

UK IMPORT BAN ON ARGENTINE GOODS

Department of Trade to announce this afternoon (written PQ answered by Mr Peter Rees after 3.30 pm) a total ban on importation of Argentine goods by British firms effective immediately. Only exception will be companies who can prove imports actually on the High Seas en route here.

Also urgently seeking agreement with EC to ensure that Argentine goods imported by EC member countries do not enter Britain through "back door". Customs being informed today.

The Prime Minister has been briefed for Question Time.

GM

**Mr. Mayhew:** This information is not collected centrally, but I understand that the device is used in about 30 forces. My right hon. Friend is satisfied that there is no reason to doubt its accuracy provided it is operated correctly.

**Dr. Glyn** asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether his Department has evaluated the accuracy and reliability of the Döppler hand-held radar device for assessing the speed of vehicles; or whether any assessment, other than an assessment by the manufacturer, has been made.

**Mr. Mayhew:** This is a matter for chief officers of police. The Association of Chief Police Officers' working party which originally examined the suitability of radar devices for police use was given some technical advice by the Home Office telecommunications branch. In its recent review of the equipment the association had the benefit of two independent technical advisers.

#### Children (Parental Access)

**Mr. Cryer** asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will introduce legislation to provide that, if a spouse removes a child from the country against the wishes of the other parent and against the provisions of access to the child laid down by a court, a criminal offence takes place punishable by fine, imprisonment or both.

**Mr. Mayhew:** No. The courts already have powers to punish a parent who takes a child out of the country against the wishes of the other parent and in contravention of a court order.

#### Private Security Firms

**Mr. Hoyle** asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether, in the discussions that have taken place with the private security industry, he has been able to establish any procedure providing for checks on the background of security guards to ensure that they are fit persons without criminal records.

**Mr. Mayhew:** No. Successive Administrations have taken the view that this would not be a proper use of criminal records maintained by the police.

**Mr. Hoyle** asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will introduce legislation to regulate the position of private security firms and make provision as to the character of the employers and employees and the minimum capital a company requires before it can operate as a security company.

**Mr. Mayhew:** No. As my right hon. Friend explained in answer to the question by the hon. Member for Walsall, South (Mr. Winnick) on 11 December 1980, we think that a case has not been made out for statutory control of the private security industry, and that it is preferable to support and encourage self-regulation.—[Vol. 12, c. 712.]

**Mr. Hoyle** asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department what progress has been achieved in obtaining self-regulation in the private security industry since the publication of the consultative paper; and if he will make available any guidelines or codes of practice which exist.

**Mr. Mayhew:** The British Security Industry Association is setting up an inspectorate to oversee the pre-employment screening and induction training of member companies, and the International Professional Security Association is producing a code of practice for their members. It is for the two organisations to decide how far to make available information on these matters.

#### Cable Television (Inquiry)

**Mr. Geoffrey Johnson Smith** asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he can now announce the remaining members of the independent inquiry into the broadcasting policy aspects of the expansion of cable.

**Mr. Whitelaw:** I am glad to announce that the following have now agreed to serve on the inquiry, under the Chairmanship of Lord Hunt of Tanworth: Sir Maurice Hodgson, who has just retired from being Chairman of I.C.I. Professor James Ring, Professor of Physics at the Imperial College of Science and Technology; Member of the I.B.A. 1974-81.

I am grateful to all three members for being prepared, at short notice, to undertake this onerous but important piece of Government service.

The Secretary of the Inquiry will be J. C. Davey, an Assistant Secretary in the Home Office. The address of the inquiry is:

Inquiry into Cable Expansion and Broadcasting Policy,  
Whittington House,  
19-30 Alfred Place,  
London WC1E 7EJ  
Telephone: 01-637-2355, Ext. 365.

I understand that the inquiry is holding its first meeting today, and hopes very shortly to issue a document inviting views on the matters outlined in its terms of reference, which were set out in my statement of 22 March.—[Vol. 20, c. 236-7.]

Data Protection

**Sir John Eden** asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department when he expects to publish the White Paper on data protection.

**Mr. Whitelaw:** A White Paper setting out the Government's proposals on data protection will be published tomorrow.

#### TRADE

##### Argentina (Imports)

**Mr. Peter Mills** asked the Secretary of State for Trade if he has given further consideration to imports from Argentina; and if he will make a further statement.

**Mr. Peter Rees:** The Government have decided to place a ban on all imports from Argentina. This ban comes into operation at midnight tonight. All import licences issued under existing arrangements are revoked with effect from midnight tonight. I shall consider applications from United Kingdom importers for licences to import goods which can be shown to have been in transit to the United Kingdom before the ban took effect.

##### Seafarers (Health and Safety)

**Mr. Trotter** asked the Secretary of State for Trade if he will make a statement on the progress made in protecting the safety and health of seafarers in their daily work.



money go to British Leyland, it should raise what money it can by selling any parts of the group that people are prepared to buy?

**The Prime Minister:** There is a view that the company should continue some of its policy of selling assets in order to provide capital from internal sources.

### President Reagan

Q2. **Mr. Cryer** asked the Prime Minister if she will make a statement on the progress of Her Majesty's Government's arrangements for the visit to the United Kingdom of President Reagan.

**The Prime Minister:** President Reagan is to be the guest of Her Majesty the Queen at Windsor Castle. As was announced on 25 March, he is to be invited to address Members of both Houses of Parliament in the Royal Gallery. The programme is still under discussion and further details will be announced when it has been approved.

**Mr. Cryer:** Does the Prime Minister accept that her attempt to use the visit of President Reagan to shore up her failing position is widely regarded as an abuse of the House? Has she noted that even President Reagan has called for a peaceful solution to the Falkland Islands crisis, without bloodshed? Does she not accept that, as she is responsible in the final analysis for the conduct of her Government, she should consider an early resignation and allow someone else to meet President Reagan on his visit?

**The Prime Minister:** We shall welcome President Reagan as the President of our senior NATO ally, the most powerful defender of liberty in the West and throughout the world. I understand that President Reagan, like most of us, would wish a peaceful solution to the crisis in the Falkland Islands. We shall be happy if anyone is able to secure the withdrawal of the Argentinians from the Falkland Islands, the restoration of British sovereignty and the respecting of the wishes of the people to live under sovereignty without a drop of blood being shed. If anyone can do that, we shall warmly welcome their co-operation. With regard to resignation—No. Now is the time for strength and resolution.

**Sir John Biggs-Davison:** While warmly welcoming what my right hon. Friend has said, the personal charge that she is taking over these affairs and all that President Reagan can do to help bring about restoration of British sovereignty in the Falkland Islands, may I ask whether my right hon. Friend—and all of us—should not keep in mind in this difficult matter the prayer by Sir Francis Drake that she and many of us heard yesterday in Westminster Abbey?

**The Prime Minister:** I think that the prayer to which my hon. Friend must be referring is:

"There must be a beginning of any matter, but the continuing unto the end until it be thoroughly finished yields the true glory." That is an apt quotation under the circumstances.

### Engagements

3. **Mr. John Browne** asked the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for Tuesday 6 April.

**The Prime Minister:** This morning I presided at a meeting of the Cabinet and had meetings with ministerial colleagues and others. In addition to my duties in the House, I shall have further meetings later today.

**Mr. Browne:** Does my right hon. Friend accept, with regard to her action over the Falkland Islands issue, that she has the overwhelming support of the House and the nation? Can she confirm whether our mission is to destroy the Argentine invasion fleet? If my right hon. Friend cannot confirm that, would she say whether she believes it either possible or desirable in the long term security interests of the Falkland Islands, and to protect the exposed southern flank of NATO, that a NATO base should be established in the Falkland Islands?

**The Prime Minister:** Our mission is to restore British sovereignty to the islands and to give the people what they want—the right to live under British rule and to owe allegiance to the British Crown. That is our task. I do not think that the idea of a NATO base in the Falkland Islands would be well received because the islands are far out of the NATO area.

**Mr. Foot:** Has the right hon. Lady been able to study this morning the reports in many newspapers such as *The Daily Telegraph* and *The Times* that the information about the attack was known in London 10 days before the invasion? Is the right hon. Lady aware that this is claimed to be on unimpeachable sources and that, if that was true, it would have been possible for action of interception to have been taken? Will the right hon. Lady say whether that information is correct and if it was received, what action was taken by the Government?

**The Prime Minister:** There are two points that need to be made. I told the House on Saturday that even if action had been taken—[HON. MEMBERS: "Oh".] Will the House let me answer the question in my own way, giving information that I am certain is accurate, as I try to do and try to check these matters?

As I told the House on Saturday, even had we known at the time of 19 March, when there was the landing at South Georgia at Leith—which is a long time before the 11 days to which the right hon. Gentleman was referring—we could not have got ships of the fleet there in time.

With regard to the second part of the right hon. Gentleman's question, I think that he will find a certain amount of confusion in the reports. I therefore stand by what I told the right hon. Gentleman on Saturday—that the first time we had precise information was on Wednesday. If the right hon. Gentleman looks at his copy of *The Times* he will see that there is a phrase to the effect that they knew there were ships but did not know their intent. [Interruption.] I am telling the right hon. Gentleman with the greatest possible accuracy, as information came to me.

The first information that I had was on Wednesday of last week, when we took action. Previously, we had been very worried about the situation in South Georgia, where HMS "Endurance" had been, and it was suggested that she take off the Argentinians by force. We had understood that there were ships on the way for that and when we understood that we also took certain dispositions.

**Mr. Foot:** Will the right hon. Lady now answer the immediate point that I put to her? Questions of British intelligence are concerned in these matters and the House



was the right to judge whether British intelligence was operating properly and if so what action was taken. Can the right hon. Lady now tell us whether the information stated in these reports was received? Whenever she may have been informed, surely she has had the chance to look at such accusations today and can tell the House and the country whether such information as this was received at the time stated.

**The Prime Minister:** I have tried to help the right hon. Gentleman. I think, if he looks at the report on the front of *The Times* he will find that it says that there were ships in the area but their intent was not known. [Hon. Members: "Oh."] That is what I understand *The Times* to say. We knew there were problems and of course we were dealing with them on South Georgia. The precise time that we had information that it was an invasion fleet and that it was on its way was Wednesday evening. We took action then. [Interruption.] I am trying to give the right hon. Gentleman accurate information. Previously, because of the situation in South Georgia, we had also made certain other dispositions.

**Mr. Foot:** If the right hon. Lady cannot give us and the country an accurate answer on the matter now, will she study the matter further and make another statement to the House tomorrow, as many of her Ministers have had to do before?

**Mr. Ashton:** Come clean.

**The Prime Minister:** I have given the accurate information—[Interruption.]—that I myself know and the action that I myself took at the time when I received it.

**Sir Paul Bryan:** Is not my right hon. Friend encouraged by the support that the country has received at the United Nations and throughout the free world for the stand that her Government have taken on the Falkland Islands?

**The Prime Minister:** Yes. There was a forceful resolution moved at the United Nations Security Council calling upon the Argentines to withdraw and we received support in the vote that was passed from the United States, France, Ireland, Japan, Zaire, Togo, Uganda, Guyana and Jordan. Those were the countries that voted for us. The Soviet Union, China, Poland and Spain abstained and Panama voted against.

**Mr. David Steel:** Did the Prime Minister hear the interview at the weekend with the hon. Member for Shoreham (Mr. Luce) before he resigned as Minister of State, Foreign and Commonwealth Office? In that he said quite clearly—and I heard the interview—that the Government had no warning of any attack or threat to the Falkland Islands until about a fortnight ago. A fortnight is a great difference from 48 hours or 24 hours. Will the right hon. Lady try to clear this matter up?

**The Prime Minister:** As I have been trying to indicate, there were problems, as the right hon. Gentleman knew, on South Georgia. The problems there were that if HMS "Endurance" proceeded to take off the 10 Argentines who had landed at Leith and who refused to leave although they did not have proper immigration papers—[Interruption.] We were in touch with Buenos Aires and we said that the

men must go or get the proper clearance to be on our territory. We knew that there was a threat that if we took them off by force HMS "Endurance" might well have been stopped, and that there were ships about that could do the stopping.

The precise nature of the threat to Port Stanley and to that part of the Falkland Islands came to me, as I told the right hon. Gentleman, on Wednesday. I do not believe that there was a precise threat to Port Stanley as long before as the right hon. Gentleman indicated.

**Mr. Higgins:** As the United Nations Security Council resolution on the Falkland Islands is mandatory and the Argentine Government have not complied with it, will my right hon. Friend consider tabling a further resolution enforcing economic sanctions on the Argentine Government?

**The Prime Minister:** I think that if we were to table a further resolution about economic sanctions we should not have quite such a successful conclusion as we had to the resolution that we have already tabled.

**Mr. Allan Roberts:** Will the Prime Minister consider the consequences of the Government's mishandling of the Falklands crisis for quite a number of my constituents? Is she aware that 50 per cent. of the trade with Argentina goes through Liverpool docks, and that that trade is likely to stop as a result of military action or sanctions, which I would support? If that trade is stopped, will the right hon. Lady make sure that Merseyside docks, which are already in a state of crisis, receive Government assistance to compensate, so that unemployment does not increase as a result of the mishandling of the Falklands crisis by this Government?

**The Prime Minister:** The extent of our exports to Argentina is, and has been, comparatively small in relation to our total exports. Therefore, I cannot give the hon. Gentleman the answer that he seeks. However, I can tell him, as a matter of information, that we have decided to impose an embargo on the imports of all goods from Argentina from midnight tonight.

**Several Hon. Members rose—**

**Mr. Winnick:** On a point of order, Mr. Speaker. In the exceptional circumstances of a national crisis, as this undoubtedly is, can I ask you to give careful consideration to extending Prime Minister's Question Time, because it is the only way that hon. Members have—

**Mr. Speaker:** Order. I do not decide the length of Prime Minister's Question Time.

## BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

### Ordered.

That, at this day's sitting, proceeding on the motion standing on the Order Paper in the name of Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer relating to the Committal of the Finance Bill shall not be subject to the provisions of Standing Order No. 40(3) and may be proceeded with, though opposed, for a period of three-quarters of an hour after Ten o'clock or for three-quarters of an hour after they have been entered upon, whichever is the later, and that at the end of that period Mr. Speaker shall put any Question necessary to dispose of those proceedings.—[Mr. Thompson.]