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PRIME MINISTER

COAL: MISC 101(84)1ST MEETING

You will no doubt want tomorrow's meeting, and subsequent meetings, of MISC 101 to be as brisk and businesslike as possible. To this end it may help to get all the oral reports on the latest situation delivered in an orderly fashion in the first part of the meeting and proceed after that to discuss what issues are posed by the current situation and what action ought to be put in hand.

2. The basic structure for tomorrow's meeting might therefore be as follows:

I REPORTS

a. The situation on the ground:

- report from the Secretary of State for Energy about the number of pits still working and any news about pithead ballots;
- report from the Home Secretary on law and order.

b. Civil action in the Courts:

- report from the Secretary of State for Energy about the National Coal Board's latest intentions;
- additional reports as necessary from the Secretary of State for Employment and the Attorney General.

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c. Endurance:

- report from the Secretary of State for Energy on:
 - the latest assessment of endurance of power stations, coal burning industry and domestic users;
 - CEGB preparations to increase oilburn, and whether and when any decisions are required from Ministers.

II DISCUSSION

- How is the overall situation moving?
- What are the weak points where remedial action is required?
- What danger points lie ahead?

III ACTION

- should further action be put in hand on:
 - law and order;
 - matters relating to the NCB's civil action in the Courts;
 - any advice to the NCB about their handling of the situation generally;
 - improving endurance (with particular reference to oil burn);
 - publicity and communications, both by the NCB and the Government directed to:
 - rank and file miners;
 - public opinion generally.

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Further meetings

3. You will be involved with the European Council on Monday and Tuesday. The Lord President will however be available to chair MISC 101 in your absence. Depending on developments at tomorrow's meeting, you might wish either:

i. to propose that a meeting of MISC 101 should definitely be arranged under the Lord President's chairmanship on Monday, or;

ii. to ask the Lord President in consultation with the Secretary of State for Energy and the Cabinet Office to review on Monday the need for and timing of a meeting on Monday or Tuesday.

PLG

P L GREGSON

15 March 1984

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