

NOTE FOR THE RECORD

Mr. King reported to the Prime Minister in Brighton that the NUM and NCB were discussing a text which ran as follows:

"3(c): Any other colliery not covered by 3(a) or (b) may be brought forward by either party for discussion and investigation in line with Plan for Coal and the Colliery Review Procedure.

3(d): The Colliery Review Procedure will be amended to include an independent appeals body whose function will be to consider an appeal from any one of the mining unions, or the NCB, on any matter arising from 3(a)-(c).

Alternative Codicils:

(i): Any decision of this body will be binding.

(ii): Full weight will be given to the advice of this body."

The Prime Minister discussed this with Mr. Walker by phone. It was not clear whose draft this was, but it seemed likely that it had been prepared by ACAS and the NUM.

The Prime Minister said it was unsatisfactory in several respects:

(i) The body should be advisory and should consider applications rather than appeals.

(ii) The NCB should not be an applicant as this would, in effect, concede its management function.

Mr. King spoke subsequently to Douglas Smith in his Department who said that NCB had raised three objections to the text:

- (a) They wished the body to be advisory.
- (b) The role of the body should be confined to paragraph 3(c), i.e. it should not consider pits closed under heads 3(a) and 3(b).
- (c) The phrase "in line with Plan for Coal" should be replaced by "in line with the principles of Plan for Coal".

It subsequently emerged that the NCB had secured agreement to their objections (b) and (c) and to the deletion of the reference to the NCB as an appellant to the body. The argument which remained therefore focussed on whether the body should be advisory and on whether its findings should be binding.

Apparently, earlier in the day agreement had been reached with NACODS that the body should be advisory only.

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