

To keep the record straight HERE IS THE NATIONAL COAL BOARD'S SIDE OF THE STORY:

The biggest fact staring us in the face is that we have been producing more coal than we can sell. That is why there are record stocks.

The Coal Board is concerned for the future. The size of the market will determine the size of our industry.

At the beginning of last year we were producing 8m. tonnes a year more than we could sell. Since then we have taken out 4m. tonnes of output. This year we propose to do the same.

In twelve months time the industry's output and demand will be in balance. We shall then attack the market to increase sales. Our objective will be a minimum capacity of 100m. tonnes a year.

Last year the number of jobs was cut by 20,000 – without anyone who wanted to stay in the industry having to leave it.

And those who chose to go received the most generous compensation terms ever offered to industrial workers in this country.

Again in the coming year, no mine-

worker who wants to stay in the industry will be made compulsorily redundant.

And another fact we can't repeat too often – there is no new closure plan.

Despite what you might be told, the industry is not being run down. £700-800m. a year will continue to be invested in sinking new mines and modernising existing ones. This highly efficient new capacity will replace the hopelessly expensive tonnage we hope to take out. And that will make it possible to compete for markets.

Another bright note for the future is that the Board could substantially increase the recruitment of young men a year from now.

Finally, it is not true to say that the Coal Board have stopped discussions. National meetings have continued with the other unions but the National Union of Mineworkers stayed away. Full consultation will resume as soon as the NUM make themselves available.

THE NATIONAL COAL BOARD.
RE-SHAPING THE INDUSTRY FOR THE FUTURE.

NCB