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10 DOWNING STREET

From the Private Secretary

19 February 1982

Extra oilburn during the ASLEF dispute

The Prime Minister has seen a copy of the Chancellor of the Exchequer's letter of 18 February about the financing of oil burn during the ASLEF dispute.

This letter crosses with my letter of 18 February to Anthony Mayer in which I recorded the outcome of the Prime Minister's discussion with your Secretary of State after Cabinet yesterday. The purpose of this letter is to make it clear that the Prime Minister wishes your Secretary of State to arrange that coal stocks are rebuilt at the fastest possible rate over the coming weeks, by means of continuation of maximum oil burn, road haulage, use of the Scottish link; and also super accelerated rail delivery. The Prime Minister believes that such action is justified by the run-down of stocks in the wake of the ASLEF dispute, and by the recent very cold weather; and also by the continuing fragility of the ASLEF situation.

I am sending copies of this letter to John Holmes (FCO), John Kerr (HM Treasury), Muir Russell (Scottish Office), Caroline Varley (Department of Industry), John Rhodes (Department of Trade), Anthony Mayer (Department of Transport), Barnaby Shaw (Department of Employment), David Wright (Cabinet Office) and Gerry Spence (CPRS).

M. G. SCHOLAR

Julian West, Esq.,  
Department of Energy.

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