

SECRET AND PERSONAL

10
BDaily Coal Report - Thursday 6 September 1984Pit categories

	<u>Number</u>	<u>plus on holiday</u>
(i) Working normally	42	3
(ii) Turning some coal	7	2
(iii) Some men present	17	-
(iv) On strike/picketed out	102	1

Again the picture is encouraging, and attendances are up.

Two further pits, Bettshanger (Kent) and Arkwright (North Derby) have now moved from category (iv) to (iii).

A record 223 men have reported for work in Scotland, including 154 at Bilston Glen (up 1 from yesterday).

The NUM have withdrawn safety cover at five pits, though the encouraging development is that the pit deputies union (NACODS) is now co-operating with management.

In the North East both Wilkinsons have reported for duty at Easington pit. 2 further men have reported at Wearmouth, bringing the total to 19.

SECRET AND PERSONAL

SECRET AND PERSONAL

33 men have reported for work in Yorkshire (up 2 from yesterday). The breakdown is as follows:-

Kellingley	-	2	
Allerton Bywater	-	5	
Gascoigne Wood	-	2	
Elsewhere in the Selby complex	-	4	
Yorkshire Main	-	4	
Markham	-	3	
Carcroft	-	1	
Kiveton Park	-	8	(up 1, despite 3,000 pickets yesterday)
Silverwood	-	2	
Brookhouse	-	2	

In North Derby attendances have risen at Bolsover (239, up 4 on yesterday), and Warsop (159, up 1), though at Shirebrook, where there are 300 pickets, numbers have declined by 3 to 155.

4 men have reported at the Arkwright pit which has now come into category (iii) for the first time.

In Kent there are again 4 men at Bettshanger and 23 at Tilmanstone.

Coal Movements

Yesterday was even better than Tuesday. 152,000 tonnes were moved - the best daily figure since late May.

41 coal trains ran.

1,000 tonnes of coal went by road to BSC Scunthorpe.

Movements of coke from BSCs Orgreave plant have proceeded

SECRET AND PERSONAL

SECRET AND PERSONAL

without disruption.

Law and Order

There was trouble at Kellingley (North Yorkshire) where 3,000 pickets gathered. There were scuffles with several police injured and an ITN camera car overturned and burnt.

There was also trouble in the North East, with 500 pickets at Wearmouth and 7 arrests. At Westoe NCB clerical staff were barricaded in their offices by 250 pickets. At Hawthorne pit, where 450 pickets gathered, the single miner who reported yesterday stayed away today.

In Kent, 3 men have been arrested following yesterday's serious assault on a maintenance engineer at Tilmanstone. The situation there this morning is fairly quiet.

Talks between the NCB and NUM

The NUM's response (text attached) to the Coal Board's formal invitation to talks gives little cause for optimism that the union is approaching the talks in a constructive spirit. For its part, the Board has today written to the NUM reconfirming its wish to talk on Sunday and reiterating its desire to obtain a reasoned settlement based on the draft discussion document tabled in July. A copy of the Board's letter is also attached.

Docks Dispute

DTI report that a further coal ship is due to dock tomorrow at Hunterston.

SECRET AND PERSONAL

D/Transport report that dockers at Goole have decided to strike following a visit by pickets from Dundee. These pickets are now believed to be heading for Teeside and Immingham.

The Port of London Authority are understood to expect the result of the ballot of their workers tomorrow.

Rail Dispute

D/Transport report that British Rail are still hopeful that the threatened work to rule may yet be averted. Talks are continuing.

Line to Take

The Coal Board have done everything they can. It is now up to the NUM to confirm finally that they will attend Sunday's meeting, and to approach that meeting in a constructive spirit.

[See also attached extract from speech to be delivered by Secretary of State for Energy to tonight's Scottish CBI dinner].

Distribution: MISC 101 members, Mr Gregson (Cabinet Office)

Enquiries: Michael Reidy, PS/SOS for Energy, 211 6070

Text of letter from Mr Heathfield to the NCB

"I am in receipt of your letter dated September 5, reiterating Mr MacGregor's offer to reopen negotiations with the NUM on Sunday at a mutually agreed location.

I hope the board will attend this meeting so that the matter on which you broke off negotiations in July can be resolved, and that you will now drop your demands for the closure of so-called uneconomic pits which started off the dispute, and which is of course in violation of Plan for Coal.

We hope therefore that when the two sides meet the coal board will be able to confirm its verbal undertaking to:

1. Withdraw the pit closure programme announced on March 6.
2. Keep open the five pits - Polmaise (Scotland), Herrington (Durham), Cortonwood and Bullcliffe Wood (Yorkshire), and Snowden (Kent), currently under closure threat.
3. Reach agreement with the NUM regarding the exhaustion of colliery reserves on the basis of Plan for Coal.

As indicated previously, we want to see an expanding and developing industry in line with the Plan for Coal, and in the interests of British miners, their families, and the entire nation. We await your reply."

TELEPHONE
01-235 2020

TELEX 882161 HOB

NATIONAL COAL BOARD
HOBART HOUSE
GROSVENOR PLACE
LONDON SW1X 7AE

P. E. Heathfield Esq.,
Secretary,
National Union of Mineworkers,
St. James' House,
Vicar Lane,
SHEFFIELD,
S1 2EX.

6th September, 1984

Dear Mr. Heathfield,

I refer to your letter of 5th September. It is not the wish of the Board to continue the public conjecture on the question of arrangements between us with regard to meetings. We think it necessary, however, just to recall that at our last meeting on 18th July the Board did not break off negotiations. As you know, after many hours of negotiation on the Board's discussion document related to Clause 3(c), we mutually agreed that there were no grounds for further progress to be made.

It is also important to point out that, contrary to the statement in your letter, the Board did not, either in writing or verbally, agree to the course of action implied by the three points contained in your letter. What we did propose was clearly set out in our draft discussion paper, a copy of which I attach herewith since you may not have it with you at the Brighton Conference. You will also recall that in making these proposals, intended to assist you in reaching a solution to the present dispute, they were to be taken as a "package". It was because you were unwilling to accept these proposals in the whole that the negotiations broke down.

We also regard it as important in this letter to reiterate once again that the Board's proposals put to all the Unions on 6th March for a reduction in output were not in violation of Plan for Coal, as the NUM repeatedly assert. The Plan for Coal anticipated that in the decade up to 1985 capacity would be closed at a rate of between 3 and 4 million tonnes a year. The Plan also envisaged that during the same period, of the order of 40m. tonnes of new capacity would be constructed. As you will know, by the end of the year 1983/84 only some 14m. tonnes of capacity was closed, an average of 1.7m. tonnes a year. During that period, however, 19m. tonnes of new capacity was constructed and was in operation, and a further 24m. tonnes was under construction which will come into operation within the next 3 or 4 years.

The great difficulty that beset our industry, in common with many other industries, was that the demand for energy envisaged in the Plan fell short by about 100m. tonnes of coal equivalent, and despite the fact that our industry maintained, indeed marginally increased, its share of the market, by the end of the last full year of normal operations, i.e. March 1983, there were 56m. tonnes of coal in stock in this country including

/cont...

28m. tonnes held by the Board. This was an all time record stock, increasing at the rate of 8m. tonnes a year at an annual cost in excess of £350m. a year.

As you know, output was reduced last year by 4m. tonnes with an associated manpower reduction which was achieved on an entirely voluntary basis. The Board's proposals made on 6th March at the request of all the Unions in the industry was to achieve a further reduction in output of 4m. tonnes, bringing supply and demand into balance. Again it was envisaged that the associated manpower reduction would be achieved on a voluntary basis. Given that output and demand could have been brought into balance this year, it was the intention that we would jointly continue to attack the market and from a stable base of 100m. tonnes of output begin to expand our sales. We find it difficult to understand how the events briefly outlined above can repeatedly be described by the NUM as a willful breach of the principles of the Plan for Coal.

It has always been our wish to obtain a reasoned settlement to the dispute to end the hardship and division within the industry, and we hope that at our meeting with you on Sunday next you will be prepared to consider this objective based on the movement by the Board contained in the attached discussion document last considered in July. We sincerely hope that you will agree to attend the meeting on this basis.

I confirm that the Board team will be available for our meeting on Sunday evening and perhaps you will be kind enough to contact me later today at my office so that we may make the necessary detailed arrangements with regard to venue etc.

Yours sincerely,

Ned Smith

NCB PROPOSED DISCUSSION DOCUMENT 18TH JULY 1984

The NCB and the NUM have examined the current situation, in an effort to resolve the present dispute and provide a basis for the future of a sound industry.

1. On March 6th the NCB put forward proposals designed to influence the prospects of the industry and to equate production with market requirements. There have been losses of output resulting from the dispute and changes in the needs of the market. In the light of the changed circumstances the Board will re-examine the proposals for the industry and revise the objectives for the individual Areas.
2. The following collieries referred to specifically by the NUM - namely
 - (a) Polmaise
 - (b) Herrington
 - (c) Cortonwood
 - (d) Bullcliffe Wood
 - (e) Snowdownwill continue in operation. Any future decisions relating to these (and other collieries) will be dealt with in accordance with the guidelines under section 3 below.
3. In order to establish more clearly the parameters in respect of exhaustion of reserves - in line with the principles of the Plan for Coal - it is agreed that in the future the following categories and procedures will apply:-
 - (a) Collieries which are exhausted in line with the principles set out in the Plan for Coal will be closed by joint agreement.
 - (b) Collieries facing severe geological difficulties, i.e. safety, again in line with the principles of the Plan for Coal, will be closed by joint agreement.
 - (c) The NCB and NUM agree that where a comprehensive and in-depth investigation by their respective mining engineers shows that a colliery has no further mineable reserves that are workable and which can be beneficially developed, such a colliery shall be deemed exhausted.
4. On the basis of the above arrangements the Board and the Unions will jointly discuss the Plan for Coal and any proposed revision. It is agreed that these discussions will seek to identify the basis for jointly establishing a developing and expanding coal industry equipped to meet future energy requirements.