

Daily Coal Report - Wednesday 29 August 1984

40

Pit categories

| | <u>Number</u> | <u>Plus on holiday</u> |
|------------------------|---------------|------------------------|
| Working normally | 35 | 10 |
| Turning some coal | 8 | 1 |
| Some men present | 11 | 1 |
| On strike/picketed out | 107 | 1 |

These totals show that 3 pits have moved from the on strike category to the some men present category since last Friday. These are Frances in Scotland, Bold in Lancashire and Allerton Bywater in North Yorkshire.

129 men worked at Bilston Glen in Scotland today and yesterday, an improvement of 12 on last week's record. The total in Scotland today was 184, 3 more than yesterday and 26 up on last Friday. The NCB have announced that so much gas and water has built up at Polkemmet Colliery in West Lothian that no coal will be produced for up to a year, and even then only if the current damage is repairable. 2 heavy duty submersible pumps are being obtained so that the salvage operations can begin by drying out the shafts. The flooding was caused by lack of NUM safety cover for a week until Monday night. Safety cover has still been withdrawn at Castlehill, Longannet, Frances, Killoch and Monkton Hall collieries.

In the North East Paul Wilkinson continued to work at Easington colliery today, despite nearly 200 pickets. Local MP Jack Dormand led an NUM delegation to complain to the police that Mr Wilkinson had been got into work via a side entrance. Some arrests were reported. Eleven men went to work at Wearmouth colliery again this morning, 500 pickets were present outside the pit but no trouble was reported. The NCB confirmed that 10 of these were members of COSA, and that the eleventh was from another section of the NUM. A single NUM member again defied pickets to go to work at the Monkton coal preparation plant in Jarrow.

28 miners reported for work in Yorkshire today - 9 more than last Friday's record. The breakdown between areas is as follows:
North Yorkshire - Gascoigne Wood 2 (80 pickets), elsewhere in

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Selby 5 (300 pickets), Allerton Bywater 4 (up 1 - 60 pickets), Stillingfleet 2 (new); Doncaster - Markham 1 (100 pickets), Yorkshire Main 1 (new, 50 pickets), Carcroft Park Workshops 2 (new, 150 pickets); South Yorkshire - Kiverton Park 7 (up 1, 600/700 pickets, 2 arrests), Silverwood 2 (up 1, 150 pickets), Brookhouse 2 (new, 700 pickets).

In North Derbyshire, there were a record 142 at Warsop, 14 up on last Friday (250 pickets). Attendance at Shirebrook was 139, 3 below the best last week (450 pickets). Numbers at Bolsover have been building up steadily after their holiday. Today 192 reported for work there - this compares with 157 yesterday and a maximum of around 220 before the holiday.

The best news in Western area is that men have returned to Bold colliery in Lancashire for the first time since the strike began. 6 men appeared on Monday, 5 yesterday and 6 again today.

South Wales, Kent and Barnsley area continue to have all men on strike or picketed out.

Coal Movements

A small quantity, 9,000 tonnes, was dispatched by the NCB on Bank Holiday Monday. Around 98,000 tonnes were moved yesterday, of which about 76,000 were for the CEGB. As 21 pits which usually work normally were on holiday yesterday, this level of movements was greater than expected. Around 25 trains ran. The NCB hope that total movements for the week might reach nearly 500,000 tonnes.

BR management have warned that it may be difficult to maintain the present level of coal trains in the run up to the national work to rule on 10 September, if this has not been called off by then. Talks between London Regional Transport management and unions on Friday may prove crucial.

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Law and Order

The most serious incident today occurred at New Cummock in Ayrshire, where 87 striking miners were arrested for failing to move from outside the home of a miner who is working at Killoch colliery. Police are reported to be considering the use of an 1875 Act which makes it illegal to "beset a house".

More than 20 people were arrested outside Bold colliery in Lancashire this morning, 12 arrests were also made there yesterday. 19 were arrested outside Easington colliery in the North East yesterday; this has regularly been the scene of disturbances. 2 men - a striker and a working miner - were charged with breach of the peace outside Renishaw Park colliery in North Derbyshire this morning. 2 men also appeared in court today in connection with the unpleasant incident in which a working miner was thrown off his motorcycle after a cable was stretched across a road.

Dispute in the Docks

Responses by dockers to the TGWU call for a national strike remain mixed and the number of docks not working continues to vary - some helpful signs have however emerged. The positive points are: dockers in the North East voted by 322 to 156 to return to work from 6 am tomorrow, having been on strike since last Friday; 150 tugboatmen at Southampton have also decided to work on despite other TGWU members there being on strike; and at Grimsby, where all the men walked out yesterday after voting to keep working at the weekend, nearly half the commercial dock workers reported for work. Less helpful developments included the decision by Barry dockers in South Wales to join the strike (after unloading a banana boat!); and the small numbers who actually crossed picket lines at Tilbury and Bristol after the confusion and calls for a return to work there yesterday.

Mass meetings planned at Tilbury, Dover and Felixstowe for tomorrow should provide a further indication of dockers intentions. It is not clear whether the union will allow a ballot to be taken at these three meetings.

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Mr Donald Stringer, chairman of the National Association of Port Employers, said this afternoon that it was "possible" he would approach the TGWU to discuss ways of ending the dispute. He insisted that no meeting would be sought before other groups of dockers decided whether to join the strike in the next few days. He estimated that around 10,000 dockers were currently on strike, and said that the employers had decided against taking legal action against the dockers.

Preparation for the TUC Congress

Today the NUM knocked down suggestions current yesterday that they might be willing to come to an agreement with the TUC General Council about the motions to be tabled at next week's Congress. NUM general secretary Peter Heathfield said today that there would be no meeting between the NUM Executive and the TUC General Council to discuss the pit strike strategy. This makes it more likely that the Council will have to make its own statement on the dispute, which could lead to a left/right split at the Congress. To add to the embarrassment, Mr Scargill issued a statement from NUM headquarters in Sheffield today which said: "The NUM wishes to make it clear that the amendment to our resolution standing in the name of the NUR asking for a levy of 10p per person per week in support of the miners has not been withdrawn."

Line to Take

The return to work seen in the last couple of weeks continues to make progress, particularly in Scotland and Yorkshire. In the last few days we have seen further manoeuvring by union officials in attempts to prevent their members having a say in the decisions of their unions. If dockers, like miners, were all given the right to a ballot, then we would soon see any widespread support for a strike disappear.

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