

Prime Minister

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I attach the latest
note on stocks.PRIME MINISTERDUB
29/5Coal: MISC 101(84)17th Meeting

In the course of the usual reports, the following points merit particular attention.

- (i) The British Rail pay settlement is welcome: you might ask the Secretary of State for Transport to report and assess any residual risk of disruption over issues such as privatisation or workshop closures.
- (ii) The challenge in the courts by three Nottinghamshire miners against the declaration by the NUM of an official strike in the county succeeded last week but appears to have had little impact. You might ask the Solicitor General to comment.
- (iii) The Secretary of State for Energy was invited at Cabinet on 24 May to discuss with Mr McGregor and report on possible improvements to schemes for helping redundant miners and their public presentation.

NCB/NUM Talks

2. You will wish to concentrate after the usual reports on the talks between the Board and the Union due to take place tomorrow, 30 May. In particular,

- (i) what is on the agenda and what are the NCB's tactics on substance and, if necessary, on presentation?
- (ii) What is the NCB's game-plan for the longer-term and how do the present talks fit in? The NCB must



emerge with adequate freedom to close pits not just in the current year but during the remainder of this Parliament.

- (iii) It was understood last week that neither Mr Scargill nor Mr McGregor would take part in the talks: it is reported now that Mr Scargill will take part but Mr McGregor will not. If this is true, how is the status of the talks affected? It will be important to make sure that the unions cannot present Mr McGregor's absence as an indication that either his authority in the Board or the Government's confidence in him may be diminishing.

3. The next meeting of the Group has been provisionally arranged for 5 June (next Tuesday).


J F STOKER

Cabinet Office
29 May 1984