



SECRETARY OF STATE FOR ENERGY

THAMES HOUSE SOUTH
MILLBANK LONDON SW1P 4QJ

01 211 6402

Prime Minister

CONFIDENTIAL

David Barclay Esq
Private Secretary to
The Prime Minister
10 Downing Street
London
SW1

*Dms
19/4*

19 April 1984

Dear David

COAL DISPUTE

I attach a weekly report on the situation in the usual form which I believe covers the details for which you have asked. However it may be useful if I summarise briefly what we see as the main features of the situation in the past week:-

- (i) 122 pits have continued wholly on strike. The number working more or less normally has remain stable at 45-46. Men at work on Monday were 500 up compared with the previous week but numbers fell slightly today (Easter).
- (ii) some obstruction by signalmen to train movement has continued but the position has improved during the week, with 55 coal trains moving on Wednesday compared with 40 on Monday. Total movement of coal in the week seems likely to be about 520,000 tonnes, much the same as in the previous week: of which about 300,000 tonnes will have moved by rail and the rest by road. Road movement has not encountered difficulty. The NUM has agreed some exports of house coal to Northern Ireland and the Northern Ireland TGWU have agreed imports (initially of US coal) for the Belfast West power station.
- (iii) CEGB are now operating at 100% oil burn, as planned. The receipt of the 300,000 tonnes of coal this week is a bonus measured against the worst scenario of an all-out strike. If this pattern could be continued throughout the summer it would mean a significant extension to planned endurance (see table attached to my letter of 16 April to Andrew Turnbull).



- (iv) no serious problems have yet developed in industry generally, though there are some worries in the cement industry. The most significant problem is in British Steel at Scunthorpe and Ravenscraig. The NUM have found themselves in difficulty in honouring their bargain with the steel union to facilitate limited coal supplies for Scunthorpe: the issue is still in doubt. Meanwhile there are some threats in the National Union of Seamen to stop imports of coal to Ravenscraig.
- (v) The CEGB has agreed to sell 1 m tonnes of its Rotterdam stock to fulfil export contracts. This was agreed with the Department of Energy and the Treasury as a sensible use of stock, yielding public expenditure savings and benefits to both industries. The CEGB, and the two Departments, judge that such a sale will not prejudice endurance or recovery because (quite apart from the existence of pit head stocks in this country) coal stocks at Rotterdam will remain substantial (at least 2 m tonnes), coal is available on the international market and there are, in any case, physical constraints to the amount of coal that can be readily imported for use by CEGB.
- (vi) the NUM Sheffield Delegate Conference voted this morning 187 to 59 to reduce the requirement for a national strike in a national ballot from 55% to a simple majority but rejected by 69 to 54 a proposal to ballot now. NCB are unable to explain the discrepancy in the figures. The similar minority in both votes confirms the existence of the hard core of moderates within the union. One must assume that the left wing are still not confident of obtaining a majority for a national strike. The principle is still: area action. Once again the test next week will be whether, in these circumstances, the Notts miners and others continue to work.
- (vii) the Board intend to launch a major publicity campaign starting on Tuesday. This will be primarily giving positive messages to the miners and the public on local and national press and radio. For example, as usual, all pits remain open for those willing to work, management willingness to negotiate - door remains open etc.
- (viii) two small haulage firms in the Forest of Dean (Read Transport) obtained an injunction on Tuesday against pickets organised by the South Wales Area NUM interfering with their coke deliveries from Avonmouth to Port Talbot. No other legal action is in train at present. At the Sheffield Conference Scargill announced that, in future, picketing would be nationally organised. This may be an attempt to require any legal action to be taken against the NUM nationally.





(ix) The Annual General Meeting of the National Docks and Waterways Committee of the TGWU this morning called for total stoppage of dock work if any docker was sent home without pay for refusing to handle coal. Their Chairman claimed he was confident the men would come out. Department of Employment are sceptical that this claim will be fulfilled.

*Yours sincerely
M F Reidy*

M F REIDY
Private Secretary

CONQUEROR



PITS WORKING

date		Working normally (a)	producing some coal (b)	men working but no coal (c)	idle (d)
Monday 16.4.84	am	45	6	3	121
	pm	43	1	9	122
Tuesday 17.4.84	am	46	5	2	122
	pm	44	0	8	123
Wednesday 18.4.84	am	46	5	2	122
	pm	44	0	8	123
Thursday 19.4.84	am	46	5	2	122
	pm	44	0	8	123

North and South Nottingham have continued to work normally this week, although there has been reduced attendance at Newstead and Linby. The extra pit idle this week is Wolstanton (Staffordshire) which now has sufficient men working only to provide safety cover.

The movement from categories (a) and (b) on the afternoon shifts has been attributable mainly to Staffordshire pits.



COAL MOVEMENTS

The following table shows movements of Principal Coal Traffic Movement Trains (PCTs). These are trains to power stations and major industrial users. Each carries about 1000 tonnes.

Date	PCTs that would normally be scheduled	PCTs BR hoped to run	PCTs BR actually ran
Monday 16.4.84	313	45	40
Tuesday 17.4.84	313	40	48
Wednesday 18.4.84	313	48	55
Thursday 19.4.84	313	55	not available

Improvements from Tuesday were largely the result of an apparent change of heart by men at Thoresby. This led to a much larger than expected number of trains getting into High Marnham power station. BR have decided not to roster additional overtime for the holiday weekend; there will, therefore, be no coal movement by rail until Tuesday.

Road transport has been running relatively smoothly where there is coal to be moved and volumes moved daily have been fairly evenly split between rail and road. Total movements daily have been around 100,000 tonnes mid-week, with rather less at either end.

A shipment of Polish coal for BSC has been unloaded at Teeside this week, and a shipment of American coal for Ravenscraig is expected at Hunterston on Easter day; over two-thirds of this cargo could be unloaded by BSC crane drivers without assistance from dockers.



PICKETS

Pickets are generally concentrating on fewer sites but appearing in large numbers.

Bolsover has had a heavy presence all week, ranging from 120 to 750. Several pits in North Nottinghamshire have consistently had 100 or more pickets all week, although there have been fewer in South Notts.

Littleton and Lea Hall, the two pits in Staffordshire with the highest turn out among the workforce and the most consistent coal producers, have been singled out for heavy picketing.

Deerness, a private opencast site in the North East has been heavily picketed all week. There were violent incidents on Monday and a number of arrests, including that of Bob Clay, MP for Sunderland North.

Picketing of power stations has been light and not generally effective. There has been isolated picketing of smaller ports such as Wivenhoe in Essex.



ENDURANCE AND COAL SUPPLIES

a) Figures showing

- coal stocks at power stations and NCB;
- coal and oil consumption at power stations; and
- electricity demand

as at 15 April are attached.

Total coal deliveries this week are expected to be about 550,000t, compared with 475,000t last week.

b) Power Stations

Coal deliveries this week are expected to be about 325,000t; the increase of 75,000t on last week is largely due to less disruption on the railways. Roadborne deliveries continue at a high level. Stock lift of around 0.9mt is expected during the week as CEGB oil burn continues to increase.

c) Coke Ovens and BSC

Some movement of coal to coke ovens re-commenced this week as agreement was reached with the unions to provide some supplies from Yorkshire for BSC Scunthorpe. Three train loads (2700t) have been agreed this week. Three further train loads have been agreed for next week, and negotiations are continuing regarding a further 6 train loads. If successful this will provide around three-quarters of Scunthorpe's normal consumption of 12,000t/week.

At Llanwern, some 14,000t of coke from Nantgarw will be delivered during the week, and deliveries will continue over the Easter weekend. Coal from Oakdale is also moving to Llanwern.

d) Foundry Coke

Deliveries of foundry coke from Cwm continue at a level of 180t/day, and are expected to continue over the weekend. In the North East similar arrangements have been agreed for deliveries from Derwenthaugh at a rate of 140t/day. In all some 50 foundry companies are benefitting from these arrangements which provide the foundry industry with between a quarter and a third of normal requirements.

e) Industry

Deliveries to industry from the Midlands continue at about 100,000t/week - around 60% of national normal. All priority customers throughout the country continue to receive supplies, and many others are receiving a good proportion of normal supplies.



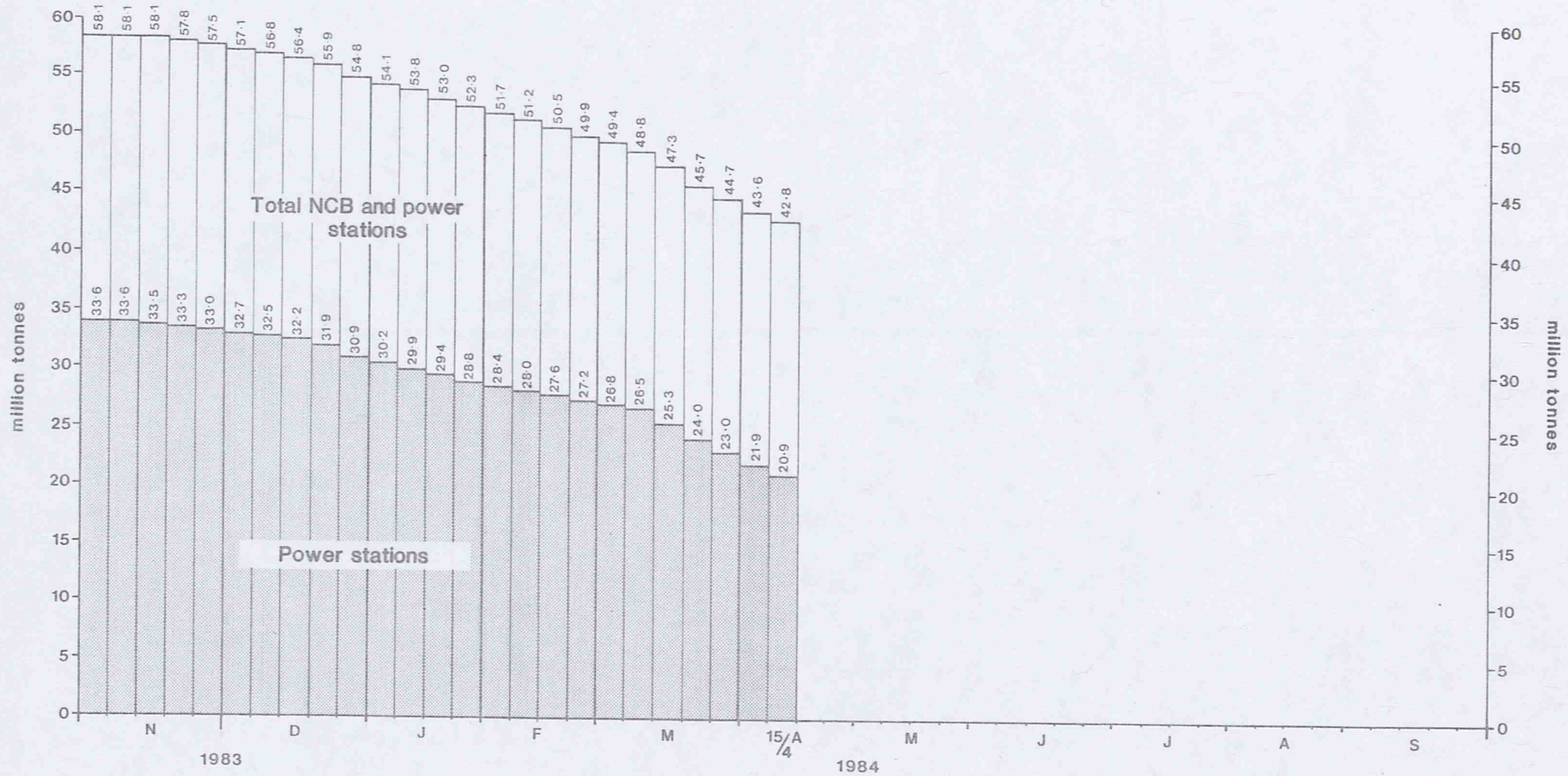
f) Domestic

The domestic position continues to ease as the burning season ends. But the position remains tight particularly in the strike-bound areas. Arrangements to meet priority needs are working with few problems, and local authorities are generally co-operating well in providing evidence of need.

In Northern Ireland agreement has now been reached between the unions and the Northern Ireland Coal Importers that 9000t/week of domestic coal may be shipped to meet "emergency" needs. This should be sufficient to prevent any substantial shortages in the Province.

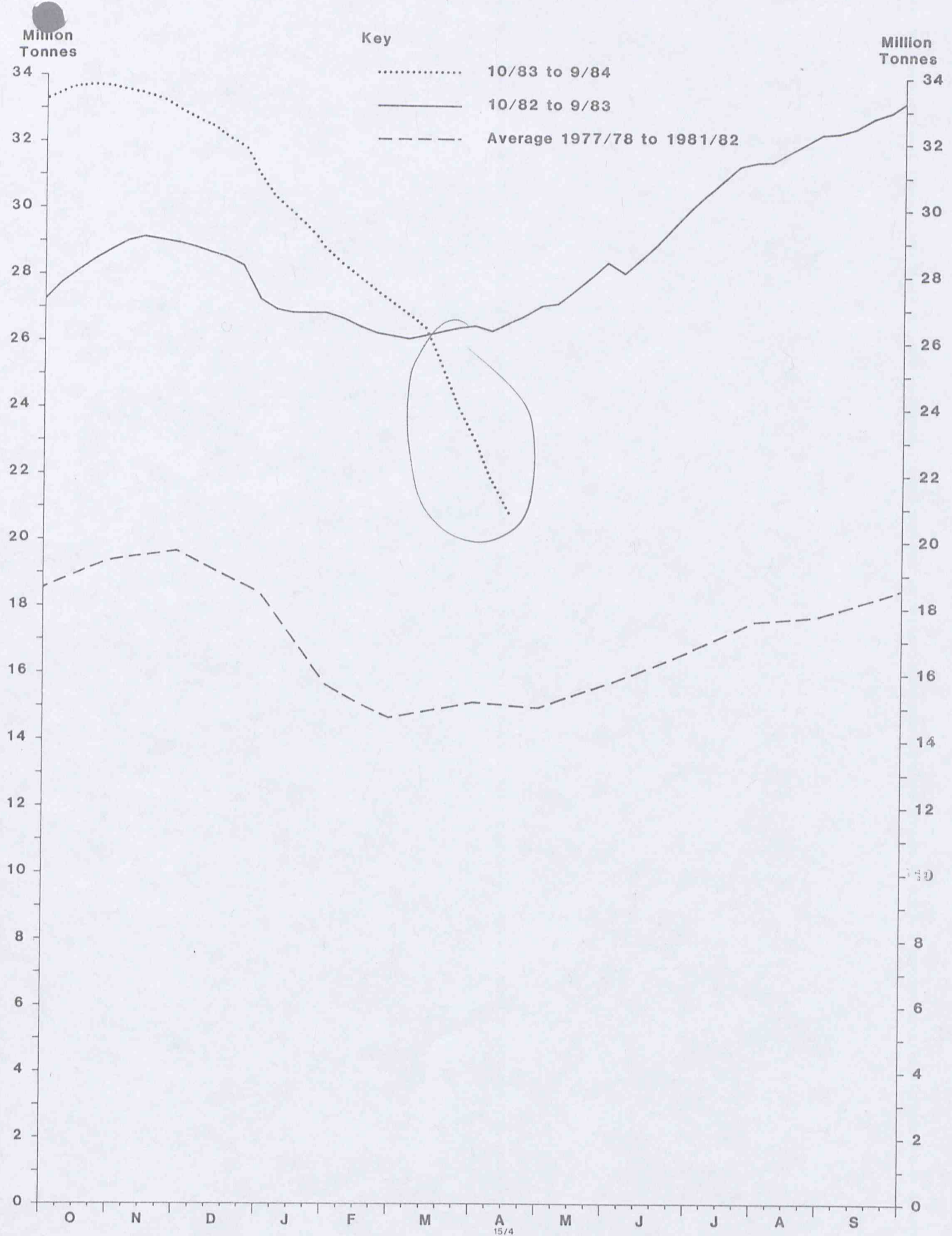
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COAL STOCKS IN GREAT BRITAIN



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COAL STOCKS AT PUBLIC SUPPLY POWER STATIONS IN GREAT BRITAIN



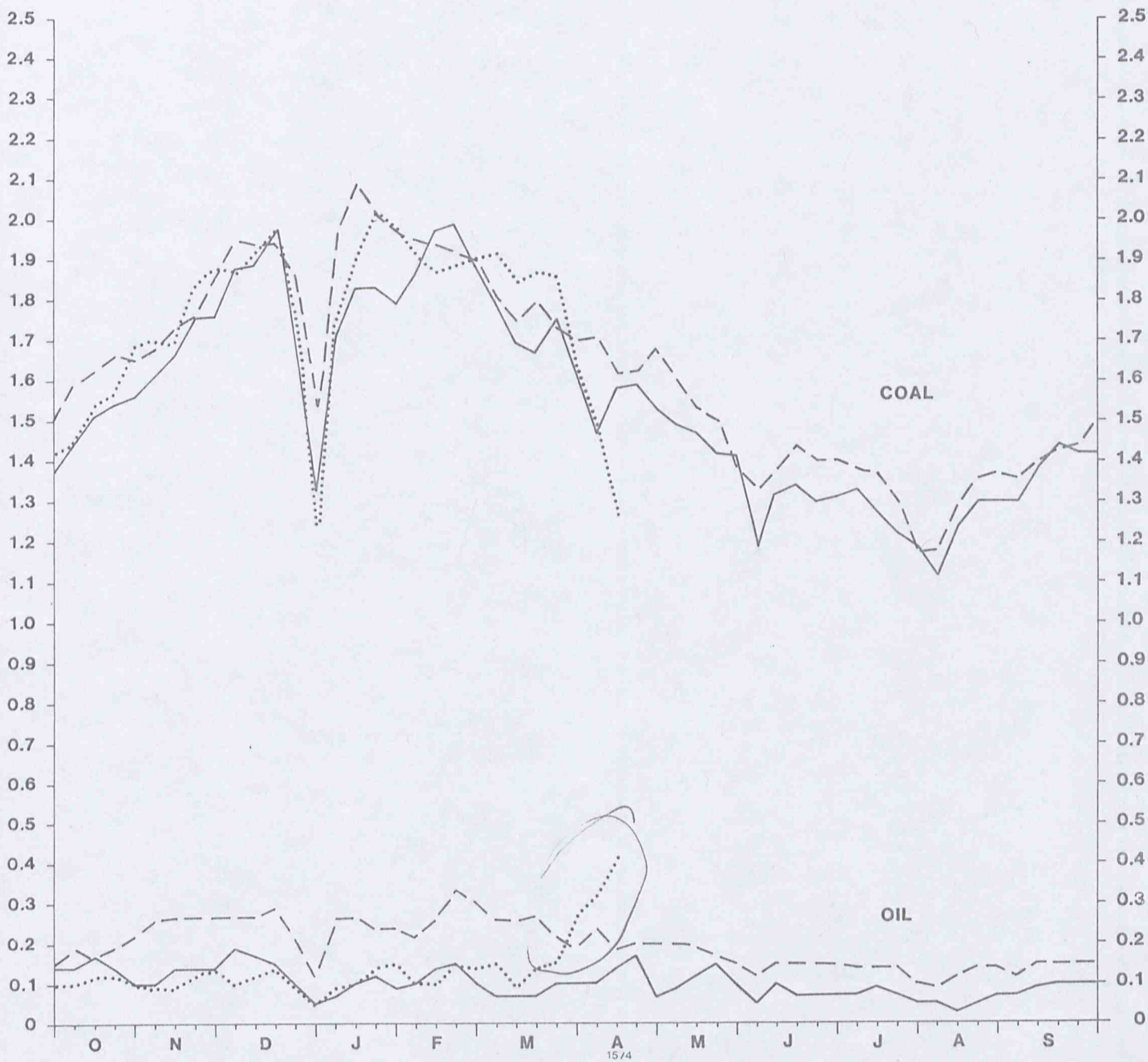
COAL CONSUMPTION AND OIL CONSUMPTION (OIL FIRED) AT PUBLIC SUPPLY POWER STATIONS IN GREAT BRITAIN

Key

- 10/83 to 9/84
- 10/82 to 9/83
- - - - Average 1977/78 to 1981/82

Million
Tonnes
Coal
or Coal
Equivalent

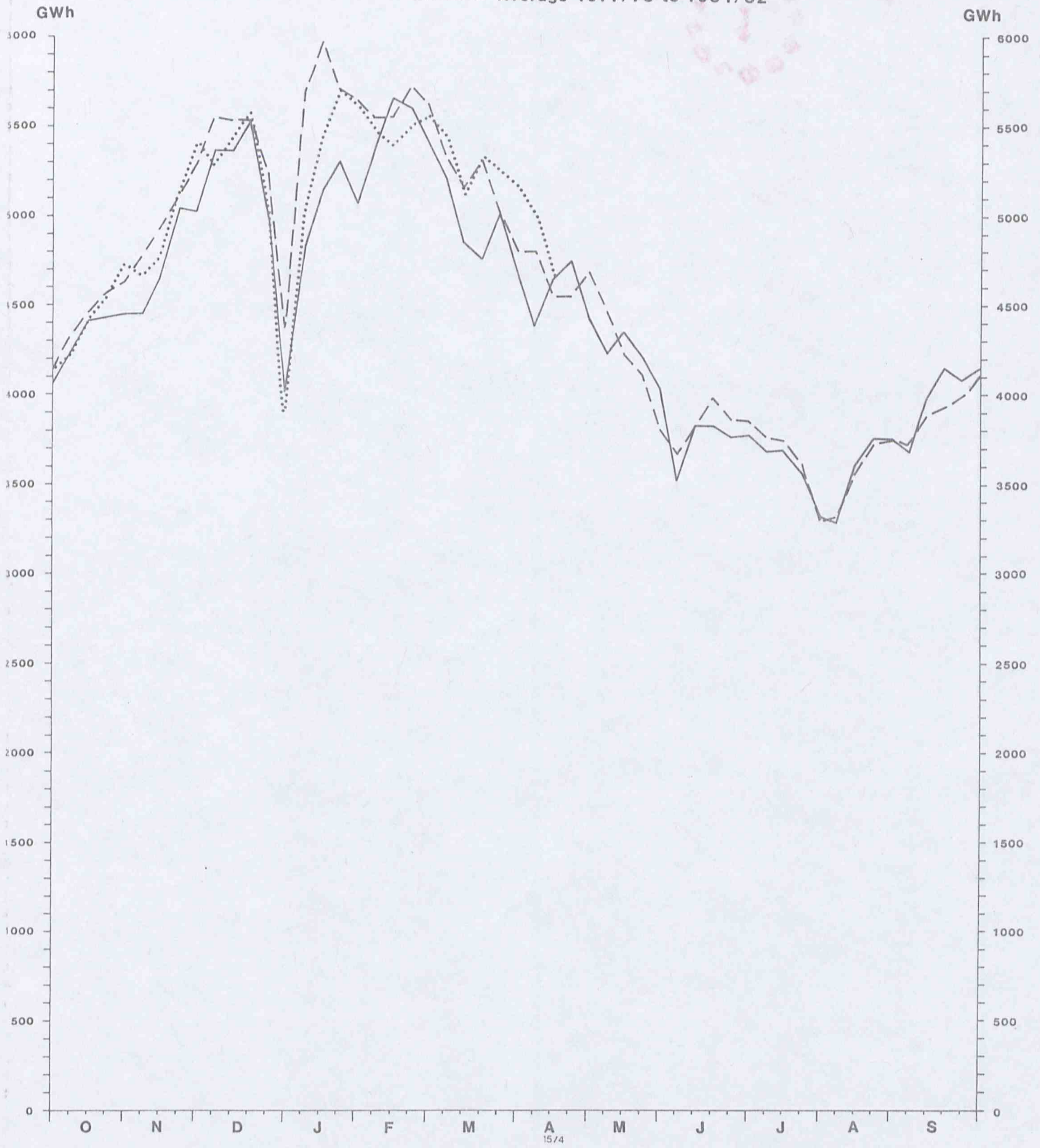
Million
Tonnes
Coal
or Coal
Equivalent



ELECTRICITY SUPPLIED BY PUBLIC SUPPLY STEAM STATIONS IN GREAT BRITAIN

Key

- 10/83 to 9/84
- 10/82 to 9/83
- - - - Average 1977/78 to 1981/82



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10 DOWNING STREET

From the Private Secretary

25 April 1984

Coal Dispute

Thank you for your letter of 19 April with which you enclosed a report on the coal dispute for the week beginning 16 April. The Prime Minister was most grateful for this comprehensive report.

David Barclay

M.F. Reidy, Esq.,
Department of Energy.

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