

SECRET



SECRETARY OF STATE FOR ENERGY
THAMES HOUSE SOUTH
MILLBANK LONDON SW1P 4QJ

01 211 6402

✓ *Mr. Hyman*
Mr. Barker

Tim Lankester Esq
Private Secretary to the
Private Minister
10 Downing Street
London SW1

ms

6 August 1981

12. 2
Energy
Prime Minister
Differences about
how the public
opinion campaign
should proceed
have now been
revised.

Dear Tim

TL
6/8

PUBLICITY ABOUT THE COAL INDUSTRY

Officials here held a meeting last week with officials from No. 10, Treasury, CPRS, the Cabinet Office and the Department of Employment, to discuss how to carry forward our efforts to increase public awareness of the coal industry's problems, about which you wrote to Julian West on 29 June.

There was general agreement that the first task was to influence the environment in which the 1981 wage negotiations take place in the hope of inducing a lower settlement and cooler bargaining process than might otherwise be the case. During this sensitive period it will be necessary to proceed discreetly as stated in your letter of 29 June, and certainly to avoid any action of a confrontational nature. Briefing undertaken initially with the 1981 pay round in mind will lay the foundations for a continuing and broader exercise, which will be developed after the 1981 miners' pay settlement designed to develop accurate knowledge of the facts and to sap the support the miners have invariably been able to attract from large segments of public opinion in times of confrontation.

My Secretary of State and his Ministerial colleagues have already set the exercise in train in recent weeks through conventional channels, including speeches in the House and at other engagements, contacts with MP's and a substantial number of inspired PQ's and Press briefings. These approaches will be developed in the coming weeks as will contacts with the CBI. There was also agreement amongst officials that further consideration should be given to the possibility of other approaches, including the use of prominent figures and commentators as intermediaries and encouraging TV programmes about the coal industry and its cost to the nation.

The background brief circulated to immediately interested Departments with Julian West's letter of 6 July is now being revised and supplemented with a view to circulation at an early date as a PMG paper with a cover note advising Ministers on its use.

SECRET



The Department of Energy will be chairing a group of officials to monitor and develop both the short and longer term briefing exercises.

I am copying this letter to John Wiggins (HM Treasury), Richard Dykes (Department of Employment), David Heyhoe (Privy Council Office), David Wright (Cabinet Office) and Gerry Spence (CPRS).

Yours ever

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'David Lumley', with a long, sweeping flourish extending to the right.

David Lumley
Private Secretary

conqueror