

CRIPPS CUTS HIS "NO CAKE" BUDGET

Budget Day and the eyes of Britain centre on 11, Downing Street for the Chancellor's last-but-one national housekeeping account before the General Election. Holding high Gladstone's tattered red dispatch box, Sir Stafford keeps the crowd guessing. For weeks, armchair chancellors (whose only experience of budgeting is to make the pay packet last the week) had been prophesying cuts all round. But the Iron Chancellor remains relentless and makes the nation face the stark realities of his accounts. With the national cake given out in the form of a great health service, there isn't any more cake to go round. Food subsidies - which last year totalled 485 million pounds - are cut, and what has been coming out of the taxpayers pocket must now also come out of the housewives purse. The weekly food bill goes up by fourpence-halfpenny a person and the nation has to put up with more self-denial. But Sir Stafford has a brighter side! The situation is much healthier than last year, he says. By next year, there may be a reason for his smile.