himself.

Guardian - Prime Minister hears how boy 16, helped 8 to safety. Picture of you inspecting the fence.

YOUR TEN YEARS

A Fabian society publication: "ABC of Thatcherism" attempts to prove that the decade of your premiership shows record interest rates, balance of payments deficit, bankruptcies, house repossessions, increased tax burden, crime levels, hospital waiting lists and water pollution (Independent).

MINISTERS (UK VISITS, SPEECHES ETC)

- DES: Mr Baker addresses the Surrey Federation of Women's Institutes conference on "Adult Education"
- DTI: Lord Young and Mr Clarke meet Mr Lukanov, Bulgarian Minister of Foreign Economic Relations; Lord Young later addresses Management Research Group, Institute of Directors, London
- CO: Mr Luce addresses Business Sponsorship Incentive Scheme reception, London
- DEM: Mr Cope meets representative from Danish Federation of Trade Unions, Mr Thorgrimson, London
- DEM: Mr Lee opens 5th Industrious Oldham Exhibition, Oldham
- DES: Mrs Rumbold launches Open University National Association of Governors and Managers introductory package for school governors, Institute of Chartered Surveyors, London
- DES: Mr Butcher visits Leicestershire Youth Service
- DES: Mr Jackson addresses Newcastle Polytechnic
- DH: Mr Mellor addresses reception for Westminster Hospital Association of Friends, House of Commons; later gives opening speech at "Housing and Health: Care in the Community" conference, St Barts, London
- DH: Mr Freeman visits Pilgrim Hospital, Boston, Lincs
- DOE: Mr Trippier visits Mansfield District Council to see projects funded by derelict land grants
- DOE: Mr Howard visits Thames Water Authority, Reading
- DOE: Mr Moynihan meets Robert Hughes MP to discuss children's playgrounds (and 18 April)
- DOE: Mrs Bottomley addresses United Biscuits strategic management course seminar on "unleaded petrol"; later visits Clerkenwell Heritage Centre
- DTI: Mr Forth visits Leeds Task Force
- MAFF: Mr Thompson has dinner with Bulgarian Trade Minister, London
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MINISTERS (OVERSEAS VISITS)

- MAFF: Mr MacGregor and Mr Ryder attend Agricultural Council, Luxembourg (to 19 April)
- FCO: Lord Glenarther visits European Space Agency, Paris (to 20 April)
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MINISTERS (PRESS INTERVIEWS)

- DES: Mr Baker gives lecture on "A Tale of Two Cities" for Granada TV, City of London School for Girls, Barbican
- DH: Mr Clarke interviewed by Glasgow Herald
- DEM: Mr Nicholls interviewed by Shelley Karabell of NBC News, on women's issues
- DOE: Mrs Bottomley interviewed on the environment. by John Williams, Evening Standard and Victor Smart, Observer
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TV AND RADIO

'Trading Places': Thames (19.00) Paul Heiney asks whether Portugal can be turned into a more competitive country before it meets the challenges of 1992

'World in Action': Thames (20.30) Current affairs

'Panorama': BBC1 (21.30) Joshua Rozenberg looks at the Government's plans to reform the legal system, as judges protest
