

SECRET AND PERSONAL

21/9
cc Mr Butler
Mr Gregson

2A

PRIME MINISTER

Copy 1 of 4 copies

COAL DISPUTE

At the meeting you are holding on Sunday evening it would be helpful to divide the issues into the immediate ones which need to be addressed for the coming week; those on a longer term scale concerning the way the dispute can be brought to an end; and finally, longer term issues on the structure of the industry. I attach a note listing points which it would be helpful to discuss.

Obviously the handling of the coming week must have priority. It may be better then to consider the various issues relating to the resolution of the dispute and to take up the longer term structure of the coal industry only if there is time when the other items on the Agenda have been considered. (Enclosed in the folder is the Policy Unit note on the future of the industry which you have already seen). It may help to keep the discussion in a logical order if Mr Walker and Mr MacGregor also had the Agenda note. Spare copies are enclosed.

One characteristic of earlier meetings with Mr MacGregor is that he rarely manages to express his views at any length. If you want to find out what ideas the Board has (if any) you will need to give him time to answer the points you put to him and to prevent Mr Walker from answering the questions for him.

HT

Andrew Turnbull
21 September 1984

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All copies
destroyed except
one for PG.

COAL DISPUTE

A IMMEDIATE ISSUES

(i) Talks with the TUC on Monday

- How do NCB intend to present their case?
- Do TUC members consider NUM demand on uneconomic pits is unreasonable?
- What have the TUC to say about methods by which the strike is being conducted?
- How to handle pressure to resume negotiations - see (ii) below?
- What to say to press afterwards?

- *Pidul. C. Williams.*

(ii) ACAS

- What contact has NCB had with ACAS?
- What role, if any, is seen for ACAS?
- How best to discourage hopes of an ACAS inspired settlement without appearing unreasonable to the public?

(iii) NACODS

- What contact has NCB had with union?
- What more can be done to head off adverse result?
- Assessment of vote and union executive's next move.
- Assessment of response from members. Would men in working areas stay in? Would safety cover be maintained?
- Assessment of ability to get by without them.

(iv) Interim Pay Rise

- Where have discussions got to?
- Implications for constitutional position of working miners if rise is accepted?
- At what level should it be pitched? How structured and described - eg as 'payment on account'?
- Impact on overtime ban.
- Any other carrots to reward workers and encourage return?

B FUTURE HANDLING OF STRIKE

(v) By which route will it end

- By crumbling of support? Is this taking place fast enough?
- Revolt of executive committee?
- Ballot?
- Negotiations?
- Legal action?

(vi) Redundancies

- How do NCB now assess pros and cons of making redundancy payments?
- What proposals it is considering?
- Should undertaking be given to working miners that their applications will have priority (as an incentive to return or to help escape from hostility after the strike)?

(vii) Closures

- Should closure of uneconomic pits be pursued unilaterally?
- Should damaged uneconomic pits be abandoned?

(viii) Withdrawal of offer

- Does it make any sense to withdraw the existing offer? How does this concept apply to forms of words?

(ix) Civil Law

- Under 1980 and 1982 Acts?
- Under 1984 Act?
- By NCB, BSC, BR?
- By injured companies?
- By working miners? - see below

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(x) Working Miners Committee

- What are they doing to organise return to work?
- What legal action are they taking?
- How to respond to Prime Minister's wish to meet representatives of working miners? Which men? When and where?

(xi) Safeguarding Working Miners

- Should NCB offer to transfer to less hostile pits after the strike those who lead return?
- Should miners guilty of criminal offences against other miners be sacked?

(xii) Getting the message through

- What media?
- Are NCB Management doing enough in all areas?
- Should miners have a better indication of prospects for their own pit?

(xiii) Miners Communities

- Can NCB Enterprise Agency be given more prominence?
- Should its role and funding be expanded?
- Could reclamation of derelict land provide employment for ex-miners?

(xiv) Open cast sites

- Can output at existing sites be increased?
- Can movements from existing sites be increased?
- Are there sites with planning permission which can be brought into production? If so, in what time scale?

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C LONGER TERM STRUCTURE OF COAL INDUSTRY

- What work should be done while strike is still on to plan for a new structure?
- Regionalisation.
- Separate subsidies for new developments.
- Greater role for open cast.
- Separation of NCB's functions as an operator and a licensing authority.