

14 March 1988

PRIME MINISTER

MAIN EVENTS

The Queen and Duke of Edinburgh attend the Commonwealth Day Observance, Westminster Abbey, later attend a Commonwealth Day Reception, Lancaster House

The Princess of Wales holds a reception, during London Fashion Week, at Kensington Palace, London

Vauxhall Car Workers and COHSE protest march against NHS cuts

RCN day of protest

EC: Transport Council, Brussels (to 15 March)

EC: Informal Meeting of Ministers for Social Affairs, Dortmund (to 15 March)

International Confederation of Free Trade Unions World Congress, Melbourne, Australia (to 18 March)

STATISTICS

DOE: Provision against homelessness; local authorities' action under the homelessness provisions of the 1985 Housing Act: England. Results for 4th quarter 1987-supplementary tables

DTI: Retail sales (Feb-prov)

DTI: Producer price index numbers (Feb)

MAFF: Food facts (4th qtr)

PUBLICATIONS

DEM: The Finance of British Trade Unions 1975-1985

PARLIAMENT

Commons

Questions: Transport; Wales; Energy

Business: Social Security Bill (Allocation of Time Motion)
Followed by consideration of Lords Amendment to the Social Security Bill

Adjournment Debate: New developments in breathalyser technology (Sir Ian Lloyd)

Select Committees: PUBLIC ACCOUNTS
Subject: Dockyards Commercial Management
Witnesses: Vice-Admiral Sir Benjamin Bathurst, KCB, Chief of Fleet Support, Ministry of Defence

PARLIAMENT (Cont'd)Lords: Starred Questions

Consolidated Fund Bill: Second Reading (and remaining stages)

Employment Bill: Committee (3rd Day)

Matrimonial Proceedings (Transfers) Bill: Committee (to be discharged)

Foreign Marriage (Amendment) Bill (HL): Second Reading

Duchy of Lancaster Bill: Second Reading

PRESS DIGESTMAIN NEWS

Budget overshadowed by "row" between you and Chancellor over sterling and exchange rates

Speculation that this may be the Chancellor's last Budget.

Labour Front Bench say tax giveaway will worsen Britain's trade deficit to £7bn.

Kinnock says foreign competitors will be toasting you in champagne.

Some expectation of interest rate cuts later this week.

Budget speculation: Consensus on 2p cut in standard rate; cuts in top rates; more on drink and cigarettes; abolition of ceiling on National Insurance contributions.

In Sun Norman Tebbit goes for big cuts in top tax rates and to limit mortgage relief to standard rate. And he tells Chancellor to forget this nonsense about it being his last Budget. "We need you as Chancellor. Stay and take a cracking pay rise" he adds.

Marplan poll in Guardian shows big majority in favour of more money for NHS rather than tax cuts. BBC pre-Budget poll reaches same conclusion.

Meanwhile Telegraph says you are preparing to keep up the radical reforming pace of your third term with another heavy and controversial programme next session.

Mirror says Labour's Chief Whip, Derek Foster, is likely to be sacked in the autumn; four of his colleagues have been approached to stand against him.

Stage set for major clash over Kuwait's interest in increasing its stake in BP.

Mail says Ford is planning a new offer for Land Rover.

Russians seeking Channel Tunnel contracts with help of State subsidies (Mail).

Ladbroke's get sole betting licence in Wyoming.

City of Sheffield expected to place contract for Student Games Stadium with American firm.

Unemployment forecast to fall to 2.5m, lowest for 7 years.

Paul Johnson, in Mail, attacks Lord Boardman for lack of courage in announcing Natwest is ending its contract of Economic League.

John Redwood claims that bureaucrats make up 10% of NHS staff and wants regional tier eliminated.

Civil Servants who walk out today in support of nurses' demos face disciplinary action.

Association of Ratepayers Action Groups say "poll tax will pole-axe" you.

Home Secretary heading for showdown with prison officers over guerilla industrial action.

Mail says study shows Japanese children are 3 years ahead of ours with their education - testing plays a key role in their success.

Michael Heseltine accuses Nicholas Ridley of allowing South of England to be torn apart by intrusive development.

Flare ups feared at funerals this week of IRA bombers.

Sun says Sinn Fein are having difficulty finding pilot to fly home bodies of shot IRA men.

Star reprints Norman Tebbit's Sunday Express article on Gibraltar bombing/shooting, saying he has had more than a bellyfull of Haughey.

Bill Deedes, in Telegraph, likens Labour MPs who receive and publish leaked documents to shoplifters.

Guide to lesbianism available at Dalton (E.London) children's centre, funded by grant from Greater London Arts Association.

Star: sickening.

Homosexual teacher in Bradford to be disciplined over allegations he told pupils about his sex life.

Mirror says Swiss police are looking for four skiers above Prince Charles' party who may have started fatal Klosters avalanche.

Seven die and 20 injured as avalanche hits St Anton in Austria; thousands of holidaymakers cut off by heavy snow.

Gadaffi frees British engineer after 3 years of life sentence for spying - last Briton held in Libya.

Mail says Russia has started pulling out its military advisers in Afghanistan ahead of troops.

David Mellor refuses to visit Czechoslovakia unless he can meet human rights activists.

Gorbachev visits Yugoslavia this week.

Times says Mr Gorbachev's visit to Yugoslavia is first by Soviet leader since Tito's funeral 8 years ago and he may be relieved to find a country which seems to be experiencing difficulties even more acute than those in the Soviet Union.

Independent: Moscow and Bonn announce that Kohl will visit the Soviet Union this autumn and Gorbachev will visit Germany in the first half of 1989.

Church leaders defy apartheid restrictions in South Africa.

BUDGET

Star: Give and take away Lawson Budget plan.

Sun tips lower interest rates after Budget to ease rift between you and Chancellor; leader says the disagreement is extraordinary. Your instincts are correct. In a free market governments cannot permanently manipulate exchange rates. Chancellor should recognise he is luckiest man in Britain.

Mirror: Lawson may quit in Thatcher split over pound; leader says that daily you act more like a President than a Prime Minister. Chancellor is your latest victim. Nobody has the guts to challenge you.

Today: Maggie sour note for Lawson's swan song.

Express leads with tax cut bonanza in Lawson's last Budget - a fiver back into every household; leader headed "Axe the tax again, Nigel" hopes Chancellor will cut standard rate by more than 2p. We are all working from Monday morning to Wednesday afternoon for the state. However taxation is key to continuing economic growth.

Mail: Lawson's Budget may be his last - but most spectacular. Leader says there is a widespread impression this may be Chancellor's last Budget, his departure hastened by a tiff with you. Yet it is only a pinprick - a technical argument which could hardly be a resigning matter. More likely he has had enough of a tough job. But tempting as it must be to him personally, from the country's point of view it is the wrong moment to go.

Telegraph leads with Lawson "nearly resigned" over exchange rate. Your timing considered "extraordinary". Professor Griffiths driving force behind confrontation. Leader says it is hard to believe that the Chancellor contemplated resignation very seriously or that it was decided to allow the £ to float above DM3 in defiance of Chancellor's judgement. The week before Budget is not the week the Treasury would wish to have its hand forced on interest rates and there is nothing intrinsically unhealthy about competing policy perceptions between No 10 and Departments. But you should move more carefully.

Guardian says Government's financial and political credibility dented in spite of Whitehall's attempts to defuse row.

Independent: Tomorrow's budget will be the initial test of Nigel Lawson's ambitious for tax reform and of his trial of strength with you over the pound. John Smith says the "unhealthy argument" between you and the Chancellor over exchange rates makes it "much much harder" for British industry to compete. Leader says the Chancellor's "managed floating" is a more tolerable option than your fundamentalist belief that the only alternative to bucking the market is to do nothing. For once the CBI was being realistic rather than alarmist or defeatist when it argued that the rising pound was a serious threat to British industry.

Times leads with differences which threaten to mar what should have been a day of triumph for Nigel Lawson as he introduces a radical Budget package; Mr Beaumont-Dark MP calls on you to "get off your economic high horse" while Ministers strive to play down the extent of the differences over tactics; most currency analysts agree with Chancellor that the £'s rise against the German mark is unlikely to be sustainable; leader says allowing sterling to float upwards on foreign exchange markets tightens counter-inflation markets, and should therefore help to convince markets that the Government is serious about bringing inflation down further.

Discussing the Budget in the Times, John Hoskyns says it would not be difficult to sweep away the nonsense of higher rates of tax but the feeling is that it would somehow be immoral to do so runs very deep.

Times: Chancellor will announce improved prospects for economy as well as making sizeable cuts in both basic rate and higher rates of income tax.

FT: Lawson will reaffirm commitment to stable £ in Budget speech. By last night earlier talk of a healthy argument between you and Mr Lawson had been toned down to a straightforward acknowledgement that a predictable discussion on exchange rate tactics had been taking place.

IRELAND

Sun leader says the Early Day Motion condemning shooting of IRA terrorists in Gibraltar and supported by more than 50 Labour MPs reveals once more just how out of step with public they are.

Independent: Tom King reviews possible release of 34 youths convicted of terrorist-related offences despite strong reservations by John Stanley.

Independent: Massive police exercise on both sides of the Irish border to ensure a peaceful return of the bodies to Belfast after they arrive at Dublin around 4pm.

Times: Huge security operation likely to surround IRA terrorist funerals after families refuse to give undertaking that ceremony will take place within law.

NHS

Today leader says BUPA and other health workers should be working flat out to draw more people into private health care. This will be in everybody's interest because, by not using the NHS, they leave more resources free for rest.

Independent: Plans are being considered to run the East Anglian region of the NHS as an experimental internal market in which health authorities would buy and sell services among themselves and with the private sector. The idea is a front-runner for adoption in the Government's NHS review.

Independent: West Midlands health service region to cut spending on hospital service back to its 1986 level, to allow care for the mentally ill, mentally handicapped and elderly to develop.

Times: BUPA planning to cut health premiums to encourage more elderly people to take out cover.

MEDIA

Today says Government should drop whole idea of Broadcasting Standards Authority. Instead extend Obscene Publications Act.

FT: Cable Authority plans "Big Bang" to advertise 10 franchises simultaneously within the next few weeks.

Times: Government admits it has been difficult to find people with the right ability for four new BBC governors.

Times: John Birt to meet BBC journalists for first of series of quarterly meetings set up to allow staff to voice fears about his overhaul of news and current affairs.

INDUSTRY

Times: NUM to consider disbanding its separate areas and to concentrate control at national level under Mr Scargill.

Times: Lord Young intends to ensure that British companies are given same access to contract for new £4bn airport in Japan as American firms.

Times: International survey shows Britain's managers are significantly more critical of their top management than their USA counterparts.

Times: CBI calls on Government to step up its efforts to have EC Trade Marks office located in London.

Times: Zeebrugge coroner calls for supremo to take charge of disasters.

Times: You will receive a report today compiled by group of unnamed pilots claiming that Gatwick airport is unsafe; CAA, BAA and BALPA say claims are irresponsible or inaccurate.

FT: Rapid growth in economy over past year has left chronic skill shortages in many regions, according to Association of British Chambers of Commerce. Some 92% of companies in Thames Valley reported problems in recruiting skilled workers.

POLITICS

Robin Oakley writing in Times, is critical of Government excluding local authorities from repackaged inner city policies, saying that if cities are to be revived the views of those living there should be adequately expressed and this can only be done by democratically elected and responsible local government.

Independent: Organisers of the Community Programme warned by the MSC that schemes could be closed if they are used to criticise the Government.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Times: English councils have nearly £10bn of unused funds lying idle in their accounts, largely because of their success in selling council houses.

Times: Gerald Bowden MP launches a "Right to Buy" club for council house tenants facing delays in buying council houses in his latest move against Southwark where tenants have been waiting up to 2 years.

COMMUNITY CHARGE

FT: Government is preparing amendments to Local Government Finance Bill to prevent rush of demands for a rating revaluation from commercial property owners.

EDUCATION

Times: Kenneth Baker fighting with Cabinet colleagues over introducing legislation for student loans.

Times: Pamphlet says the ILEA should be saved and turned into a post-16 education authority for capital.

LAW AND ORDER

Independent: Government will be challenged in the Lords next week over its slowness to ratify the UN Convention on Torture.

Independent: Ministerial Group on Crime Prevention is preparing open-ended internal inquiry into the causes of crime, under a long-term strategy to reclaim law and order as a Tory political preserve. Leader says the underlying problem is the growth of criminal motivation. Government must make crime prevention a cross-departmental responsibility and ask some hard questions about its own social philosophy.

EC

Times: EC Commissioner for Competition hopes to have his proposals for a Community-wide merger policy approved by end of June, despite continuing doubts about British support for the scheme.

NATO

Interviewed in the Independent, Frank Carlucci says that the US Administration has no intention of lessening its commitment to Europe. He believes the European members of the Alliance could and should do more. But burden-sharing ought not to be a budgetary exercise; it should be an exercise to strengthen the Alliance. Asked about the Franco-German Joint Brigade and the Anglo-French nuclear dialogue, he was relaxed about these provided they did not weaken NATO.

RUDOLF HESS

Times: British surgeon Hugh Thomas calls for international inquiry to examine evidence suggesting Rudolf Hess was murdered.

BERNARD INGHAM

MINISTERS (UK VISITS, SPEECHES ETC)

- DES: Mr Baker meets Bishop Konstant and Cardinal Hume about the Education Reform Bill; later addresses the Adult Literacy and Basic Skills Unit, Centre Point, London
- DHSS: Mr Moore visits Childline
- DOE: Mr Ridley hosts dinner for North West regional editors, London
- WO: Mr Walker attends dinner in honour of Chinese Foreign Minister, Chinese Foreign Embassy, London
- DEM: Mr Nicholls addresses Health and Safety conference, Birmingham
- DEN: Mr Spicer opens the Coalfield Communities Campaign exhibition, House of Commons
- DES: Mr Jackson chairs meeting of Student Support Review
- DES: Lady Hooper attends lecture given by James Hammond, Deputy General of the National Confederation of Parent Teachers Association, Royal College of Art
- DES: Mr Dunn visits Monks Walk Secondary School and Chancellors Secondary School, Herts; later receives deputation from Woolversten Hall School, re closure
- DHSS: Lord Skelmersdale attends launch of Disabled Living Foundation
- DHSS: Mrs Currie visits Licensed Victuallers National Homes, Burton on Trent
- DHSS: Mr Portillo visits Scunthorpe and Grimsby ILO's
- DOE: Mr Waldegrave visits Sheffield (housing)
- DOE: Mr Trippier visits Salford for Manchester Inner Area Programme meeting
- DTI: Mr Clark co-opens Tunisia Week Exhibitions, Arab-British Chamber of Commerce, London
- DTP: Mr Mitchell launches LRT City Extension from Tower Hill to Bank; later addresses the Council for the Preservation of Rural England, London branch conference on Transport and the Environment, House of Commons
- FCO: Mr Eggar addresses all-party committee on drugs
- HO: Mr Patten visits the Community Projects Foundations, Rochdale
- MAFF: Mr Gummer visits ICI, Seacotts Hill, Research Station, Bracknell; later addresses Royal Institute of Chartered Surveyors on current Government agricultural policy, London
- ODA: Mr Patten visits UNICEF UK Symposium on Debt, Poverty and Adjustment, London
- SO: Mr Forsyth visits St Thomas Aquinas/Notre Dame High School, Glasgow
- SO: Mr Lang opens new premises of Flow Laboratories, Irvine; later addresses Schools/Industry conference, Glasgow; later visits Lamberton Robotics Factory, Coatbridge

MINISTERS (UK VISITS, SPEECHES , ETC) CONT'D

SO: Lord Sanderson meets Blackface Sheep Breeders Association,
Edinburgh

MINISTERS (OVERSEAS VISITS)

DTP: Mr Channon attends European Transport Council, Brussels (to 15
March)

DEM: Mr Cope attends EEC Informal Endorsement, Germany (to 15 March)

MINISTERS (PRESS INTERVIEWS)

DES: Mrs Rumbold interviewed by Anna Alstor, Independent Schools
Careers Organisation

DTP: Mr Bottomley gives interview to Radio Suffolk on Drink/Drive

TV AND RADIO

"Today": BBC Radio 4 (6.30)

"Money Box": BBC Radio 4 (10.00)

"You and Yours": BBC Radio 4 (12.00) Pre-Budget survey

"Business Daily": Channel 4 (12.00)

"The World at One": BBC Radio 4 (13.00)

"Advice Shop": BBC 2 (16.00): caring for the disabled

"P.M.": BBC Radio 4 (17.00)

"Promises and Piecrust": Channel 4 (18.30): 'Promises to Keep.' Includes
Sir Keith Joseph on his hopes and fears for education

"Open Space": BBC 2 (19.40). Goldsmiths' College Media Research Group
looks at the media's portrayal of the 'looney left'

"Horizon": BBC 2 (20.10) 'Purple Warrior: Limited War' follows a Navy
exercise in the South Atlantic (second of two programmes, repeated Sunday)

"World in Action": ITV (20.30). Details not available at time of going
to press

"Panorama": BBC 1 (21.30) 'Underclass of 88' reports from Sheffield on
how DHSS changes will affect the poor

"The World Tonight": BBC Radio 4 (22.30) followed by "The Financial World
Tonight" then "Today in Parliament"

"Newsnight": BBC 2 (22.45)

"Business Matters": BBC 1 (23.00). 'A tale of two mill towns' compares
inner city dereliction in Bradford and Lowell, near Boston in the US
(repeated Sunday)
