

Prime Minister

cc Miss Lewis-Jones

1. MR BUTLER
2. PRIME MINISTER

Since this is the Lord President's view as well as Bernard's, you should see, though we discussed the point this morning.

KFB

7.5.

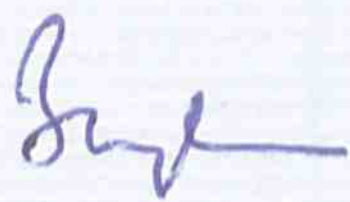
COMPENSATION FOR MINERS' POLICING

I have discussed this subject with Lord Whitelaw and I am minuting you as a consequence.

Lord Whitelaw shares my view that it would be wrong in public relations terms to make an announcement tomorrow when the NUM executive is meeting. This would simply afford Mr Scargill with an opportunity to divert attention from his problems on to what he would no doubt describe as a development of the police state.

It follows that in an ideal world it would be better to defer any announcement until after Mr Scargill's attempt next Monday to bring the Nottinghamshire coalfield to a halt.

It may be that the Home Secretary is under pressure to make an announcement. If so, we would hope it could at the very least be held back until Friday.



BERNARD INGHAM
9 May 1984

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PRIVY COUNCIL OFFICE
WHITEHALL, LONDON SW1A 2AT

9 May 1984

Dear Leon

MINERS' DISPUTE: POLICING COSTS

Thank you for sending me a copy of your letter of 8 May to the Chief Secretary about the arranged Question and Answer which you would like to give tomorrow. *- with AT*

I am quite content with the proposed text of the Answer, but I am rather concerned about the proposed timing. The Executive of the NUM meets tomorrow and I think they would be likely to make great play of the Answer to highlight the role of the police in the dispute, its cost to public funds, and what they would no doubt describe as Government "backing" for action against their pickets. I am anxious that as little publicity as possible should be given to the role of the police. Ideally, it would be best to postpone your announcement until after Monday 14 May, when the NUM Executive hopes to be able to close the whole of the Nottinghamshire coalfield.

I appreciate that you are under strong pressure from the local authority associations to make an early announcement, but from the public relations and handling point of view there would be considerable advantage if you could give the Answer early next week or, if that is not possible, at least this Friday rather than tomorrow.

I am sending copies of this letter to the Prime Minister, to those who attended the last meeting of MISC 101, to George Younger, Patrick Jenkin and Peter Rees, and to Sir Robert Armstrong.

George Younger
Patrick Jenkin

The Rt Hon Leon Brittan QC MP

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