

BUDGET

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Security pretty good.

People and News of the World, who get the detail wrong, say there will be a row over the Civil List which the NoW says will show a 12 per cent increase; Fisher, NUPE, says there will be extreme bitterness among nurses.

S/Times says Budget is likely to fall well short of what the CBI wants.

Measures canvassed by newspapers: indexation of taxes on motoring, drinking and smoking; tax allowances to be increased or better; possibly no income tax cuts now; one per cent in National Insurance surcharge; standstill on gas prices; full restoration of 2 per cent cut in unemployment benefit.

Terence Beckett says Britain needs a message of hope and realistic measures to lift us out of the recession.

Teddy Taylor, M.P., wants an extra 2 per cent for pensioners.

Woodrow Wyatt, Mirror, says lower oil prices will generate more activity and revenue so it is nonsense for the Treasury to argue that its room for manoeuvre has been reduced.

Newspaper comment:

Matt Coady, People, says Chancellor is on the high wire in relation to Party popularity.

Hugo Young, S/Times, says 'wets' have been routed but the Budget will be your judgment and your baby, not the Chancellor's.

Ivan Fallon, Telegraph, says this is not the most important Budget - last year's was but change was resisted; look what has happened beneficially since then.

ECONOMY

OPEC call emergency meeting for March 19; S/Times fears that oil prices might fall to \$25 a barrel.

Express says that shares are poised to go through the FT's 600 barrier.

NoW, commenting on the move to reduce mortgage rates, says there is nothing like a bit of competition to knock some sense into the economy and to put money into people's pockets.

NoW says jobcentres are offering £150 a week jobs in topless Soho dives.

INDUSTRIAL PROBLEMS

British Airways: Express says that John King has sacked his Finance Director and more changes are expected after consideration of a Price Waterhouse report this week.

Although the airline is losing £200 a week, it is planning to give away gold-plated pens at £12 each to passengers as a promotional gimmick; 3,000 pens on order.

Laker: British Caledonian wants to take over Laker licences to Los Angeles now to prevent the Americans creaming the profit.

S/Times says the plans to launch a people's airline are in an advance stage with Lonrho seeking £105m backing but it will be a shoestring operation with only five aircraft (compared with thirteen) and 70 staff (compared with 2,795); and no price cutting.

John Junor (Express) takes Laker to task for asking for free travel when his customers were stranded.

Rowland welshes on his promise to find out of his own pocket money for stranded passengers.

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Times: hopes that Murdoch will get 450 of the 600 redundancies.

Transport: Telegraph says new flexible shifts have gained the backing of NUR men after only five days' operation.

Express says Ministers are considering reducing the track by half.

London Transport strike is likely to be defied by hundreds of drivers.

Teachers: Assistant masters and mistresses also to take action over pay; NoW says whatever the merits of their case, it is time our teachers grew up and learned how to behave.

UNIONS/PAY

Mirror leader congratulates Sir John Boyd, AUEW, for wisdom in saying that only in exceptional and outrageous circumstances should strikes in nationalised industries be allowed.

Civil service unions opposing Labour plan to end private boarding school allowances to diplomats and servicemen.

LABOUR LAW

Weighell says that with four million unemployed and economic problems on a scale he has not seen in his lifetime, we have a Government that thinks clobbering the trade unions is going to solve our problems.

S/Times says Equity is first TUC union to break ranks and seek Government money for ballots.

INDUSTRY

Honda recalling 70,000 cars because of dangerous rust affecting suspension.

Three thousand jobs will have to be shed in London and Liverpool ports this year, according to reports of the Department of Transport.

MORI poll says that nine out of ten want lead banned from petrol.

CRICKET

Views mixed and generally follow political affiliation but pressure felt to be on the Government to take a harder line on sporting contacts with South Africa.

S/Times says there should be no sympathy for the cricketers, who are wrong; Gleneagles needs rededication; but a feature says that the cricketers feel they will be reinstated after perhaps a couple of years in the wilderness.

Michael Parkinson, in S/Times, speaks the unspoken (for him) and says that the trip has enabled him to say that he doesn't care one jot whether Boycott or Old, who are both on tour, ever plays again for Yorkshire.

Telegraph says, whatever we may think about the cricketers, they have shown that freedom really exists in this country.

George Gardiner (Express) says it is disgraceful that Callaghan signed the Gleneagles Agreement and he congratulates the cricketers on going to South Africa because he thinks it will help to end Apartheid.

Observer says your performance, which is the only one to be judged, has been puzzling.

There is also some rye comment about sporting links with Russia and the hypocrisy and humbug of our cricketers while sporting links with Russia and trade with South Africa go ahead.

WELFARE

Social workers in Wolverhampton ship out five children to Belize, even though they knew their mother had previously abandoned them; four, youngest 7, given away to peasant families and one in an institution for delinquents, even though innocent; it hopes Wolverhampton will do the decent thing and bring them home.

Express, referring to SDP health plans, says it is clear the SDP has the same old Socialist urge to nanny, interfere and intrude.

EDUCATION

People survey of readers says 'Carry on caning'; NoW says Britain is ready to challenge the Eurocourt ruling - significantly, the Government, in offering advice about the legal position, makes no recommendation to teachers.

ART

Ronnie Butt, S/Times, suggests that Rees-Mogg's best benefaction to the Arts would be to wind up the Arts Council.

LAW AND ORDER

One hundred and thirty arrested at Chelsea cup tie for trouble outside the ground; boy of 11 arrested trying to smuggle an air pistol and darts into the ground.

Another holiday chalet burned down in Wales.

Telegraph says London averages more than 50 muggings a day.

IRELAND

Historic charge against Tuite for explosive offences in Britain; Express says, however, that security chiefs expect

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the IRA to take revenge bombings for Tuite's arrest; search of garages for IRA explosives in Southampton.

Man being questioned in Donegal about the sinking of the Collier.

IRA shoot dead an informer on the border.

S/Times says the omens for a successful political initiative have been increased by the Belfast South result.

Government to announce a review of the Prevention of Terrorism Act this week.

Politics

S/Times leads with a remarkable speech by Wall, who has been selected in place of Ben Ford in Bradford; addressing a Socialist Workers Party Meeting, he predicts civil war; S/Times leader says Foot can no longer dodge the question - Does Labour represent the revolutionary left or Parliamentary socialism?

Benn says the BBC is the main agent of the SDP.

General agreement that Roy Jenkins is running into difficulties in Hillhead, where the race is neck and neck.

Brian Magee, M.P. joins the SDP.

S/Times says a lot of M.P.s, mostly Tory, have given up drink for Lent.

POLAND

Wife says Walesa will be freed this month to attend christening in Gdansk; Moscow has told the regime not to allow the Pope to return to Poland this year; Glemp wants a new meeting with Jaruzelski because of strained Church/State relations and growing underground movement.

B. INGHAM