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P.01368

PRIME MINISTER

Cabinet: Industrial Affairs: Coal

You will first wish to have the usual reports on the current situation and then invite a discussion on tactics during August.

Reports

2. The main reports will be from:

- i. the Secretary of State for Energy
 - on the number of pits and miners working
 - on whether there is any evidence that the "Silver Birch" movement is having, or is soon likely to have, any marked impact
- ii. the Home Secretary
 - on law and order
- iii. the Secretary of State for Employment
 - on the civil action against the South Wales NUM and its likely consequences and implications
- iv. the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry
 - on the situation at BSC and in particular the chances of avoiding a confrontation over the loading of iron ore at Immingham
- v. the Secretary of State for Transport
 - on rail movements
(movements of coal by rail have continued to deteriorate, even allowing for the fact that the

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Nottinghamshire pits are on holiday; fortunately lorry movements have increased; out of 60,000 tonnes delivered to power stations on Monday, only 11,000 tonnes were carried by rail).

Tactics during August

3. You may wish to refer to the arrangements for handling the coal dispute during August, about which you are minuting the Ministers mainly concerned. These arrangements will enable Ministers to be kept closely informed of the developing situation and there will be regular coordination of publicity under Ministerial supervision.
4. It may nevertheless be useful to have some discussion about:
 - i. the handling of publicity over the coming weekend, bearing in mind the return to work of the Nottinghamshire pits on Monday;
 - ii. the general publicity stance during August (although it will need to be kept constantly under review in the light of developments, for example the NUM Delegate Conference on 10 August);
 - iii. whether any developments relating to pit closures and redundancies are likely during August;
 - iv. whether, in the light of the South Wales case, there are likely to be more civil actions brought against the NUM, or indeed other unions involved in the dispute and, if so, what bearing this would have on the TUC Conference.
5. On iii. (closures and redundancies) you will recall that the Secretary of State for Energy has made it clear that the NCB would

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be unlikely to act until the Nottinghamshire miners are safely back at work next week. He has also said that the NCB are examining the possibilities in detail and that it should be left to the NCB's tactical judgement to decide whether and when such an initiative should be taken. Before they disperse however Ministers are likely to want some indication of whether action of this kind is to be expected during August and, whether it is or not, to understand the NCB's current thinking on this matter.

Next meeting

6. In the light of developments and the Cabinet discussion you will wish to consider whether you want to ask Ministers to come together for a final pre-holiday meeting of MISC 101 on Monday or Tuesday of next week, or whether it is sufficient to operate from now on in accordance with the August arrangements you are promulgating.

PL

P L GREGSON

1 August 1984