

Prime Minister ✓
Mr Hough seems relatively relaxed. But see Bernard Lyban's minute attached.

~~M. Hough
C. Lyban
M. Lyban~~

PRIME MINISTER
COAL INDUSTRY REVIEW

-IPM'd

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Further to my minute of 11 February the NUM National Executive unanimously decided at their meeting yesterday to recommend industrial action to a ballot of members if the NCB does not withdraw its 'plans for closures'.

However, a ballot will not be held immediately. Over the next week, the Board will be holding discussions with the unions at Area level. It is at these discussions that details of the Board's proposals will emerge. The Board have deliberately adopted this procedure because the impact of these details Area by Area will be less than the rank and file mineworkers have been led to expect by the statements of their leaders at national level. The NUM National Executive will meet again next Thursday to consider what they have been told at Area level.

I have also received letters from both Mr Gormley and the NCB in conjunction with all the mining unions requesting a Tripartite meeting. I think it will be necessary to let it be known before the Executive meets next Thursday that we are prepared to hold such a meeting (which would be to discuss Plan for Coal, the financial strategy, imports and support parity with other Community coal industries.) I will of course aim to avoid having any such meeting before the E Committee discussion of coal strategy on 24 February.

I am copying this minute to Cabinet colleagues and Sir Robert Armstrong.

I think it will have to be held before that meeting.

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I refer you with Bernard's point
Secretary of State for Energy M.B.

13 February 1981

Note: The point is that high price of coal = high price electricity = job losses elsewhere.