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17 August 1984

SECRET

David Barclay Esq
Private Secretary to the
Prime Minister
10 Downing Street
LONDON SW1

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Dear David,

MINERS' STRIKE: COAL FOR RAVENS CRAIG

My Secretary of State has seen a copy of Ruth Thompson's letter of 15 August to you on the above subject.

Mr Younger has asked me to register his very great concern about the threat which the TGWU action poses to Ravenscraig. While he recognises the need to go through the NDLB procedures he strongly supports Mr Tebbit's conclusion that, if the NDLB decision is adverse, BSC should be authorised to berth and unload the 'Ostia'. However Mr Younger is concerned lest the time taken by the NDLB procedures may mean that the point of no return for preventing damage to the coke ovens at Ravenscraig is passed. He understands that by halving production at the coke ovens, BSC has bought a little more time but that even taking this into account, a decision must be taken not later than Friday, 24 August - and ideally before then as it should be kept in mind that this deadline assumes that the berthing of the vessel will not be delayed by bad weather.

I am copying this letter to the Private Secretaries of other Ministers on MISC 101 and to Richard Hatfield.

Yours sincerely
Eddie Gowans
EDDIE GOWANS
Private Secretary