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EXTRACT FROM BBC RADIO 4 'WORLD THIS WEEKEND' INTERVIEW WITH
MR IAN MACGREGOR - SUNDAY, JULY 1, 1984

GORDON CLOUGH (interviewer): How do you see this thing developing now? I noticed this morning that Peter Heathfield, the General Secretary of the NUM is quoted as saying that there is room for talking about the definition of economic and uneconomic pits. Now is that the kind of thing you've heard at any time, maybe in private, from Mr Scargill?

IAN MACGREGOR: No. Arthur Scargill has been consistent in his position that there should be no closures at all under any circumstances except exhaustion or safety. Mr Heathfield's remarks this morning are a follow-up on, I think, the discussion we had at our meeting in Edinburgh which ended as I thought with the intention of continuing down the track. Unfortunately when we met at Rotherham we didn't find the same attitude on the part of the members. Clearly the proposal that is outlined in the Times, I guess to Mr McIntyre, is something that we've been working on with various people during the last few weeks. We've been working with the NACODS organisation, who are of course in the firing line with the NUM and have many close affinities to the NUM.

GORDON CLOUGH: But if you say there is room for discussion over the definition of uneconomic, does that imply that it could be that the Board would revise its closure programme if you reached a new definition of what an uneconomic one was?

IAN MACGREGOR: I made it clear to NACODS people that if we got into serious discussion as to how to solve the problems in the industry then we would negotiate these problems in the way which the industry always has done, through the consultative procedures of each individual pit - I see no reason for changing that and I believe that if we get back we can solve these problems. There's lots of room for manoeuvre on the part of both parties.

GORDON COUGH: So, there could be collieries the NUM fears would be in line for closure which the Board would say, well ^{no-} we'll accept that uneconomical means something different now and that we will not close them?

IAN MACGREGOR: Well I don't think we can accept that uneconomic means a different thing. But what we can accept clearly is that if we come up with a programme which we both agree on, which brings this industry progressively towards a more efficient operation and doesn't waste resources on uneconomic production, then there is no reason why we can't see this industry begin to grow and prosper.