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File

AT 21/9  
PRIME MINISTER

21 September 1984

COAL DISPUTE

You asked on Thursday about the next steps to increase endurance and improve the chances of encouraging more miners back to work.

The best courses of action are:

Open-cast

1. Support Peter Walker in his battle with the lawyers over road transport instead of rail transport from open-cast sites.
2. Step up production under existing contracts.
3. Let new open-cast contracts on sites where planning permission has already been granted.
4. Press for early planning applications for other sites.
5. Explore with NCB changing the distribution arrangements of open-cast coal, bypassing NCB.

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Enforcing the law

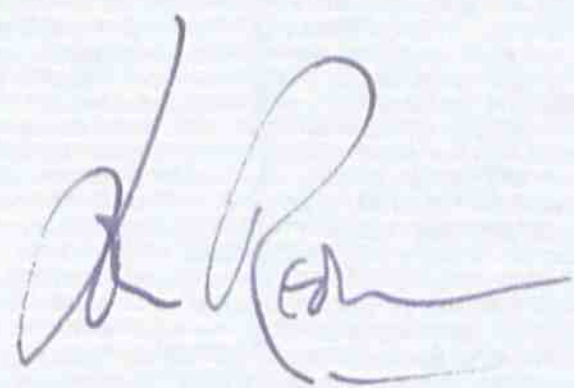
1. Continue to press for more stipendiaries.
2. Encourage more cases to be brought against riot, incitement, criminal damage etc.
3. Encourage NCB to extend its threat of dismissal to all those not only convicted of criminal damage against Coal Board property, but also those convicted of serious offences against persons on picket lines or on Coal Board premises.
4. Investigating further speeding up of trials.

Discussing with Ian MacGregor:

- a. Ways of strengthening the management of the regions most likely to go back to work.
- b. Discussing with him the tactics for organising a more voluminous return to work in the better areas, and for using senior Coal Board management where possible to allay miners' fears about intimidation.
- c. Strengthening the Coal Board's press campaign, both to reassure potential working miners about intimidation, and to keep on reaffirming the Coal Board's case.

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- d. Discussion about the handling of face and pit closures (eg Polkemmet) and the message of those closures to miners.



JOHN REDWOOD