

Daily Coal Report - Friday 7 September 1984Pit categories

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

Although attendances have dipped slightly in some areas this is normal for a Friday, and today's figures are substantially better than those for last Friday.

A record number of miners have reported for work in Scotland. Again there are 154 men at Bilston Glen. Safety cover is again being provided at all Scottish pits.

The situation in the North East is unchanged with both Wilkinsons in at the Easington pit and 19 men at Wearmouth.

32 men have reported for work in Yorkshire, 1 less than yesterday. In North Derby 231 men reported at Bolsover (compared to 190 last Friday), 150 at Shirebrook (compared to 143) and 140 at Warsop (compared to 134). In Kent, 22 men have reported at Tilmanstone (down by 1 because of intimidation) and 4 at Betteshanger.

Coal Movements

Another very good day. 155,000 tonnes were moved. The NCB estimate that total movements for the week should be around 700,000 tonnes.

45 coal trains ran.

800 tonnes of coal went by road to BSC Scunthorpe. Coke movements from BSCs Orgreave plant are still running smoothly.

Department of Transport report that British Rail remain optimistic that next weeks work to rule will be called off. The unions are having further discussions today.

Law and Order

Some 700 policemen have now been injured since the dispute started. Since Mr Kinnoch condemned violence at the TUC conference on Thursday 36 policemen have been injured.

At Kellingley (North Yorkshire) yesterday where 4,000 pickets gathered, 13 people, including 9 policemen, were injured.

Today's major trouble spot is the Kiveton Park colliery in South Yorkshire where some 3,000 pickets threw a hail of missiles at police as 7 miners (1 less than yesterday) reported for work. There were 8 arrests.

In North Derbyshire 9 were arrested after a police vehicle and Coal Board van carrying working miners were stoned.

In Deal (Kent) a group of pickets waiting for Tilmanstone men overturned a car and caused other damage. 16 arrests were made.

Talks between the NCB and the NUM

It now seems certain that Sunday evening's meeting will go ahead. The latest letter from the union is attached. Its tone is predictable.

TUC

The TUC General Council met after the close of Congress in Brighton today. Afterwards Mr Willis issued a statement claiming that the TUC can deliver powerful support to the NUM (though there are other indications to suggest that the TUC is applying pressure on the NUM for an early settlement of the dispute).

Docks Dispute

The Port of London Authority have stated that in their secret ballot 1,398 men have voted in favour of a return to work, compared with only 41 men wanting to stay on strike. 51.4% of the 2,800 workforce returned their ballot forms.

In Bristol more than 130 dockers have voted to go back to work.

Yesterday's decision by dockers at Immingham to restart ore supplies to BSC Scunthorpe is obviously most welcome. DTI report that lorries are already moving.

SECRET AND PERSONAL

Line to Take

The people of this country wish to see this damaging dispute ended without delay. The Coal Board have made abundantly clear their wish to build a prosperous industry for the future. It is up to the NUM to show on Sunday that they have the interests of their members at heart by negotiating constructively to secure a solution.

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SECRET AND PERSONAL

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Please quote our reference in reply:

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Mr. N. Smith,
Director of Industrial Relations,
National Coal Board,
Hobart House,
Grosvenor Place,
LONDON SW1

6th September, 1984

Dear Mr. Smith,

I am in receipt of the Coal Board's letter dated 6th September, and, in replying must say at the outset that the Union is deeply concerned at the way in which the Chairman of the Board has jeopardized very serious and delicate negotiations by turning them into a media event.

For the sake of the record, we must reiterate that it was the Board which broke off negotiations on 18th July. You will recall that when the NUM requested that talks be reconvened on the following morning, Mr. MacGregor said there was no point in a further meeting and, anyway, he was too busy.

I would remind you that you did agree verbally to all the points in the Union's final draft document, with the exception of clause 3(c), presented on 18th July.

It is clear from your letter that you are deliberately ignoring the revised 1977 Plan for Coal, which projected an exhaustion rate of between 1 and 3 million tonnes per year. We would point out that the actual exhaustion rate of 1.7 million tonnes per year is in line with this projection.

Furthermore, the 1977 Plan for Coal envisages 100 million tonnes of new capacity, not 40 million tonnes as you claim.

Your reference to the fall in energy demand is, again, covered by Plan for Coal, which makes very clear provisions to protect the industry, stating that it "should not be at the mercy of short-term fluctuations in the prices of competing fuels".

The Board's proposals announced on the 6th March planned a 4 million tonnes reduction in annual output; it was claimed that "when this has been done, we will have achieved our objective of balancing output with market demand".

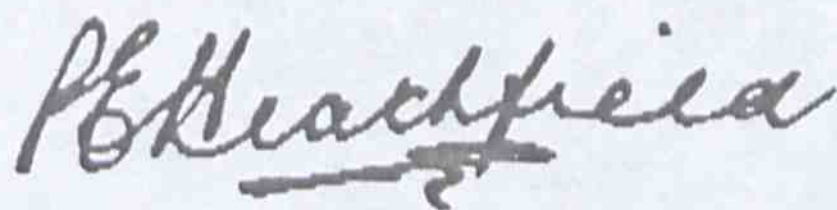
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Since the dispute began in November, 1983, 54 million tonnes of coal production has been lost, equivalent to 14 times the reduction in annual output planned by the Board. This point was conceded by you in negotiations, and in view of this the Union is entitled to ask why the Board does not withdraw the pit closure programme, keep open the pits currently under threat and resolve the strike?

The Union has always sought to negotiate a settlement of this costly and damaging dispute. We hope that at the meeting on Sunday, you will be prepared to consider a settlement based on the submissions of the Union detailed in the attached discussion document presented for your consideration on 18th July.

We sincerely hope you will agree to attend the meeting on this basis. I confirm that the Union's team will be available for a meeting on Sunday evening; perhaps you will be kind enough to contact me as quickly as possible in Brighton so that we may make the necessary arrangements with regard to venue, etc.

Yours sincerely,



P.E. HEATHFIELD
Secretary