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GADFLY

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QUEBEC's premier Jean Charest is in London this week to interest the City in his grandiose 'Plan Nord' to revitalise the province's economy. There's a bash tomorrow and a lunch at the Savoy on Tuesday.

With the Duke and Duchess of Cambridge heading for Canada on Thursday, his timing is faultless. Isn't it? Well, Thursday also sees both sets of shareholders vote on the agreed London Stock Exchange bid for TMX, owner of the Toronto exchange and, in Quebec, Montreal's derivatives market.

Guess who wants to keep the Brits out and backs a rival Canadian bid? Yes, that champion of global investment, Jean Charest.

BRITAIN has 'a long tail of badly managed firms', says **CentrePiece**, a publication of the London School of Economics. It seems that we don't allow enough dud businesses to go bust.

This is graphically illustrated by two human types: 'managementia inefficienta' and 'managementia competitivus'.

The latter may stand taller than the former but, alarmingly, both are skeletons.

SIR Richard Branson was in a jovial mood in Miami at the launch of Virgin Atlantic's flights to Cancun, Mexico.

Relaxing after the Press conference he told of improvements that he was making to the 'passenger experience'.

Branson joked: 'We've worked out a way in which you can actually have dancing girls coming out of the entertainment systems, we're going to have full fashion shows on every plane and we're also putting in lap-dancing bars and poles in all the planes, so generally it's going to be a more fun airline.' Indeed!

THE no-suits policy at London media haunt Soho House is the start of a serious purge. Founder Nick Jones has authorised staff to call members to tell them to dress down.

Indeed, Jones is planning a cull of bankers, City lawyers and other corporate types to restore the club's arty credentials.

BANK and hedge funds were supposed to be hot footing it to Switzerland, spooked by Britain's tax regime. Yet agents selling office space are having to advertise.

Last week, one offered 50,000 sq ft in Zurich with 'space for up to 200 trading desks', describing it as 'an ideal opportunity for a financial institution or trading firm'.

Another in nearby Zug, home of trading giant Glencore, offered nearly 6,000 sq ft of offices 'fit especially for the purpose of stock trading and international business'.

Some stampede, eh?

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