

13 February 1989

PRIME MINISTER

MAIN EVENTS

EC: ECOFIN Council, Brussels

EC: Informal Transport Ministers Meeting, Murcia, Spain

EC: Agriculture Council, Brussels (to 14 February)

EC: European Parliament Session, Strasbourg (to 17 February)

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STATISTICS

CBI: CBI/FT survey of distributive trades (Jan)

DTI: Producer price index (Jan)

DTI: Overseas trade statistics

DTI: Retail sales (Jan - prov)

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PARLIAMENT

Commons

Questions: Transport; Wales; Energy

Business:

PRIVATE MEMBERS' MOTIONS

Sir Hal Miller - Church, Government and Moral Values  
Mr Nicholas Baker - Town and Country Planning  
Timetable Motion on the Official Secrets Bill

Adjournment Debates: The proposed closure of the Crown Court at Barrow  
(Mr C Franks)

Select Committees:

HOME AFFAIRS

Subject: Future Funding of Channel Four Television  
Witnesses: Independent Broadcasting  
Authority; Independent Television Association

PUBLIC ACCOUNTS

Subject: Equipment Reliability  
Witness: Sir Peter Lavene, KBE,  
Chief of Defence Procurement, Ministry of Defence

TELEVISIONING OF PROCEEDINGS OF THE HOUSE

Witnesses: Official Unionist Party;  
House of Lords Record Office; Professor J G Blumler

Lords:

Starred Questions  
Atomic Energy Bill (HL): Third Reading  
Prevention of Terrorism (Temporary Provisions) Bill: Second Reading  
UQ on the protection of the World Heritage Site at Avebury

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MINISTERS - See Annex

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PRESS DIGESTMain News

Will soft cheeses made from unpasteurised milk be banned or not? Press decides there is confusion over this issue after John MacGregor gives interview to Times. Today: Blundering cheese Minister faces axe.

He meets French Agriculture Minister today. French concerned over threat to soft cheeses such as Brie and Camambert.

Environmental health experts say number of cases of food poisoning will have doubled to more than 30,000 a year compared with 5 years ago if present outbreak continues (Times).

Health experts do not know why cases of listeriosis have doubled in past 2 years; and whether Government announcement of action to deal with threat posed by food poisoning further enhances the reputation of Edwina Currie (Times).

Mirror features on its front page dangers from factory farming arising from feeding animals massive doses of antibiotics.

Sun says Edwina Currie may not be recalled to Government until after next election. Others say next year.

Richard Holt MP says it would be appalling if she returned to office.

Mail says Mrs Currie's return would cause civil war on backbenches.

Mail leads with report that lead in the air has increased 5% since last year; Chancellor must cut relative price of unleaded petrol.

Inflation looks like going to 8% but retail sales fell in January; Chancellor not expected to cut taxes in Budget but to raise thresholds. John Smith calls on Chancellor to resign.

According to a poll of 100 MPs, 71% of Conservatives, 86% of Labour and 71% of other parties believe Chancellor should increase tax allowances rather than reduce basic rate of tax at next Budget (Times).

Unemployment to fall below 2million this week.

Labour to switch to more pragmatic arguments to try and discredit Government's record on unemployment (Independent).

PRESS DIGEST

Tory-controlled Barnet council, covering part of your constituency, planning to abandon the Employment Training scheme which will cause you embarrassment (Independent).

Over £40billion added to value of Stock Market since beginning of year.

Lawyer who handles a lot of terrorist cases in Northern Ireland shot dead last night at his home; wife injured. Killing thought to have been done by Protestant paramilitaries.

London police hold man under Prevention of Terrorism Act after inquiries into Clapham bomb factory.

NATO summit likely soon - after James Baker's visit to Chequers. Probably in May in Brussels.

Brighton councillor to test in High Court media's interpretation of IRA media ban.

Air traffic controllers threaten industrial action from May Day unless training of new recruits is improved.

Martin O'Neill, Opposition defence spokesman, says Labour would never press nuclear button; this, Sun says, blows his party's new moderate stand to smithereens.

Abu Dhabi to buy £90million worth of British Aerospace Hawk aircraft.

Rover reported to have made £50million profit.

Labour local authorities intend to challenge right of Government to sell off water industry.

Government prepared to spend £300million on Chunnel rail link to appease Kent.

Archbishop of Canterbury warns Kent villages Chunnel link is the price to be paid for economic expansion.

Water companies told by their financial advisers to ignore government protests over huge price rises (Independent).

FT feature on Nicholas Ridley ends with his repeating that no decision has been taken on whether to sell all water industry equity at once or to sell it in several stages. The mix will be chosen in the light of the markets, on the eve of privatisation.

PRESS DIGEST

Support for privatisation of water and electricity falling, according to Gallup.

Adam Smith Institute wants Post Office broken up into separate businesses and sold off.

Kenneth Baker announces tough new rules to stop Left-wing LEAs intimidating parents out of opting out their school.

Councils will have to pay legal costs of parents and governors in fights against LEAs (Times).

Big row over Westminster Council paying £1million "hush money" over time to buy silence of Chief Executive who has resigned after clashes with Lady Porter.

Labour MPs to attempt to force formal investigation into Westminster City Council's plans to pay its chief executive a retirement package worth £1million (Times).

Plan to spend £1billion on an NHS computer network instead of on patients brings protests from Labour MPs.

Family doctors to be allowed to advertise from this summer after MMC inquiry.

Guardian leader wants Kenneth Clarke to try out its NHS reforms in one region. And it says the reforms won't work unless there is extra cash.

East Anglian RHA to start pioneering parts of an internal NHS market within next few months (Independent).

National Consumer Council calls for stricter controls on old people's homes (Independent).

South Korea to launch major drive to increase investment in Europe with target of 50 manufacturing projects this year (FT).

Labour starts concerted attack on DTI for failing to give clear and effective approach to City regulation (FT).

Hooded gang of "steamers" armed with knives rob and batter passengers in early morning train from Bedford to London.

Train passengers warned against menace.

PRESS DIGEST

Star leads with picture of Guardian Angels intervening in fight between drunks at Tube station; it wonders where out wonderful police were this weekend.

Man stabbed and seriously injured at Clapham tube station.

Express says Government is launching a crackdown on police waste and inefficiency; Ministers concerned at falling crime clear-up rate.

Paul Channon to press ICAO to call for redesign of aircraft to foil bombers.

Electronic tagging for certain categories of prisoners will start this summer with 6-month trials in Nottingham, Tyneside and possibly London (Times).

Times leader discusses the Official Secrets Bill guillotine saying any attempt to curtail debate on legislation which is of such importance and commands such wide public interest is, to say the least, politically maladroit. It is no candidate for the guillotine, and the Government should accept this.

Right-wingers claim that Young Tory membership has fallen from 100,000 in 1950s to 5,000 now.

Telegraph says that tomorrow you will overtake Baldwin's tenure of Tory party leadership and in August Churchill's.

Sun says Kinnock has turned his house into a fortress - it is protected by £10,000 worth of equipment.

In interview with Sunday Times, replayed today, Kinnock tells critics within Labour Party to stop moaning and get working.

Express leader says Kinnock's latest attempt to scrap unilateralism seems to have lasted 3 days, for he revealed yesterday he would not press Labour Party conference to remove "unilateral" from arms strategy.

MORI poll shows only 46% of Labour supporters think Kinnock makes a good leader, compared with 30% of all adults surveyed. Times leader says Kinnock's problems over credibility do not stop at defence. Worst of all is the knowledge that as Prime Minister he would face harassment from the Left, as have his predecessors. The question for him now is how to shed this albatross.

PRESS DIGEST

Archbishops of Canterbury and York to meet MPs and peers to avert looming confrontation between Parliament and the Church over the General Synod's proposal to end absolute ban on the ordination of divorcees who have remarried (Times).

Consecration of first Anglican woman bishop in US presents Church of England with acute test of its own unity (Times).

Two anti-apartheid South African newspapers say Winnie Mandela took part in gang beating of young boys (Independent).

Soviet Jews hopes of a better deal under Gorbachev rise with opening of independent Jewish cultural centre in Moscow.

Hungary renounces one-party socialism (Independent).

FOOD

Sun leader on these tough days for the housewife; she must feel as if she is entering a minefield when she goes shopping. Who can blame her for being angry with the Government?

Today says the food "farce has gone too far". Food and health authorities have learned nothing from salmonella in eggs crisis. A sorry flow of events. You must bang heads together.

Express - Ministers in soft cheese muddle. Total confusion reigns. Leader headed "Don't delay on food law" says new Bill must be given top priority.

Telegraph leads with "MacGregor sees French to avert cheese trade war" Government should not act like a nanny says Robert Adley. Leader says for MAFF to consider banning products made from unpasteurised milk is an overreaction.

Guardian reports chief executive of Institute of Environmental Health Officers saying public is "totally confused and bewildered" over warnings about cheese and eggs.

FT - John MacGregor to face protest by French over listeria claims when he meets his counterpart in Brussels today.

Independent - Labour demands urgent action to give statutory backing to guidelines on food safety. John MacGregor confirms that draft legislation for Food Bill is well advanced. Confusion over soft cheese warning as food experts say that pasteurisation will not guarantee safety.

PRESS DIGEST

Times page 1 - John MacGregor to meet French Minister to avert trade war over Britain's threat to ban cheeses made with unpasteurised milk but no question of banning imported cheeses without consulting EC.

MINISTERS (UK VISITS, SPEECHES ETC)

- DEN: Mr Parkinson addresses Toshiba Year of Invention lunch, Savoy Hotel, London
- DH: Mr Clarke meets Lord Mulley and consultants from St Thomas's Hospital; later meets Robert Adley MP and representatives of Western Counselling Service, London
- DTI: Lord Young and Mr Clark meet Mr Obzina, Czechoslovakian Federal Deputy Prime Minister; later both meet Mr Paye, Secretary General OECD; Mr Clark later meets Mr Jastrzebski, Polish Minister for Economic Co-operation and Lord Young addresses City Personality of the Month award, London
- HO: Mr Hurd opens Sussex Police new residential block, Slougham Manor, Sussex
- MOD: Mr Younger visits the Met Office, Bracknell
- CO: Mr Luce addresses Industry and Parliament Trust, on "Next Steps", Royal Institute of Chartered Surveyors, London
- DH: Mr Freeman addresses Derbyshire FPC conference on "Raising the Issues", City Hospital, Derby
- DOE: Mrs Bottomley meets Tidy Britain Group, London
- DOE: Mr Trippier attends presentation, Irwell Valley, Bury; later launches joint venture company in Kirklees; opens Gatehouse Enterprise Centre in Huddersfield and attends launch of Oldham Metropolitan Borough Council/Bovic Urban Renewal Ltd/DOE joint housing scheme project, Oldham
- DSS: Mr Lloyd meets Peter Thurnham MP and delegation re housing benefit, London
- DTI: Mr Atkins visits CFC replacement plant, ICL, Runcorn
- DTp: Mr Bottomley chairs the East Midlands Regional Annual Consultative Committee meeting, Lincoln; later opens the Bottesford Bypass, Leicestershire
- FCO: Lord Glenarthur addresses YMCA Indian students hostel Republic Day dinner, London
- HMT: Mr Brooke addresses press conference on civil service pay and location of Government work, London
- MAFF: Mr Thompson attends Horderson Committee, St Thomas Hospital, London
- WO: Mr Grist visits Breast Cancer Screening Centre, Cardiff
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MINISTERS (OVERSEAS VISITS)

- DTP: Mr Channon attends an informal Transport Council meeting, Spain
- LCD: Lord MacKay addresses American Bar Association, Washington, on legal matters
- MAFF: Mr MacGregor and Mr Ryder attend Agricultural Council, Brussels (to 14 February)
- HMT: Mr Lilley attends meeting of EC Economic and Finance Ministers, Brussels
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MINISTERS (PRESS INTERVIEWS)

- DH: Mr Clarke on Jimmy Young Programme, BBC Radio 2, to talk about the NHS Review
- FCO: Sir Geoffrey Howe interviewed on BBC Radio's "Analysis" programme on east/west relations (prov)
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TV AND RADIO

- 'Watchdog': BBC1 (19.30)
- 'Horizon': BBC2 (20.10). In The Last Resort. A look at care for the elderly
- 'World in Action': Thames (20.30)
- "Panorama": BBC1 (21.30). Inside the Ayatollah's Iran. A look at the tenth anniversary of the Iranian Revolution and the ceasefire with Iraq
- 'The Nuclear Age': Thames (22.35). One Step Forward. The story of the Nixon-Kissinger era of detente
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