

13 February 1985

PRIME MINISTER

MAIN EVENTS

HM The Queen visits 'The Golden Age of Anglo-Saxon Art' exhibition, British Museum

Prime Minister attends National Union Executive Committee Dinner; makes presentations to winners of Hansard Society 40th Anniversary nationwide school radio competition

South Wales NUM delegate conference

NACODS leaders meet Energy Secretary

EC Dooge Committee, Brussels (to February 14)

PUBLICATIONS

C&E: Committee on enforcement powers of revenue departments Vol IV, customs and excise and car tax (15.30)

M&MC: Monopolies and Mergers Commission report on Ford Motor Co Ltd on policy and practice of company of not granting licences to manufacture or sell certain replacement body parts (15.30)

PAY

DEM: NHS Ancillary Workers; (205,000); claim expected to be presented; settlement date 1.4.85

PARLIAMENT

Commons

Questions: Scotland; Foreign and Commonwealth

Business: 10 Minute Rule Bill: Employment of Young People (Mr C Smith)
Representation of the People Bill: Progress in Committee
Adjournment Debate
Exceptionally severe weather and heating allowances
(Mr G Brown)

Select Committees: TRADE AND INDUSTRY
Subject: Tourism in the United Kingdom
Witnesses: British Railways Board (at 10.30); British Waterways Board (at 11.15 approx)

DEFENCE

Subject: Nimrod Airborne Early Warning Aircraft
Witness: Ministry of Defence

PARLIAMENT (Cont'd)Select Committees:
(Cont'd)

ENERGY
Subject: United Kingdom Gas Depletion Policy
Witnesses: Esso; Phillips

PUBLIC ACCOUNTS

Subjects: Comprehensive External Trade Facility;
Tender to Contract Facility;
Claims and Recoveries
Witness: Mr J Gill, CB, Export Credits Guarantee
Department

SOCIAL SERVICES

Subject: Misue of Drugs, with special refernce to
treatment and rehabilitation of misusers of hard drugs
Witnesses: Standing Conference on Drug Abuse; National
Association of Probation Officers; Association of Chief
Officers of Probation

TRADE AND-INDUSTRY

Subject: British Shipbuilders
Witness: British Shipbuilders

Lords: Debate to call attention to public and professional anxieties about the National Health Service and to changes in the social security system which affect the well-being of increasing numbers of people
UQ to ask HMG whether they will consider taking urgent steps to assist the reactivation of the building industry

MINISTERS - See Annex

PRESS DIGESTPONTING ROW

- Your row with Kinnock takes the headlines - with the exchange of letters printed.
- But the Mail discloses that a woman member of the Ponting jury is also a Labour member of Islington Council which called for the charges against Ponting to be dropped. Sun say Special Branch is now expected to press for an inquiry as to how she got through the jury vetting system.
- Ponting to write a book - expected to be published in about 2 weeks.
- Express says Government and Whitehall have been shaken to their foundations by the trial verdict.
- D/Star From the Prime Minister to Labour leader: Don't call me a liar. Seething Thatcher demands an apology.
- Sun: I'm no liar, Maggie lashes Kinnock. You and Kinnock declare all out war. Rift biggest for many years.
- Mirror leads paper with one word "Liar" - you say "I was not involved in decision to prosecute Ponting". Kinnock says "Frankly, I do not believe you".

PONTING ROW (CONT'D)

- Express P1 lead - I'm not a liar! Maggie demands Kinnock apology. Relations between the two of you at an all-time low. You are unlikely to let the matter rest but senior Parliamentarians surprised you were not consulted; George Gale says Ponting's acquittal must surely be the end of S.2. Ponting should have been sacked for breach of trust.
- Mail P1 - Apologise at once, Maggie tells Kinnock. Most vitriolic exchanges yet.
- Telegraph P1 Thatcher in Ponting uproar. Kinnock told to "Apologise". Furious rebuke over secrets prosecution. You are locked in a running battle of words. Your anger increased because twice last year you wrote to Kinnock assuring him you had not been involved in decision to prosecute. In other story, Ponting is said to be undecided about his future.
- Telegraph says FDA believes the affair will give impetus to a draft code of ethics for civil servants. But quick repeal of Official Secrets Act is unlikely.
- Guardian says you and Kinnock were locked in an unprecedented confrontation about the credibility of the Government in general and the Prime Minister in particular. Suggests references to holidays by you and Attorney General have dumped responsibility for prosecution on Solicitor General and were fatal mistakes. In another story Ponting claims Government could give more information about the Belgrano affair without endangering national security.
- Guardian run 2 pages on the alleged contradictions, the alleged search for a scapegoat and the man Ponting.
- Times says if Kinnock chooses eventually to give you the benefit of his doubt, his advisers were contemplating a more promising line of attack - eg if Attorney did fail to consult you on such a politically charged issue he is not fit for the office.
- FT says Government and Opposition business managers are working frantically to prevent the row becoming a Parliamentary crisis.

PONTING COMMENT

- D/Star hopes you and Kinnock feel better after your extraordinary bout but as an exercise in calming public concern over the trial it was as effective as using a sponge to tackle a flood. When you give your word, backed by the Attorney-General, it must be accepted. But this is no more than a sideshow to the main event. No closer to real issues - did Government mislead over sinking of Belgrano? When will Government repeal S.2 of Official Secrets Act? When will Parliament be asked to consider a realistic and workable Freedom of Information Act?
- Sun leader on "the phoney hero of Whitehall" says despite his posturing Ponting is not really the stuff of which heroes and martyrs are made - not even much of a man. His principles did not quite take him to resignation. He hid behind his anonymity and tried to blame someone else. He should not be trusted to bring in the office tea.
- Express says Kinnock has to apologise. Immature performance. For an appropriate form of words the apology he need only consult the past master - Harold Wilson.
- Mail says Commons exchanges were as futile as they were furious. When will little Kinnock learn some Parliamentary ring craft? He should have grace to accept your word. It is hoped Monday's debate will thrash out the real issues - what to do about Civil Servants who betray their trust; what to do about Ministers who withhold information from the Commons; and how to replace discredited S2.
- Telegraph says Government can feel quite relieved about its handling of immediate aftermath of Ponting's acquittal. But Government would have lost nothing in being more frank about Belgrano and if it emerges any Minister has deliberately and systematically lied it would be appropriate for him to resign.
- Guardian leader predictably attacks the Government on all fronts and ends up by saying "This administration, with bullying and evasion pushed to extremities" has finally been found out of balance. It is time that it stopped short and thought again about its own "official duty".
- Times while worrying about the rancour which affects Parliamentary business with the Labour Party to blame more than most, it says in the Belgrano affair Ministers have always given too little information too late. Wants it to publish Crown Jewels with intelligence material suitably marked.

COAL STRIKE

- Norman Willis, TUC, meets Ian MacGregor in an effort to get peace talks started - 353 return to work.
- High Court outlaws picketing at 11 pits in Yorkshire.
- South Wales NUM executive meets today to consider strike. Express says last Scargill stronghold is under threat. NCB officers tour South Wales pit villages to try to get volunteers to save Oakdale colliery complex from flooding.
- Peter Walker to see NACODS today to discuss situation.
- Telegraph says miners who have returned to work are being expelled from the NUM under "Star Chamber" hearings in spite of NUM assurances Rule 51 would not be used - 140 in North East and 110 in Durham.
- Peter Walker says an agreed written agenda would be enough to get the talks going, including discussion of uneconomic pits (Guardian).
- NCB offers miners £1550 to transfer from flooded Polkemmet colliery in Scotland.
- Peter Jenkins, in Guardian, while agreeing it was necessary for the Government to prevail over Scargill, does not like the way the strike is ending and wants noble and generous words.

INDUSTRY

- First commercial Concorde flight to Sydney today.
- D/Star notes that a Written Answer to Dennis Skinner shows that gas prices have risen 112.5% in last 5 years - 50% faster than electricity.
- Shell/^{and BP}petrol goes up 4p a gallon following Texaco's lead.
- Mirror says the plan to close 29 Skillcentres is a ludicrous suggestion and Mr King will throw it out if he is serious about helping the unemployed.
- NGA rejects Fleet Street pay offer of 5% in ballot by 2-1 - disruption of national newspapers likely.
- NFU accuses Mr Jopling of 'gross dereliction of duty' to farmers.
- Sir Michael Edwardes had £500,000 golden handshake from ICL.

ECONOMY

- Sterling down to new low - \$1.0845 - caused mainly by strength of dollar.
- Share prices fall sharply.
- Guardian notes that European currencies plunged against the dollar, too, and many worse falls than the £.
- In his third and final article in the Times, John Hoskyns says unions are a major obstacle to Britain's economic performance.

POLITICS

- Ken Livingstone to launch a campaign this weekend to get more women and blacks as MPs.

MEDIA

- BBC World Service being cut back and 20 posts likely to go.

HEALTH/WELFARE

- Rodney Bickerstaffe, NUPE, claims "warehouses" for the dying are on the way - referring to danger of more and more private homes for elderly as Government cuts back support for councils.
- DHSS computer strike cost £143m.

EDUCATION

- NUT to hold a strike ballot and tell its 127,000 members to take the morning off on February 26 in new round of action over pay. Wave of 3-day strikes being planned.
- Express says NUT's plans are 'disgraceful'. They seem to have fallen from their high ideals.
- Telegraph says its time Sir Keith Joseph amended the law to bring negotiations and pay and conditions together.

LAW AND ORDER

- Dikko kidnap gang sentenced from 10-14 years in prison.
- D/Star continues its campaign against violent crime; frail widow of 60 has bones in her hands broken by sex maniac in Stockport.
- Government spending £8m on better security at Royal Ordnance Factories after Select Committee report.
- Vacancies in police now exceed 500 in England and Wales.

RACE

- Harvey Proctor puts down a Commons motion condemning council leaders who have branded golliwogs as racist.
- Commission on Racial Equality says Government's immigration controls discriminate against black people; Government says report fails to recognise more economic pressure to emigrate from some countries than others.

GERMAN RAF crash extensively covered with pictures of those who escaped and died; band to be re-formed. Anglo/German inquiry being set up.

PEOPLE

- Mrs Tebbit having brain scan tests.
- Prince Charles joins meditation session with British Holistic Medical Association, and then asks "Do people think I'm a crank?"
- Grantham FC, of which you are President, told its lease on its ground will not be renewed in 1988.
- Mail on today's Synod discussion of the Christian faith, says Bishop of Durham makes headlines but he has not been good news for Church of England

CANADA

- Defence Minister resigns after visit to West German night club on NATO tour.

EHTIOPIA

- Sun takes pop star Bob Geldorf to task for saying on TV Ethiopian famine is wilful murder to be compared with the Nazi holocaust. He has a big mouth unfortunately allied to a small brain.

LIBYA

- John Vincent, in Sun, says Archbishop of Canterbury has spared no pains to get his share of limelight for getting release of 4 hostages.

RUSSIA

- Fresh speculation about Chernenko's health when he fails to appear to welcome Papandreou.
- Express says Russia is creating an alliance of radical Middle East States to overthrow USA influence.
- Mail reports on the drive by Russia to steal West's technology.

MINISTERS (UK VISITS, SPEECHES ETC)

- MOD: Mr Heseltine participates in Glasgow University debate motion 'This House regrets the absence of greatness in politics' (Mr MacKay (SO) also participates)
- DES: Sir Keith Joseph gives opening address to Birmingham Headteachers Association one-day conference
- DEM: Mr King speaks at the Colchester Association for Protection of Property
- DOE: Mr Jenkin addresses British Institute of Management dinner, London
- HO: Mr Brittan speaks at Queen Mary's College
- OAL: Lord Gowrie visits Anglo-Saxon exhibition, British Museum
- SO: Mr Younger, Lord Gray and Mr Ancram meet Countryside Commission, London
- DTp: Mr Ridley addresses the Bus and Coach Council annual dinner (Mr Spicer and Mr Mitchell also attend), London
- MAFF: Mr MacGregor lunches with Agricultural Mortgage Corporation
- MAFF: Mrs Fenner visits Grain '85, Stoneleigh
- MOD: Mr Lee visits Clyde Submarine base, Coulport and Holy Loch
- DEN: Mr Goodlad visits South Wales Electricity Board, Cardiff later dines with Board members (to 14 February)
- DOE: Mr Waldegrave meets Friends of the Earth
- DOE: Sir George Young participates in debate on "Government of London", St James's Church, London
- HO: Mr Waddington visits East London re-race relations and racial attacks
- SO: Lord Gray addresses National Federation of Site Operators' lunch
- DTI: Mr Pattie addresses Electronic Components Industry Federation dinner, London
- DTI: Mr Trippier addresses Business in the Community seminar, Peterborough
- DTp: Mr Mitchell attends luncheon for MPs AA, London

MINISTERS (OVERSEAS VISITS)

- DTI: Mr Channon begins trade visit to the Cameroons (to 18 February)

TV AND RADIO

- "Diverse Reports"; Channel 4; (20.30); 40th anniversary of the Dresden bombing
- "Analysis"; Radio 4; (20.45); The vanishing mandarins, losing the best civil servants