

21 February 1985

PRIME MINISTER

MAIN EVENTS

Prime Minister visits Bramshill Police College
Preston train collision inquiry opens, Preston

STATISTICS

CSO: Tax and price index (January)
DEM: Retail prices index (January) (11.30)
DTI: Sales and orders in the engineering industries (November)

PUBLICATIONS

FCO: EC No 7 (1986). Agreement between EEC and Government of Pakistan on economic and development co-operation (14.00)
FCO: EC No 8 (1986). Agreement between EEC and Kingdom of Spain on international combined road/rail carriage of goods and final acts (14.00)
DTI: "British Business" - includes market report on doing business in the USA - No 36 - Chicago

PARLIAMENT

Commons

Business: PRIVATE MEMBERS' BILLS
Civil Protection in Peacetime Bill: 2nd Reading
(Sir N Bonsor)

Tobacco Products (Sports Sponsorship) Bill: 2nd Reading
(Mr R Sims)

Medical Act 1983 (Amendment) Bill: 2nd Reading
(Mr N Spearing)

Adjournment Debate
The sub post office network in Britain
(Mr P Ashdown)

MINISTERS - See Annex

2.
PRESS DIGEST

BRITISH LEYLAND

- Mail: "Thatcher puts the brakes on BL deal". Plans for the sale of Land Rover may be radically altered after a Cabinet rebellion against another American take-over. You have set up a committee of senior ministers to take the heat out of the issue that could be as explosive to Tory unity as Westland. The 4 March deadline may have to be lifted. Douglas Hurd, Norman Fowler and Kenneth Clarke are said to have challenged the haste of the sales operation. Unless a deal can be honourably defended, it may turn into another resignation issue for one, possibly two, of your team.
- GM has set up a London unit to deal with the affair.
- Leader says your basic reason for wanting to unload public concerns on to the private sector is that ministers are unqualified to manage businesses. The mess they are making of this sale proves the wisdom of removing their opportunity to make any more boobs.
- Star: You tell the House that propping up BL costs every family £200.
- Leader says that putting the "Great" back into Great Britain was one of the main plans on which the Conservatives won the last election. But the Government appears to have given a British solution barely a passing thought.
- Telegraph: The new Committee has been set up because some ministers had expressed concern about the political dangers and a group of Tory MPs with constituency interests were also anxious.
- Top GM executive says they would want to stand back and look at the whole thing again if Land Rover is excluded from its proposals. GM has been in Britain for 60 years and accepts responsibility for its 100,000 British employees. "What does it take to become a recognised member of the community here and stop being foreign?" he asks.
- The director leading the Land Rover management buy-out consortium has been given leave of absence by the BL Board to see if he can organise a bid.
- Guardian: Leader says if you insist on GM taking over, the consequences could make Westland seem small beer. You are tearing up all you believe in.
- Times: GM's proposed takeover will result in job losses and possible plant closures, but Land Rover will, for the time being, remain an all-British vehicle, says GM executive.

SELLAFIELD

- Mail: The National Radiological Protection Board says the bodies of dozens of people who have died of cancer in the Sellafield area have been dissected and analysed for contamination by plutonium. Not one showed evidence that fall-out from the plant contributed to their death.
- The Cabinet is believed to have approved four sites where radioactive waste from Sellafield is to be dumped. They are believed to be Maldon, Essex, North Bedfordshire and Scunthorpe, Lincs. A site near Bicester, Oxon, may also be on the list.
- Sun: Article comparing safety of different industries says people are in more danger of being killed by frying a plate of chips than by a radioactive leak.
- Star: The European Parliament yesterday called for a temporary shutdown of Sellafield.
- Article lists '21 things you need to know about Sellafield'.
- Mirror: Story headlined "The crisis at Sellafield" - "Our life in the shadow of fear" suggests the villagers of a village near the plant are terrified - but only one family is quoted.
- Guardian: Scientists have been ordered to take samples of food consumed by people living near Sellafield to see if it has been contaminated.

EDUCATION

- Mail: "Parents win a bigger say over schools". Leader says: "Well handled - an important qualification - these changes should radically improve the quality of our children's education".
- Express P1 lead headed: "Parent Power" says the Education Bill is a major boost for Britain's schools. It is welcomed by the National Confederation of Parent Teachers Associations but attacked by teachers. Leader hopes that not only radical parents will be represented on governing bodies.
- Telegraph: Leader says that only if this Bill is the prelude to more major surgery will it be worth the effort.
- Times: The bill is a positive measure, but it is only an instalment.

ECONOMY

- FT: Capital spending 7 per cent higher in 1985 than 1984.

INDUSTRY

- Sun: Lucas is to close a Birmingham car components factory with the loss of 1,200 jobs.

UNIONS

- Mail: Brenda Dean yesterday paid the £25,000 fine imposed on SOCAT for blacking distribution of Rupert Murdoch's papers.
- Sun: Print strike thugs smash a beer glass in one journalist's face and punch and kick another.
- Norman Tebbit accuses the print unions of behaving like Ostriches.
- Labour MPs and other unions attack visit to Lebanon by Left wing transport workers' leaders to meet Arab "trade union" that is a front for PLO terrorists.

TEBBIT SPEECH

- Mail: Norman Tebbit yesterday attacked Opposition MPs of all parties, accusing them of "dirty and cheap anti-Americanism". Warring factions in other parties were bombarding great institutions and public servants with mud and dirt.
- Mirror: Mr Tebbit, whose abrasive style has been worrying even his Tory colleagues, says the Oppositions mudslinging is eroding serious political debate.
- Telegraph: David Steel says Mr Tebbit increasingly represents "the Chief Tonton Macoute to Mrs Thatcher's Mama Doc". The speech met a varied reaction from Cabinet colleagues.

DRUGS

- Mail: The mother whose teenage son died after being injected with a drug 'cocktail' yesterday won her private prosecution to bring his killer to justice. Gary Austin was jailed for 15 months for manslaughter
- Express: A secret DHSS report says Britain's most commonly prescribed tranquillisers are to be treated as dangerous, addictive drugs.

FORESTRY COMMISSION

- Mail: Malcolm Rifkind and Nicholas Edwards have forced Michael Jopling to drop a £1.5bn plan to privatise the Forestry Commission. Mr Jopling is "fuming".
- Telegraph: There are reports of a Cabinet split and backbench unrest at proposals to sell nearly 3 million acres of woodland. Mr Kinnoch pledges Labour's bitter opposition.

LAW AND ORDER

- Star: The Lord Chief Justice is today expected to advise judges to give tougher sentences to rapists.

RUSSIA

- Express: The Russians are planning to send three men to Mars in 1992.

HOSPITALS

- Express: A 'flu epidemic is said to be sweeping hospitals in the South of England and a crisis looms.

LEFT WING

- Mail: Neil Kinnock last night rebuked Bernie Grant for calling Roy Hattersley rascist.

RIOTS

- Mail: Trouble could erupt again in Handsworth because of racism, according to a report commissioned by West Midlands County Council and written by 5 black people.
- Express: Police are launching a door-to-door recruitment drive in Birmingham to enlist more black songtables.

WESTLAND

- Sir Michael Havers has told Commons Defence Committee that Sir Patrick Mayhew will not give evidence. Law Officers are not answerable to Parliament for advice they give to Governments.

DENTISTS

- Mail: The Government is planning action to curb dentists who carry out unnecessary treatment. High earners will be subject to close investigation.

ARGENTINIANS

- Mail: The Argentine politicians will not accept an invitation to see Tim Eggar because they have no mandate to see him.
- Telegraph: The delegation seems to have decided that the meeting might have been adversely interpreted in Buenos Aires.

SUNDAY TRADING

- Sun: Leader says a tattered army of some 70 Tory MPs threaten a rebellion. But already some 8 million people work on Sundays. The Government should give the people what they want.
- Telegraph: David Waddington in broadcast, says critics are "living a lie" if they think people don't already shop on Sunday.
- Times: Article by Teddy Taylor headed "Stop this Sunday Steamroller".
- FT: It is believed the Government will allow the Lords amendment to remain in the Bill.

MIDDLE EAST

- Express: Several Iranian MPs were killed yesterday when their plane was shot down by an Iraqi fighter.
- Telegraph: Iraq blamed for 40 deaths.
- The US yesterday signalled the death of its Middle East peace effort involving Jordan and the PLO.

GRENADA

- Telegraph: Reagan stages triumphal five-hour return.

DEFENCE

- Telegraph: Vickers is insisting on a guarantee in its contract with MoD for Trident submarines that would ensure it received other work in the event of a Labour Government cancelling the contract.
- Guardian: The DTI last night back-tracked on an earlier decision to postpone the sale of the Vickers Yard at Barrow-in-Furness after last-minute representations from Vickers managers who have arranged a consortium to buy the yard.
- Guardian: "US retreats from zero arms option - President influenced by Allies' objections.
- FT: The UK and US are to work together on a research programme for a future generation of advanced short-take-off-and-landing fighters.

OBSCENITY BILL

- Telegraph: Broadcasters, film makers, theatre directors and writers joined yesterday to fight Winston Churchill's Obscene Publications Bill. It would severely damage broadcasting and the arts.

ROYALTY

- Telegraph: Princess Anne says there should be realistic fees for keeping pets, with exceptions for pensioners and blind people.

CHILD BENEFIT

- Guardian: A group of 17 Tory MPs have warned the Government that it faces a serious revolt if it cuts the real value of child benefit in its uprating announcement next week.

SOUTH AFRICA

- FT: South Africa and its main creditor banks have agreed proposals for handling the country's £16.5bn debt.

COAL

- Guardian: More than two thirds of pits are operating at a loss, according to confidential NCB figures.

GCHQ

- Guardian: Staff will be offered a new pay deal if they agree to a new grading structure which would isolate them from the rest of the civil service.

JUDGES

- Times: A judge has challenged Lord Hailsham over the rules which prevent judges speaking publicly to the press.

PUBLIC SPENDING

- FT: The Government plans to introduce emergency legislation after Easter to control public expenditure because the Treasury has seriously underestimated in forecasting spending levels for the next three years.

JIM COE

MINISTERS (UK VISITS, SPEECHES ETC)

- MAFF: Mr Jopling addresses seminar on "Farming and the Environment", Lancaster University
- DEM: Lord Young visits Hewlett-Packard Ltd, Wokingham
- DEM: Mr Clarke visits Glasgow
- DEN: Mr Walker attends launch of Neighbourhood Energy Action 200th project, London
- HO: Mr Hurd opens Humberside police computerised criminal information system; later visits Scunthorpe Probation Office
- SO: Mr Rifkind and Mr Stewart meet Scottish Economic Council
- DTI: Mr Channon addresses annual US European Round Table, London
- DEM: Mr Trippier speaks at Bradford Chamber of Commerce dinner
- DHSS: Mr Whitney visits North Tees and Hartlepool; addresses Durham University Union Debating Society
- HO: Lord Glenarthur attends passout parade at N East Police Training Centre, Durham; visits Northumbria Police HQ
- SO: Lord Gray meets MPs on Scottish Agricultural Colleges; meets Scottish Fishermens' Federation, Edinburgh
- SO: Mr Stewart meets Scottish Economic council; dines with CBI employment committee, Glasgow
- SO: Mr MacKay meets Scottish Prison Officers' Association, Edinburgh
- DTI: Mr Morrison addresses Chester Chamber of Commerce on Industry Year
- DTI: Mr Howard attends Guinness Mahon & Co Ltd lunch, London
- WO: Mr Robinson visits Clwyd District Health Authority
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MINISTERS (OVERSEAS VISITS)

- DES: Mr Walden visits ocean drilling project ship, Marseilles
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TV AND RADIO

"Pillars of Society"; BBC Radio 4 (11.00): Repeat of Thursday's programme

"A Question of Economics"; Channel 4 (14.30): Examines views that trade unions no longer represent their members and affect employment by keeping wages above market levels

"A Week in Politics"; Channel 4 (20.15): Includes report on the Fulham by-election

"Law in Action"; BBC Radio 4 (20.20): Joshua Rosenberg presents topical legal issues

"Any Questions?"; BBC Radio 4 (20.45): With the Rt Hon Norman Tebbit, the Rt Hon David Steel, the Rt Hon Gerald Kaufman and Ann Leslie

"Jimmy Young Programme"; BBC Radio 2 (10.40-11.00am) featuring the Lord Chancellor
