

May 21, 1990

PRIME MINISTER

MAIN EVENTS

The Queen visits the Chelsea Flower Show

EC: Agriculture Council, Brussels (to 22 May)

EC: Energy Council, Brussels

EC: Heads of Mission conference, London (to 22 May)

Communication Managers' Association, annual conference, Floral Hall, Southport (to 25 May)

National Union of Seamen biennial general meeting Aberdeen (to 25 May)

Prison Officers Association annual conference, Guildhall, Portsmouth (to 25 May)

May Inquiry into Guildford Four case: Start of public hearings

STATISTICS

HMT: Provisional estimate of monetary aggregate (April)

HO: Breath tests 1989

HO: The Operation of the Firearms Act 1989

PARLIAMENT

Commons

Questions: Social Security; Church Commissioners; House of Commons Commission

Business: Opposition Day (12th Allotted Day). Debate on Ravenscraig on an Opposition Motion. Followed by Debate on Bovine Spongiform Encephalopathy on an Opposition Motion. Motion to take note of EC Documents relating to the Social Charter.

Adjournment Debates: Parliamentary accountability for Executive Agencies in the Employment Group (Mr H McLeish)

Select Committees: PUBLIC ACCOUNTS
Subject: Training of non-civil servants
Witnesses: E P Kemp, Office of the Minister for Civil Service; D J Andrews, MJA Partridge, Department of Social Security

Lords: Starred Questions
Social Security Bill: Committee
Australian Constitution (Public Record Copy) Bill: Second Reading

PRESS DIGESTMain News

A good weekend for Govt with constructive reporting of de Klerk's visit, the decision to site EBRD in London and disarray in EC Foreign Ministers meeting over political union with French and British standing together. And Labour Party's new policy document comes under sustained attack.

Today describes Labour's new programme like over-cooked cabbage - soggy, tasteless and totally without energy-giving value. And whether it is workable blueprint is doubtful.

Labour to consider appointing a political "supremo" to strengthen its organisation in London, and to tackle trouble-spots that blemished the party's local election performance (Times).

TUC set to back new Labour plans for employment law, with even TGWU in favour (Independent).

Communications Workers leader urges Labour to drop plans to renationalise British Telecom (Independent).

Times and others say preparations for the next general election sharply intensify with appointment of John Wakeham to improve the Govt's image, and the launch this week of Labour's alternative policy prospectus.

Kenneth Baker accuses Labour of plotting social vengeance against middle income families with tax proposals. Express leader headed "Tax plans will defeat Labour" says you and your Ministers must ram home at every opportunity the basic difference between you and Labour: You stand for lower taxation, Labour wants more.

Mail leads, like Express, with "What will [Labour's programme] it really cost?" - the timebomb question ticking away. The answer would appear to be as obscure as ever.

FT leader on Labour policy review says it still shows blindness to what the markets are. If it refuses to accept the judgment of the market a Labour govt will move inevitably towards defensive interventionism as in the '70s. Given the significance of the EC and tenuous equilibrium of the world trading system, that alone makes the Labour Party's fundamental predisposition worth worrying about.

Bennites, in conference in Chesterfield, claim Labour's programme is its most rightwing document ever published in opposition.

PRESS DIGEST

Your warnings fall on deaf ears as Govt is faced with increasing pay-led inflationary pressure, as unions and companies show no sign of heeding your warnings that rises up to and beyond 10% will decrease competitiveness and lead to job losses. Ford deal of 10.2% now considered the going rate (Times).

Nat West's chief economist forecasts fall in interest rates to 10.5% by end of 1991.

Mr Hurd now has broad support for rethink of EC policies on sanctions against South Africa, after Foreign Ministers' meeting in Ireland (Times).

Boost for Douglas Hurd as EC Foreign Ministers indicate softening of South African sanctions line (Independent).

Guardian says UK Govt is confident most EC partners are ready to back a partial lifting of sanctions against South Africa.

Pace for federal Europe slows following EC foreign Ministers meeting in Ireland (Times).

Telegraph says an unexpected Anglo-French alliance dealt a severe blow to plans for a federalist Europe. Dumas says: No country in 1990 is ready to give up sovereignty in foreign policy and security matters.

Mail describes EBRD's coming to London as a resounding vote of confidence in Britain's future role. It shows what can be achieved by taking a positive approach to Europe.

Ruling National Salvation Front looks to have won Romanian elections but complaints of abuse in big turn out.

Star sees uncertainty in Romania as justification for your policies of maintaining NATO's guard.

Israelis try to contain protest rioting in occupied territories after madman shoots 8 Palestinians dead and wounds another 16; 7 more die in rioting.

Israeli Govt condemns massacre.

Mirror claims there have been copycat attacks on Jewish cemeteries and on Jews in London after trouble in France.

Lithuania rejects Gorbachev's call for it to suspend its declaration of independence.

PRESS DIGEST

Russian loyalists in Estonia and Latvia unite to organise a campaign of resistance against Baltic independence (Times).

An Independent editorial says support for Baltic independence cannot and should not be unconditional. Lithuania's claims to independence cannot be prosecuted with disregard for the interests of other nations. But if Moscow were to accept that the Baltic states had been acquired improperly, it would then be possible to negotiate their rapid withdrawal from the Soviet Union without setting an intolerable precedent.

Russians to be allowed to own their own homes for first time in 73 years (Sun).

Alan Clarke urges huge cuts in Britain's three armed services; upsets Tom King and shocks military chiefs (Express).

Mr King to warn Cabinet colleagues that defence cuts should be sensible not radical, with his ultra cautious approach shared by you (Times).

Times editorial looks at Mr Baker's talks in Moscow on arms control and comments that with one exception - the agreement on chemical weapons - Washington's references to dramatic breakthroughs should be read as expectations deliberately lowered: serious obstacles still remain. On CFE a treaty looks more remote than before Baker's visit. The US should not forget Gorbachev's need for a foreign policy triumph, and be prepared to deny him that if he persists in dangerous cavilling.

Power workers accept 10.2%.

Post Office union leader says price of stamps should be raised to pay postmen more.

Fears for future of coal industry as National Power warns it will cut investment in power stations (Independent).

Unions say up to 30,000 jobs in coal industry would be wiped out because of Govt's abandonment of commitment to install £2billion worth of filters in coal powered stations. Union leaders to voice their concerns to Sir Robert Haslam tomorrow (Times).

TUC prepared to have EETPU back, but Hammond will only return if £1million in subs during the time union was expelled are not demanded.

PRESS DIGEST

Birmingham City Council to disclose details of investment by German firm which will allow workers' representation on the board (Times).

Engineers' victory in campaign for shorter hours may have backfired as management introduces far-reaching changes in labour practices (Independent).

Solicitors in England and Wales will be obliged for the first time to disclose their charging rates under a new rule expected to come before the Law Society council for approval in July (Times).

Sun attacks BT's proposal to raise rental charges by 25% when it is heading for a £2.7billion profit.

Today claims that a vet was stopped by MAFF three years ago for linking BSE to scrapie. Labour says this is a Stalinist attempt to suppress public information. Leader says MAFF were wrong again and this contradicts John Gummer's claim that his Dept has done all the right things to stop BSE.

Scientists have developed a test to identify BSE in cattle in its early stages (Times).

Reports that beef was off the menu for Sunday lunch.

Mirror says thousands of cats could at risk.

John Gummer signals that he will ride out the BSE storm, believing his assurances will be enough to allay public anxiety (Independent).

Star makes point food industry has been plagued by food poisoning fears about everything from tomatoes and eggs through lamb, pate, cheese, cooked-chill foods, margarine and pesticides on fruits and vegetable. Now it's beef's turn.

Mail finds the woman advertising OXO has given up beef.

Guardian says British Rail's record profits of £304million last year have been wiped out because of burden of Network South East and drop in passengers.

PRESS DIGEST

Times editorial looks at Govt support for the Channel Tunnel, saying neither this administration nor any other could walk away from the project once it was well under way. Concluding that Britain's transport investment policy could hardly be more muddled, notably between roads and railways, it comments that the Govt is laundering its high-speed rail link investment through BR by beefing up existing Kent routes for the first phase of the London-Paris link. If such a conduit for subsidy offers Ministers ideological peace of mind, so be it, but it is a tortuous way of building a great British project - if great it proves to be.

Ove Arup has released details of proposals for a Channel Tunnel scheme to rival Euro rail link (FT).

Tory Councils will today deliver a strongly worded attack on the govt for its reluctance to adopt road pricing as a solution to the capital's traffic problems (FT).

NUPE leader blames public squalor, cardboard cities and "deepening poverty" on Govt. But union rejects mass non payment of community charge.

Manchester City Council tells dinner ladies not to give children who bring their own lunches to school a drink of water unless they bring their own glass.

70 face sack in switch to Tory polices in Ealing (Telegraph).

Express condemns as totally unacceptable EC plan to sell cut price high tar tobacco to third world at cost in subsidies to growers of £740million.

Govt to require smoke alarm in every home - under legislation next year (Today).

Timeshare developers have switched tactics by moving their base of operations to the US to beat UK laws (Times).

Two thirds of drop-outs from university, which is costing £55million a year, do so not because they aren't clever enough, but because they feel they are on the wrong courses.

Robert Jackson modifies suggestion that the brain drain is a myth, but says the solution lies in greater flexibility by universities (Independent).

PRESS DIGEST

Independent editorial says that if John MacGregor is minded to provide more money to stop the brain drain, he should ensure a commitment from the Vice-Chancellors they will pay far more attention to market concepts like flexibility and differentials and far less to the enhancement of general pay.

Cttee of Vice-Chancellors tell Mr MacGregor that salaries and working conditions for academics must be improved to counter higher salaries being offered abroad (Times).

University chiefs have agreed not to undercut each other when competing for funds to finance existing student places - thus undermining govt efforts to use market forces in cutting per capita expenditure on students (FT).

DES says schools will be given full discretion over assessment of pupils under the national curriculum and may be able to overrule results of external tests if internal evaluations are more favourable.

EC to have centralised agency for reviewing safety of medicines (FT).

Chichester accident and emergency hospital forced to close for most of a weekend in face of £2.3million deficit (Independent).

Sun up in arms over another Press Council adjudication which says it was all right to say a man who stabbed another on the Tube was black, but wrong to say his victim was white.

Mr Mellor to have urgent talks about how religious broadcasting is to be opened up without letting in extreme religious cults (Times).

Senior police worried at recent surge in crime figures, with burglary and car-related offences topping the list (Independent).

Independent claims the Govt is being influenced by American theories that educational and social programmes to change the poorest and most criminal classes are bound to fail because these people are largely born that way.

Prison Officers urge the Home Office to recruit immediately 600 staff to avert fresh riots after alerts in 3 prisons (times).

Crime concern say some Chief Constables are blocking the creation of Neighbourhood Watch schemes because of a lack of resources (Times).

PRESS DIGEST

Tidy Britain Group claims motorists strew 85,000 drink cans on kerbs and grass verges in just 7 weeks. Survey shows Milton Keynes is the cleanest place and Darlington the dirtiest.

Mirror, commenting on reports that West Germany is discussing freeing the man suspected of masterminding Lockerbie bombing in return for release of hostages, says this would be as craven an act of appeasement as was ever made to violence.

Donald Woods, fugitive journalist, to return to South Africa - cleared by de Klerk.

Rebel troops closing on Liberia's second city (Times).

Egypt faces constitutional crisis after court ruling that the parliament was elected unconstitutionally in 1987 because independent candidates were discriminated against (FT).

Last ditch campaign to be mounted in the Lords to persuade peers not to provoke a constitutional clash with MPs by killing off the War Crimes Bill (Times).

JOHN WAKEHAM

Star - Wake 'em up John says Prime Minister. Mr Fixit.

Sun - Mrs T to call an early poll. Countdown begins with appointment of John Wakeham.

Mirror - Row over "bananas" Minister - Kenneth Baker and Geoffrey Howe furious at John Wakeham's appointment as Minister for "banana skins".

Times - You have turned to Mr Wakeham to perform the role exercised by Lord Whitelaw to provide you with personal, and if necessary unpalatable, advice across the range of policies.

Mail - Maggie prepares for a poll gamble. You set your sights on 1991 election after making John Wakeham information supremo. You slip into higher gear. Leader headed "Wakeham's key job" says it is so sensible it seems extraordinary it did not happen before. His remit is to see the Tories don't lose the next election.

PRESS DIGEST

Ronald Butt, writing in the Times, comments that Mr Wakeham's appointment may be helpful to both you and the media. He goes on to say that when the party's manifesto is drawn up it should be done so on a strong collective Cabinet basis. It will be a manifesto for your continued prime ministership, but also for whoever takes over from you (Times).

Telegraph says you have effectively opened the General Election campaign, with your eye on the summer or autumn of next year, by appointing John Wakeham.

Guardian - Downing Street insists you have snubbed neither Kenneth Baker nor Sir Geoffrey Howe in appointing John Wakeham. Many Conservative MPs welcome the appointment but Labour and unions say this indicates Govt is increasingly prepared to use Whitehall machine for party political purposes.

FT - You have given John Wakeham vital role of co-ordinating publicity in run up to next Election - he will take a behind the scenes role, liaising between departments and a strategic overview on presentation - preventing further damaging slips.

MINISTERS (UK VISITS, SPEECHES ETC)

- DEM: Mr Howard visits Merseyside
- DES: Mr MacGregor attends presentation of Inter-Governmental Panel on Climate Changes report, Department of the Environment
- DH: Mr Clarke meets members of the Order of St John, London
- DOE: Mr Patten attends Precast Concrete Industry conference, QEII Conference Centre, London
- DTp: Mr Parkinson addresses Financial Times conference on "European Transport in the 1990s", London
- FCO: Mr Hurd addresses Saudi British Society annual dinner, London
- HO: Mr Waddington meets delegates from Greater Manchester Police Authority to discuss the Strangeways riots
- LPC: Sir Geoffrey Howe lunches with Building Societies Association, London; later dines with Burson-Marsteller, London
- MAFF: Mr Gummer visits Chelsea Flower Show
- WO: Mr Hunt presents Ellis Fisher award for Housing Management, London
- DEM: Mr Eggar visits East and West Midlands
- DEM: Lord Strathclyde makes tourism visits to Cornwall and Torbay (to 22 May)
- DEM: Mr Nicholls meets finalists of Live Wire UK awards, House of Commons
- DES: Mrs Rumbold visits Southend High School
- DES: Mr Jackson addresses Worthing Sixth Form College
- DES: Mr Howarth meets Japanese delegation including the Chief Inspector of Schools and Professors
- DH: Mrs Bottomley attends Variety Club press launch, Children's Hospital Appeal; later meets Barry Field MP and a delegation re hospital travel costs to mainland hospitals; later meets Andrew Rowe MP and a delegation from the Professions Allied to Medicine
- DH: Mr Dorrell visits Bolton Royal Infirmary and Health Authority
- DOE: Mr Portillo lunches with Czech local government visitors
- DOE: Mt Trippier visits National Trust site, Lake Windemere
- DOE: Mr Chope attends PSA Landscape Design awards, Carlton House Terrace
- DOE: Mr Moynihan attends start of work on Lower Lea Cross, Docklands

MINISTERS (UK VISITS, SPEECHES ETC) (Cont'd)

- DTI: Mr Hogg attends opening of English Estates Development, Chatham; later hosts dinner at Lancaster House
- DTI: Mr Redwood presents Certificate of Incorporation to 2.5 millionth company registered at Companies House, London
- HO: Mr Patten attends press launch of Crime Concern/CBI Business and Crime Initiative, London
- OAL: Mr Luce addresses lunch for Czech Minister of Culture, Professor Milan Lukes, London
- SO: Lord Sanderson meet NFU representatives
- WO: Mr Roberts performs Conwy Tunnel Breakthrough ceremony
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MINISTERS (OVERSEAS VISITS)

- DEN: Mr Wakeham attends Energy Council, Brussels
- MAFF: Mr Gummer and Mr Curry attend Agriculture Council, Brussels (to 22 May)
- MOD: Mr King attends Eurogroup, Defence Planning Committee meeting, Brussels (to 23 May)
- DOE: Mr Spicer visits the Netherlands re housing (to 22 May)
- DTI: Lord Trefgarne visits Brazil (to 25 May)
- FCO: Mr Waldegrave visits Paris, France (to 22 May)
- HMT: Mr Lilley addresses Italian/American group conference, Lake Como, Italy
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MINISTERS (PRESS INTERVIEWS)

- DTI: Mr Ridley interviewed by Sixth Sense Magazine
- OAL: Mr Luce interviewed by Peter Hennessey, Analysis, Radio 4 on Next Steps
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ANNEX

TV AND RADIO

"You and Yours" BBC Radio 4 (12.00)
looks at transport policies, congested cities

"Horizon - The Child Mothers" BBC2 (8.10 pm)
Explores the medical and social affects of teenage motherhood

"Cutting Edge - first few months leaving prison are worst" Ch4 9.00 pm

"Panorama - The Big Heat" BBC1 (9.30 pm)
Looks at politics of the climate and latest info on future weather

"The Rule of Law - womens struggle for equal rights" ITV (11.20 pm)

"Advice Shop" BBC1 (11.30 pm)
Rights for passage of disabled
