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Oct 7

PRIME MINISTER

THE SUNDAY PRESS

The Sunday newspapers are, I suppose, as good as can be expected given the perception of your longstanding opposition to membership of the ERM.

The general tone is that John Major and to a lesser extent Douglas Hurd triumphed where Howe and Lawson failed. The Sunday Telegraph (Bruce Anderson) has a particularly accurate account of the saga going back to before Madrid.

The net result is that more people are now canvassing June 1991 as the election month.

Otherwise the media generally behave with a typical lack of principle: having spent years trying to get you to take Britain into the ERM they now discover that it is not a panacea and is no substitute for economic self-discipline.

All this puts the Labour Party Conference in the shade. Generally it gets a better write-up than it perhaps deserves. But read Norman Macrae, in the Sunday Times - "An election platform built on straw". Also the Sunday Times editorial which shows the extent to which the Labour Party is in hock to the public sector unions.

Ted Heath, in the Sunday Times, continues to advocate negotiation with Saddam Hussain. Peregrine Worsthorne, in the Sunday Telegraph, on the other hand advocates instant war.

The opinion polls seem to be all over the show. The Sunday Correspondent telephone poll gives Labour a 20% lead. Gallup in the Sunday Telegraph puts Labour 14.5% ahead - a four point drop in support for the Government over September. Gallup also gives poor returns on your leadership.

Other items of interest:

- The Sunday Correspondent says the Chancellor of the Exchequer is to curb advertising of credit.
- The Mail on Sunday (and others) say Regional Health Authorities are pressing Kenneth Clarke to settle claims by haemophiliacs who became HIV positive as a result of contaminated blood.
- The Sunday Express gives a very good display to the written interviews given by yourself and President Bush.

BERNARD INGHAM

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