

CALENDAR OF ECONOMIC EVENTS

JANUARY—MARCH 1979

Classification for calendar items:

(A) **INDUSTRY**—including bids, mergers, commercial policy; (B) **LABOUR AND PRICES**—including strikes, claims, settlements prices; (C) **INTERNATIONAL**—including policy developments overseas (Bank rate changes), IMF, monetary (exchange rates) and trade, EEC; (D) **UNITED KINGDOM GENERAL**—including domestic policy, *Cmd* papers, Bank rate and other interest rate changes.

January

- (B) 1 All-out strike by Scottish lorry drivers.
- (D) 3 Britain's official reserves boosted last month by biggest underlying inflow of foreign currency—\$241 million—since July. Substantial net repayment of official debts made.
- (C) 3 Bank of Canada increases Federal bank rate by $\frac{1}{2}$ per cent to record 11 $\frac{1}{2}$ per cent.
- (B) 3 Workers at Prudential Insurance awarded 14 per cent pay rise.
- (B) 4 Texaco's 1,100 tanker drivers and ancillary workers strike over pay and picket terminals operated by other 4 big oil companies.
- (B) 7 National Tanker drivers' strike fades as Shell and Esso men accept pay offer of 13–15 per cent.
- (A) 8 Sime Darby Holdings—Malaysia-based international conglomerate—announces £122 million bid approach to Guthrie Corporation, one of the largest British-owned Far East rubber and palm oil plantation companies.
- (B) 9 Union leaders of 33,000 water service manual workers reject pay offer of 5 per cent on basic rates, worth 9.3 per cent in total.
- (C) 12 Rio Tinto-Zinc to reduce by more than a third its 72.6 per cent holding in Conzinc Riotinto of Australia, which is valued in current market terms at A\$1.12bn (£570 million).
- (B) 15 TGWU changes negotiating position in road haulage dispute by recommending that local agreements with individual hauliers go through in attempt to erode employers' common stance on 15 per cent pay offer.
- (B) 16 British Rail services come to standstill owing to first of two one-day strikes.
- (D) 16 Government's wages policy relaxed in bid to avoid series of crippling strikes in public services and sharp surge in inflation rate. Three-point package agreed by Cabinet will mean more cash for lower-paid, comparability with private industry for many public sector workers and tougher price controls for manufacturers.
- (B) 16 GMWU begins preparations for nationwide industrial action from next week as part of co-ordinated union campaign against government pay policy.
- (B) 17 Pending price rises for beer, petrol and electricity to be put into abeyance following Government's decision to remove most safeguard regulations from price control powers.
- (A) 18 Sedgwick Forbes and Bland Payne, two major Lloyd's of London insurance brokers, unveil £100 million merger plan, to form largest insurance broking operation in U.K.
- (A) 18 SKF (UK), Swedish-owned bearings manufacturer, to cut workforce by two thirds in next six months, a loss of 600 jobs.
- (C) 18 Bundesbank announces new measures to raise lombard rate by $\frac{1}{2}$ per cent to 4 per cent from tomorrow, against advice of West German government.
- (B) 18 Rolls Royce succeeds in keeping pay increases within government guidelines when 1,500 workers at Baroldswick plant, Lancashire end nine-week pay strike.
- (A) 19 Courtaulds plans to close acrylic worsted spinning factory at Sperrymore, Co. Durham, because of failure to get union agreement on more rationalization plans.
- (B) 19 Dunlop to make 3,100 workers redundant as part of plans to rationalize its UK tyre business—main impact will be felt at Speke, Merseyside, which will be closed completely.
- (B) 22 Lorry drivers dispute causes car assembly workers at BL's Cowley car plant to halt—5,000 employees affected.
- (B) 22 Water workers in Northern Manchester call off their 11-day strike.
- (B) 22 One-day protest strike against government pay policy by public-service workers causes disruption to local authority and health services.
- (A) 23 London Evening News to cut about 580 jobs and number of editions in effort to trim £5 million off annual losses, now running at over £7 million.
- (B) 23 Rail drivers' peace talks fail as drivers' union, ASLEF, walks out.
- (D) 24 Treasury postpones decision on cash limits for public spending in 1979–80.
- (C) 24 South Africa announces major changes in exchange rate policy aimed at reviving inflow of foreign investment.
- (B) 24 Vote by members of Civil Service Union favours industrial action if government fails to implement in full 15–20 per cent pay rise based on results of comparability exercise with outside industry.
- (B) 25 Pay awards by independent arbitrators of 10–26 $\frac{1}{2}$ per cent for 34,000 engineers in private contracting industry reported.
- (A) 25 NEB announces formation of office equipment subsidiary, NEXOS Office Systems—investing £40 million.
- (B) 25 British Shipbuilders proposes to close Haverton Hill shipyard, Teeside, and ship repair yard at Falmouth with loss of more than 2,000 jobs.
- (B) 26 Six more state-owned steel plants to lay off further 1,000 workers—total number 28,500 laid off by BSC since lorry drivers' strike.
- (D) 28 Treasury Ministers to minimise any adjustments in cash-limits on public spending in order to accommodate increases in pay above official guidelines.
- (B) 28 Courtaulds stops 80 per cent of production at its acrylic fibres plant, Grimsby. More than 1,000 workers laid off.
- (B) 29 Road haulage strike ends after employers agree to follow local arbitration decision and make new national wage offer of £64, only £1 short of the unions' claim on basic pay rates.
- (A) 29 BL recalls 5,000 laid off at Austin Morris plant, Cowley, Oxford, and further 2,600 at Pressed Steel Fisher factory.
- (C) 30 Chase Manhattan cuts prime rate from 11 $\frac{1}{4}$ per cent to 11 $\frac{1}{2}$ per cent.

February

- (C) 1 Farm price problems delay introduction of EMS—pending the European Council meeting on 12 and 13 March.

- (A) 1 GEC-Fairchild to build £17 million factory at Neston, Cheshire, with help of government aid and create 1,000 jobs.
- (A) 2 Ferranti to sell its Canadian subsidiary, Ferranti Packard, to Northern Engineering Industries for £7.6 million.
- (A) 2 British Petroleum cuts crude oil supplies to all customers by 45 per cent.
- (A) 5 Metro-Cammell, Birmingham, wins £50 million order to supply extra 150 rail cars to Hong Kong Mass Transit Railway Corporation, bringing total value of work placed with company to £125 million.
- (B) 5 BL cars senior shop stewards call total strike by 100,000 manual workers in support of demand for parity payments.
- (A) 5 Request for £23 million state aid by Dunlop fails to win backing from Government's Independent Industrial Development Advisory Board.
- (B) 6 West Midland lorry drivers accept £64 for 40-hour week with £7.75 a night subsistence allowance.
- (B) 7 20,000 manual workers at BL Cars' Longbridge plant, Birmingham, walk out.
- (C) 7 Royal Dutch-Shell group to cut crude oil supplies to all customers by 15 per cent from end of next month because of loss of crude oil exports from Iran.
- (D) 7 Bank of England raises minimum lending rate by $1\frac{1}{2}$ per cent to 14 per cent.
- (D) 7 Japanese domestic airline TDA to buy six European Airbuses and spares for £112 million to be delivered between 1980 and 1982.
- (D) 13 Clearing Banks raise lending base rates by 1 per cent to $13\frac{1}{2}$ per cent.
- (B) 14 Price Commission refuses to allow British Petroleum and Esso to raise oil product prices and is to launch investigation into companies' planned price rises.
- (C) 15 Abu Dhabi and Qatar raise price of light crude oils by 7 to 8 per cent above levels officially agreed by OPEC countries.
- (D) 19 Anglia, Hastings and Thanet Building Society to cut lending levels by 15 per cent from March.
- (A) 19 British Shipbuilders closes Haverton Hill Teeside shipyard with loss of 900 jobs.
- (B) 20 Rail unions reject 6.38 per cent pay offer.
- (B) 22 Southampton dockers accept pay deal. Similar settlements affected in some other ports.
- (C) 26 Kuwait and Venezuela to follow Abu Dhabi, Qatar and Libya in raising crude oil prices above official levels agreed by OPEC countries. (see 15 February).
- (B) 26 Steel industry craft unions representing 41,000 skilled workers reject pay and productivity offer of 8 per cent from British Steel Corporation.
- (B) 28 Transport and General Workers delegates representing local authority manual workers and hospital ancillary staff vote two-to-one to accept offer of 9 per cent and pay comparability study.
- (D) 28 Bank of England cuts minimum lending rate by one point to 13 per cent.

March

- (A) 1 British Airways sign \$400 million contract for 19 Boeing 757 short-to-medium range jet airliners, which use new Dash 535 version of Rolls-Royce RB-211 engine.
- (B) 1 BOC agrees to freeze prices for industrial gases for a year following Price Commission report.
- (A) 2 British Steel Corporation's Welsh division to cut 1,700 jobs—1,000 at Port Talbot and the rest at Ebbw Vale.
- (D) 5 Clearing banks cut base lending rate from $13\frac{1}{2}$ per cent to 13 per cent.
- (A) 5 Sime Darby Holdings wins £153 million takeover bid for Guthrie Corporation. (see 8 January).
- (A) 6 Turner & Newall to cut British workforce by 1,500 in attempt to improve profitability.
- (B) 8 BL workers to resume normal production at Triumph, Coventry; 3,500 workers recalled.
- (A) 9 Metro-Cammell signs £40 million deal with Hong Kong government to supply 135 rail cars. (See 5 February).
- (C) 12 First National Bank of Chicago increases prime rate by $\frac{1}{4}$ per cent to $11\frac{1}{4}$ per cent.
- (C) 12 EMS starts after $2\frac{1}{2}$ month delay. (See 1 February).
- (B) 16 British Steel to shed 1,700 jobs at Scunthorpe works and confirms closure of iron and steel-making at Bilston, Staffordshire, with loss of 1,900 jobs.
- (A) 20 Imperial Group sells remaining 15 per cent stake in BAT industries raising £153.6 million in largest share placing in the City.
- (B) 20 BL Cars agrees to make shift and overtime payments of up to £8 a week to many of its 90,000 manual workers, backdated to 1 February.
- (B) 21 Teachers in England and Wales reject 8 per cent pay offer.
- (B) 23 Pay rise of 10 per cent agreed for more than 70,000 Lancashire textile workers.
- (A) 26 Kirkby workers' co-operative launches fresh bid to save jobs in loss-making factory by selling assets.
- (B) 26 Postal services in London and South East England disrupted by post office staff seeking pay rises.
- (B) 26 Hull dockers accept 13 per cent pay offer with sizeable productivity element.
- (D) 28 Government loses censure motion of no confidence.
- (D) 29 General Election to be held on 3 May.
- (C) 29 Bundesbank raises key discount rate to 4 per cent from 3 per cent and lombard rate to 5 per cent from 4 per cent to reduce capital outflows.