



SECRETARY OF STATE FOR ENERGY
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16 March 1984

R. Mitchell

I am anxious that you should have some background information upon the dispute between some sections of the National Union of Mineworkers and the National Coal Board.

The two main points that Mr Scargill has propounded as the reason for industrial action have been the pay offer and pit closures.

The Pay Offer

Last autumn, the miners were offered an additional 5.2% on base rates as from 1 November 1983. This will add £6.80 to the basic pay of coal-face workers.

When surveyed before the present industrial troubles, the average earnings of a face worker were £179 per week and with the increase could be expected to exceed £185. Average miners will receive some £65 a week more than they were receiving when the Conservatives came into office in 1979. In 1983 miners average earnings were 26% above the average earnings in manufacturing industry. Throughout the period of the Conservative Government they have been between 23% and 27% above the earnings in manufacturing industry. During the period of the Labour Government, with Mr Benn as the Secretary of State for Energy, miners earnings were at one point only 8% and on average only 18% above the earnings in manufacturing industry.

The pay offer will more than keep pace with the rate of inflation.

The pay offer is made in spite of the industry having to receive external financing of over £1 billion in this financial year. Grants and payments in support of the Coal industry amount to £90 per week for every miner.

If the miners ceased their overtime ban and their industrial action now, a face-worker would receive over £130 backpay for an increase that was available to him from the 1 November last.



Pit Closures

During eleven years of Labour Government over 300 pits were closed. During nine years of Conservative Government 92 pits have been closed.

There is an urgent need now to close further uneconomic pits. In the last full year the best twenty pits produced coal costing £28 per tonne, the worst 20 pits produced coal costing £89 per tonne. As the Chairman of the Board has said, the worst 12% of coal output loses £275 million a year.

The miners, when they originally agreed in 1974 to "Plan for Coal", agreed three major objectives of that plan: (1) massive investment; (2) an improvement in productivity of 4% per annum; (3) the taking out of production of between 3-4 million tonnes of coal per year from the least economic pits. Only the first of these objectives has been achieved, that of course being the objective fulfilled by the Government in agreeing to a investment programme which has been running at the rate of £2 million per day since the Conservatives came into office.

Productivity, instead of being improved by 4% a year, improved by only 4.7% over ten years.

Instead of uneconomic pits closing at the rate of 3-4 million tonnes per year, they have only closed at a rate of 1-2 million tonnes a year.

It is for this reason that further closures are needed. These will reduce mining manpower by about 20,000 during the coming year. This reduction in manpower is similar to that which has taken place during this past year.

During this past year, although some 20,000 men have left the industry on redundancy terms, there have been no compulsory redundancies. At every pit closure miners have been offered an alternative job in a nearby pit or, alternatively, if over the age of 50, generous redundancy/early retirement benefits which many miners have eagerly and voluntarily taken.

In recognition of the fact that some miners under the age of 50 may be affected in this year's closures, the Government has announced its intention to introduce similarly generous terms for the under 50s.

I enclose a copy of Coal News which sets out very accurately the overall plan for the coming year. On the back page you will see the details of the remarkably generous redundancy programme that will be on offer.



Therefore on pit closures the NCB will be reducing their manpower from in the region of 186,000 to 166,000, but none of the 20,000 men involved will suffer hardship because the Government has agreed to the most generous provisions.

The Government's case is a very clear one. There is a fine future for the coal industry with good pits and good machinery. For this reason we announced this year the development of the Asfordby Pit which will cost £400 million and we are continuing the high investment programme.

The only secure coal industry of the future is one in which the uneconomic pits cease to drag down the whole industry, but the Government has decided to achieve that objective in the most civilised and generous way.

I hope therefore you will carefully read Coal News; and that you will also do all in your power to make it clear that this is not a Government attacking miners, this is a Government endeavouring to create a coal industry which gives miners a secure and prosperous future and gives the country a coal industry which will strengthen, and not weaken, our economy.

With best wishes

PETER WALKER

COAL NEWS

THE NEWSPAPER OF THE MINING INDUSTRY

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Collieries stay open for work — MacGregor

THE majority of miners who have so far been given the opportunity to vote have decided they want to stay at work.

They do not believe the false claims which have been made of impending 'butchery' and 'devastation' in the industry.

And they realise it is senseless to make life increasingly difficult for coal's customers — the people who pay miners' wages and who we rely on for future business.

That is the verdict of National Coal Board chairman Ian MacGregor.

"We will continue to keep the pits open for the many men who want to carry on working," he said.

"Of course our customers are dismayed when their supplies are interrupted — but supplies are getting through and stocks remain high.

"Our customers are also impressed by the determination of the many miners to keep working, despite the intimidation by mass pickets of strikers from coalfields where they have not even had the opportunity to ballot."

Warning that some hot-heads and extremists inside and outside the industry would continue to distort the truth in order to try and cause disruption, Mr. MacGregor said it was important to consider the facts of the Board's plans for the year ahead.

These were clearly explained to leaders of the NUM and other unions at a meeting of the industry's National Consultative Council.

Objectives

The proposals for 1984/5 are not a plan to run the industry down. They are a continuation of the objectives announced to the unions at the beginning of 1983 to bring output into line with customers' needs by reducing high cost output and stopping huge financial losses in the industry.

The main points are:

- Deep-mined output is budgeted to be 97.4 million tonnes in 1984/5 — the year just begun.

- This is only four million tonnes less than the output would have been for the year just ended — without the overtime ban and the recent strikes.

- This comparatively small four per cent reduction will be of loss-making mining capacity — the high cost coal output we cannot sell.

- The reduction in manpower will be about the same as last year — when no one was made compulsorily redundant. With the co-operation of all concerned, we again expect to avoid compulsory redundancies this year.

This also applies, of course, to the men at South Yorkshire Area's Cortonwood Colliery, whose proposed closure has been announced. The industry's other unions — NACODS and BACM but so far not the NUM — have expressed their willingness for discussions under the industry's jointly agreed review procedure.

Local jobs

Every man at Cortonwood who wants to stay in the industry will be offered a job at another local pit and will qualify for the usual transfer allowance of up to £1,550.

Other men will be offered voluntary redundancy, including increased benefits for those up to the age of 49 (full details on centre pages).

Said Mr. MacGregor: "The industry's carefully planned strategy will win us stability in the following year. The benefits of continuing investment will then enable us to expand output to 100 million tonnes a year as new sales opportunities arise. But we must get our prices right. It is no use producing coal at prices customers are not prepared to pay."

The NCB chairman added:

"These are the facts I would like everyone in the industry to weigh up carefully. They represent the way ahead to a secure future. It would be the utmost folly to cast aside the real opportunities which now face us."

NATIONAL BALLOT WANTED

LEADERS of the Mineworkers' Union are under increasing pressure to call a national ballot as more pits and more miners were at work outside the coalfields which were in the fourth week of their strike action.

Most of the leaders of NUM areas who had already decided not to strike over pay and pit closures met on March 27 and called for:

- An immediate meeting of the union's national executive committee to organise a ballot.

- A return to normal working (but to continue the overtime ban) in areas which have decided not to strike, until a national ballot is taken.

They pointed out that at least 13 of the 24 national executive committee members were in favour of a national ballot.

They expressed concern about the future of the union and the need for unity which 'can only be achieved by retaining the democracy of the ballot box.'

The National Coal Board said that this decision represented a respect for the views of union member who had voted against a strike (see page 3).

The Board stated: "It is now clear that a major-

Majority urge NUM Executive to act

ity of the members of the union's national executive committee are in favour of a national ballot. That is the only way to end the present bitterness between areas of the union and conflict between groups of the union's members."

Subsequent opinion polls reported that most miners want to make up their own minds in a national ballot.

NUM president Arthur Scargill and secretary Peter Heathfield said the union's national officials would continue to monitor the situation. As Coal News went to press there was no sign of them calling a national executive committee meeting before the next normal monthly date — Thursday April 12.

This means that in addition to the wages lost through the overtime ban men on strike will have lost five weeks pay — and the average is more than £160 week.

Page 3: Coalfield votes
Centre pages: Redundancy benefits
Back page: FACTS about the future
Coal News will be back to its normal size after the dispute.

Mine's key to low-cost energy

COAL Board chairman Ian MacGregor paid a flying visit to the Midlands for a first-hand look at the site of the new Asfordby mine in North East Leicestershire.

After surveying the land where preparatory work is due to start later this year, Mr MacGregor said that unless the country had a low cost source of energy for the future, business and industry would fail to be competitive.

Reserves

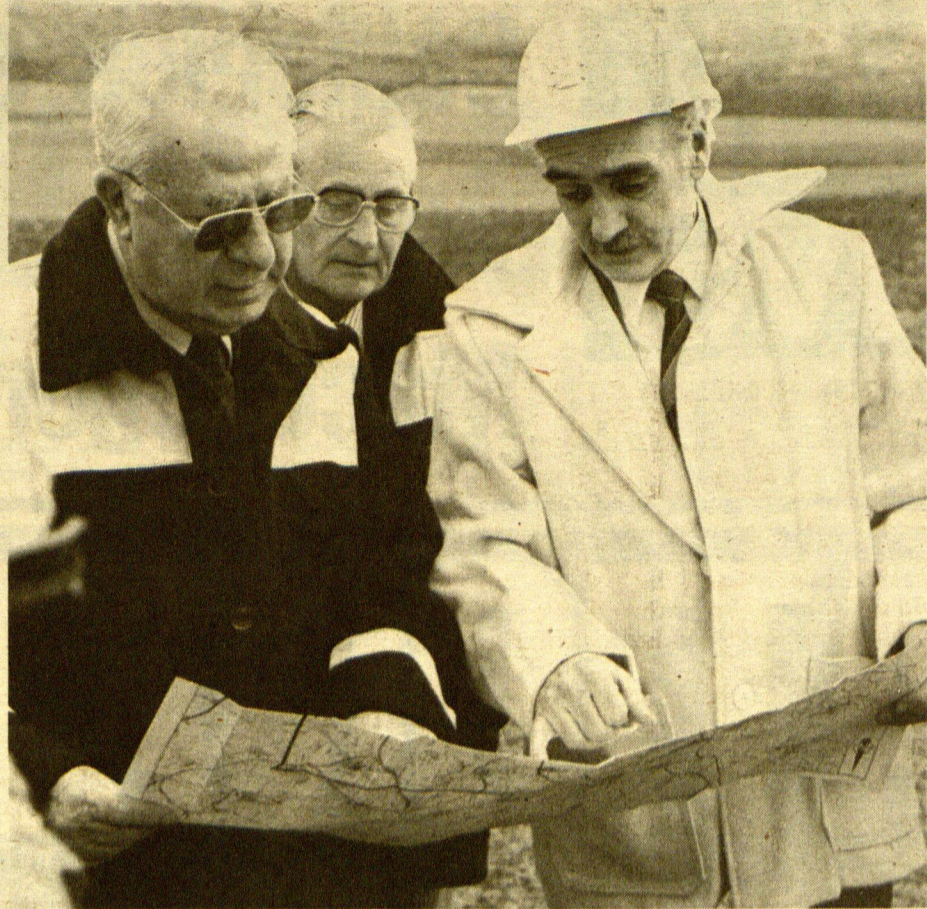
South Nottinghamshire had, he said, been one of the country's most productive coalfields, with a fine record of low-cost production. "Some of the reserves in this coalfield are a supplement to that."

"The performance of the people in Leicestershire has been such that the logical thing is to give them the opportunity of this development to the greatest extent possible." The run-down in Leicestershire, he added, had been a step towards achieving that objective.

He stressed that the Board were concerned with environmental impact in the area. "The community is beginning to learn about us," he said. "We have a very keen sensitivity in ensuring the work that goes on here does not disturb the community. We will do our best to minimise that."

And, he added, there would be "substantial sums of money" coming into the area — as much as £1 million a month in new incomes.

Reserves in the area were of



CHIEF mining engineer (major projects) Stewart Skelding, right, studies the plans for the Asfordby site with NCB chairman Ian MacGregor and deputy chairman James Cowan, centre.

great value to the people of the United Kingdom, said Mr MacGregor. "No area can afford to be selfish, we have got to learn to live in a way that is not totally selfish."

Needs

But, he said, the Board was not committed to getting the coal from other parts of the new coalfield. "It will depend on the people and their needs for energy."

Mr MacGregor was accompanied on his visit by deputy chairman James Cowan, South Midlands Area director Ralph Rawlinson and chief mining engineer (major projects) Stewart Skelding.

After a 20-minute walk around the site, where full coal production is scheduled to start in 1992/3, he held a Press conference at the George Hotel, Melton Mowbray.

Band pair are in tune on the road

THE two latest recruits to local top brass outfit Desford Dowty Band will soon be hitting the road.

They will be making an incredible 80-mile round trip for each practice session with South Midlands' nationally renowned brass banders.

Baritone player Karl Booker, a shift charge engineer at Nottinghamshire's Clipstone Colliery and flugel player Clarence Mansell, a cable joiner at Blackwell Workshops have moved to Desford in time for most of the 1984 contest season.

Says Karl: "Before moving to Desford, I played with Brown's Musical (Ransomes) Band who are based in Newark. That was about 30 miles away from my home, near Mansfield."

Of the extra 10 miles he now has to travel he says: "Desford easily rate as one of the top five in the country and for me the honour of playing with them makes it well worth every extra mile I have to travel."

Practice

The two players live within a few miles of each other and will share the cost of transport to and from the Brass Band Club in Whitwick where Desford hold their practice sessions.

Says Clarence: "I played for Desford's Yorkshire mining rival Carlton Main Frickley before moving down here, so actually it will be nearer for me. Plus, there is the added bonus of company on the journey and the reduced cost of travel through sharing the transport."

"We are both really looking forward to the contest season with Desford. They are a great outfit — they have won almost every honour available in the brass band world and we are just keeping our fingers crossed that we can help the band to continue their success and win some of those titles again during 1984 and the coming seasons."

MESSAGE OF THE POSTER SHOCKER

TRAINEE miner Richard Price lies on the ground in agony, trapped by a load of rings which slipped from a trolley. Workmates John Blaney and Frank Blower look on in horror, shocked by the sudden accident.

In a real situation, Richard could have been seriously injured or killed. As it was, the Bagworth Colliery pitman walked away without a scratch — the 'accident' had been staged for a new safety poster, to go on display in collieries throughout the country later this year.

Prevention

The safety trio got together to try and convince pitmen to ensure loads are securely fastened. Setting up the incident took an hour — time well spent if they can prevent just one accident.

Says Richard: "My back was aching a bit after a while, but it was worth it. It is not worthwhile cutting corners — the rules are there and they should be obeyed."

Frank is dust control officer at the pit, while John is dust control fitter. Says Frank: "As far as I can tell, we at Bagworth are very safety conscious."

"We have very heavy loads going down the pit, and we stress they should always be secure — it is in a man's own interest to make sure of that. Even chock blocks have two chain binders on here."

Message

"A lot of things seem to happen nowadays that are slipshod and a lot of it is neglect."

Agrees John Blaney: "I am pleased to help get the safety message across. I am very safety conscious and if I see anyone doing anything wrong, I tell him."

The incident was set up and photographed by Coal News staff photographer Deryk Wills.



ACCIDENT warning — trainee miner Richard Price is trapped as John Blaney and Frank Blower look on.

Solid fuel show place opens

COAL'S household customers can see the latest solid fuel home heating appliances and equipment at the newest Fireside Shop in the South Midlands.

Based in Union Street, Coventry, the shop was opened by George Park, MP for Coventry North East, accompanied by Warwickshire Coal Queen Dawn Johnson. Also on hand were the Solid Fuel Advisory Service Shire horses.

The shop has a display of modern appliances and fireplaces together with fuel sales and advice in a move which puts solid fuel on a par with electricity and gas showrooms.

On show

Central heating systems, chimneys, surrounds and accessories are all on show. Fuel and spare parts can be ordered at the shop and operating problems sorted out.

Said John Pendry, a divisional general manager of the British Fuel Company: "Whenever you go into a room with a nice roaring fire, you are drawn like a magnet — and quite rightly so."

He said the idea of Fireside Shops was born from the need to be informative and helpful to customers.

New technology was making solid fuel appliances acceptable all over the country, particularly in Coventry which has followed a policy of clean air. "I hope the industry will continue



COAL Queen Dawn Johnson and Coventry North East MP George Park welcome the SFAS Shire horses to the new Fireside Shop.

to prosper and develop its technology. The industry is a survivor and I hope it will continue to be so."

Manager of the Coventry Shop is Ron Gillett. Directors and senior directors of the British Fuel Company and regional representatives of the Board's marketing department and SFAS were also present at the opening.

Dance to aid blind

MINERS' club organisers hope to help the blind with proceeds from a charity dance due to be held on Thursday, April 5 at 8 pm.

Five acts and a band have been booked to appear at Coventry Colliery and Keresley Sports and Social Club, including a singer and comedian.

Says club secretary Jim White: "Tickets are 60p, on sale at the club, and we are hoping to raise more than £400 towards a 'talking newspaper' for the blind in the area."

Win customers for coal — don't drive them away

FOR the first time in five years we can foresee a stable energy market in which we can sell our coal — providing we can get over the present problems quickly and keep our customers' confidence, says NCB head of Marketing Malcolm Edwards.

That's why we have said to the unions that, once a modest adjustment is made this year to bring production and sales into balance and get our costs right, we can plan with confidence to build up for as far ahead as anyone can sensibly see.

The real danger is if people lose sight of the fact that the industry can only be as big as the markets for our coal. No orders are won by magic or making speeches. We have to look after our customers, not make things difficult for them.

Our biggest customers, the Central Electricity Generating Board, can carry on for many months. There are big coal stocks at power stations and plenty of spare oil-fired capacity to call on, although at considerable inconvenience and cost.

Electricity sales have been increasing for the first time in four years. We could benefit most from this, but because of the present dispute it's the oil companies who are getting the extra business.

ICI doubt

It took our industrial market five years to recover from the effects of the 1974 strike. But in the past five years we have made enormous strides and this is the business with best prospects for future growth.

However, potential customers are not now prepared to commit themselves to coal. It is an unfortunate fact that applications for Government grants to convert from oil or gas to coal — under the scheme the Coal Board and the unions fought for — are now only a fraction of what they were at the end of last year.

ICI were about to decide to convert their Wilton plant to coal. This would secure 1,000 mining jobs with supplies of 460,000 tonnes a year from North East Area, where there are currently 6 million tonnes in stock. Now ICI are holding back.

Exports lost

We hope the same does not happen with Nissan whose new plant is coming to the North East. We have been in direct touch with the company for two years and have high hopes that their plant will be coal-fired. So there's the prospect of more business for one of our hard-pressed coalfields.

Export business has been

The coal industry faces a potential crisis of confidence among customers who are closely following the current problems, mining union leaders were told at a meeting of the industry's national consultative council on March 6.

Energy demand in Britain has fallen more sharply than expected since 1979. But the Coal Board now believe the decline has stopped and the underlying trend can be seen with some confidence over the next five years.

The extent to which the industry can retain and build on present markets crucially depends on maintaining customer confidence — patiently built up before the overtime ban — and producing coal at a price the markets are prepared to pay.

In this interview Coal Board head of Marketing Malcolm Edwards stresses that it is essential to win over customers, not drive them into using other fuels.

won this year in highly competitive world markets because of our good reputation for quality and being near to the mainland of Europe. We have negotiated to sell 8 million tonnes of coal and coke this year. Already 300,000 tonnes of export shipments have been lost. That's tragic.

In the domestic market it's now the end of the winter heating season. With the warmer spring and summer weather coming it's the time when normally we have to make special offers to persuade our customers to stock up for next winter — but because of the dispute the Board are unlikely to be able to offer a summer discount this year.

The only real problem on supplies likely to emerge in the next few weeks is with British Steel, primarily the two works depending entirely on our coal. It's unfortunate for everyone that the two steelworks in trouble over supplies are those which decided to remain 100 per cent loyal to British coal — Scunthorpe in the North East and Llanwern in South Wales.

The way to protect jobs and safeguard the industry's future is to sell our coal — not to interfere with regular supplies. The sooner we get back to meeting our customers' full needs the better. There's a lot of work needed to repair the damage already done.



WAGGON load of loot for both Bolsover Colliery senior and junior first aid teams after they had walked off with both titles at the industry's national first aid championships. Following skipper Roy Madin (right) are, left to right, Bob Saunt, Paul Kelley, Nev and Ian Blakeley, Andrew Bytheway, Steve Hall, Stephen Bradbury, Stephen Bird, Mick Bust and Paul Sadler.

FULL RESULTS. Seniors: Bolsover, North Derbyshire, 405½ points; Whitwick, South Midlands, 405; Westoe, North East, 386½; Lea Hall, Western, 381½; Allerton Bywater, North Yorkshire, 380½; Bilston Glen, Scottish, 376; Markham Main, Doncaster, 374; Pye Hill, South Notts, 372; Cynheidre, South Wales, 357; North Gawber, Barnsley, 353; Rufford, North Notts, 318; Dinnington, South Yorkshire, 310½.

Juniors: Bolsover, North Derbyshire, 435; Cadeby, South Yorkshire, 420; Lea Hall, Western, 416½; Grimthorpe, Barnsley, 412; Westoe, North East and Kilcock, Scottish, both 409;

Allerton Bywater, North Yorks, 407; Betws, South Wales, 405; Donisthorpe, South Midlands, 397; Bentinck, South Notts, 396; Brodsworth, Doncaster, 378; Rufford, North Notts, 360.

Coal Products. Senior: Coventry Homefire, 353; Hawthorne coking works, 345½; Aberaman Phurnacite works, 345. **Ancillary workers:** Shafton central workshops, 343; Swadincote central workshops, 331; Tredomen engineering works 327. **Juniors:** Coventry Homefire, 297½; Cwm coking works, 294½; Lambton coking works, 288.

FULL REPORT NEXT MONTH

Ballots against strike

IN the coalfields where the National Union of Mineworkers areas have held individual ballots, there has been a big overall majority against strike action, ranging up to 89 per cent in Leicestershire.

Even in the Northumberland coalfield — where the question voted on was: Are you as a Northumberland miner prepared to take strike action to safeguard your job in the Northumberland area? — the 52 per cent majority for strike action fell short of the 55 per cent required under union rules.

No individual ballot vote has been taken during the current dispute in three major areas where strikes have been called.

Yorkshire miners voted three years ago to give their leaders permission to call industrial action, including strike action if necessary, to fight colliery closures for reasons other than exhaustion of coal reserves. But in last year's national ballot 54 per cent of Yorkshire miners voted for industrial action against pit

closures — 1 per cent below the minimum vote necessary for a strike under union rules.

In Scotland a delegate conference rejected a strike but empowered the area executive committee to take whatever action they thought necessary. About half the Scottish pits had voted against a strike.

In a series of lodge meetings in

South Wales, 18 out of 28 voted against a strike. The area NUM say that at subsequent meetings that decision was reversed.

The NUM executive committee on March 8 sanctioned strikes in Yorkshire and Scotland and offered support to any other area which took similar action.

Reported results of area ballots so far are:

	For a strike	%	Against a strike	%
Cumberland	109	22.2	383	77.8
Derbyshire	4,307	49.9	4,323	50.1
Leicestershire	173	10.7	1,441	89.3
Midlands	2,804	27.1	7,556	72.9
Northumberland	52		48	
North Wales	276	31.7	595	68.3
Nottingham	7,285	26.5	20,188	73.5
North Western	2,595	40.8	3,765	59.2
South Derbyshire	453	16.4	2,303	83.6
Durham				
Mechanics	36		64	
Enginemen	14.9		85.1	

PENSION INVESTMENT POLICY GOES TO LAW

A HIGH COURT case on the investment policy for the £3 billion Mineworkers' Pension Scheme was continuing as Coal News went to press.

The NCB's five trustees on the Fund are asking the court to rule that the union's trustees are in breach of their duty in refusing to approve the latest investment plan drawn up in 1982.

The union trustees want three amendments to the plan — no increase in investment overseas, no investment in directly competing energy industries such as gas and oil, and overseas investments to be withdrawn at the most opportune time.

Mr Sam Stamler QC, appearing for the NCB trustees, claimed the union trustees were 'disregarding their duty of prudence' by blocking investments in this

way. Their attitude was inconsistent with their 'fiduciary duty' as trustees to act in the interests of its beneficiaries — retired miners, widows and other dependents.

He said the fund had £200 million a year to invest. Benefits of £2.24 million were paid to pensioners in 1981/2 and yearly lump sum payments were £45.2 million. About 250,000 pensioners and 100,000 widows and former members received benefits. Members contributed £84.8 million to the scheme and the Coal Board £151.5 million.

Mr Stamler also told the judge — Vice-Chancellor Sir Robert Megarry — that in-

vestments in oil and gas and investment overseas are regarded by advisers to the scheme, its management and many other experts as necessary to the prudent investment of the funds.

Representing the union trustees, NUM president Arthur Scargill claimed the investment strategy should be decided by trustees and not by professional fund managers or other financial experts.

He said the trustees had a responsibility to see that the Fund operates in the interests of all coal industry employees as well as the beneficiaries.

This meant more investment in British industry because only by improving the country's economic base could growth be generated, jobs created and the demand for coal increased.

Mr Scargill also claimed that the union side had exercised its responsibility as trustees honestly, correctly and fairly, and in accordance with the law.

● Trustees appointed by the Board are deputy chairman James Cowan, Board member for finance Brian Harrison, director general of industrial relations Ned Smith, South Wales Area director Philip Weekes and NCB pensions and insurance director Peter Stafford. Appointed by the NUM are president Arthur Scargill, former NUM secretary Lawrence Daly, South Wales president Emyln Williams, and Nottinghamshire president Ray Chadburn.

Redundant Mineworkers Payments Scheme

YOUR QUESTIONS ANSWERED

MANY pitmen have written to Coal News inquiring about benefits from the Redundant Mineworkers Payments Scheme (RMPS) — particularly new lump sum payments of £1,000 for every year of service for men aged between 21 and 49.

For men who qualify, these improved benefits — approved by Parliament on March 28 — are based on years of service only and replace much lower payments based on age, service and earnings.

Benefits for men aged 50 and over continue to be determined by age, earnings, years of service and whether married or single.

Coal News, with the guidance of NCB industrial relations staff, answers questions miners are asking. Tables show the sort of benefits payable to redundant mineworkers aged 21 to 64.

It is obvious that benefits depend on each man's circumstances.

Q. The NCB say they aim to reduce manpower in 1984/5 by voluntary redundancies only — just as they did in the past year. Can any miner at any pit choose to be redundant?

A. No. The rules for redundancy are laid down by law. Redundancy arises only when a job ceases to exist. Only the man whose job ends, or someone whose type of work is being reduced, qualifies. Most men work at collieries where their jobs will continue to be needed, so the question of redundancy is determined by the needs of the pit or Area. If you want guidance on your own position, have a word with the management or union representatives at your colliery.

Q. What are the changes made to the RMPS?

A. The main change is to increase benefits for eligible

men (in practice most mine-workers and other industrial workers) aged 21 to 49 made redundant from April 1, 1984. Lump sum benefits previously paid from the RMPS are replaced by a single lump sum. This is quite easy to calculate on the basis of £1,000 for each complete year of coal industry employment since the age of 16.

Q. Any other changes?

A. There are two further minor improvements. Weekly benefit (excluding unemployment benefit equivalent) is payable for up to four weeks holiday abroad each year.

And there is a make-up for a man whose state redundancy lump sum has been reduced due to an earlier break in service, when he received an industry incapacity pension.

Q. Is there any other payment apart from £1,000 for every year of service for age 21 to 49?

A. Yes. There is the state lump sum under the Employment Protection (Consolidation) Act 1978. Examples of what men will get are shown in the table on the right.

Q. Does the £1,000 for each

year of service vary according to earnings?

A. No. It is based only on total years of service since age 16. It is payable to men aged 21 to 49 on redundancy irrespective of earnings.

Q. What service counts for those aged 21 to 49?

A. There must be two years' continuous service immediately before the date of redundancy. In addition, total service, whether or not continuous from age 16, is counted unless you have previously been made redundant by the NCB, received redundancy payments and subsequently rejoined the industry. In this case, only service from the date of rejoining counts.

Q. Will the £1,000 for each year of service be taxed when paid?

A. The amounts received (the State lump sum on redundancy and RMPS lump sum based on service) are added together to determine if the total is taxable. If that total is less than £25,000, the payments are exempt from tax. Under PAYE rules, tax of 30 per cent must be deducted from the excess over £25,000. For example the tax on £30,000 would be on the top £5,000 at the standard rate of 30 per cent. This would amount to a £1,500 tax deduction so the cash received would be £28,500.

Q. Would I get a refund of the tax deducted from the payment?

A. This will, of course, depend entirely on the personal circumstances of your income

for that year. Tax repayments are possible.

Q. Why have the major improvements been made for the under-50s only?

A. Because the benefits for men aged 50 and over have been substantially improved in recent years. The big improvements for under-50s are to help ensure that no hardship arises from the industry's restructuring.

Q. What are the details of benefits for men aged 50 and over?

A. The terms have not changed since the last time they were in Coal News but there have been some increases in state benefits. The table on page 4 gives examples of benefits paid.

MEN AGE 21 TO 49 — Examples of benefit for men with average weekly earnings of £165

Age	Years of service from age 16	RMPS existing lump sums £	RMPS proposed lump sums £	State redundancy lump sum £	Total lump sum £
21	5	182	5,000	217	5,217
22	6	365	6,000	290	6,290
23	7	547	7,000	435	7,435
24	8	730	8,000	580	8,580
25	9	912	9,000	725	9,725
26	10	1,194	10,000	870	10,870
27	11	1,508	11,000	1,015	12,015
28	12	1,856	12,000	1,160	13,160
29	13	2,236	13,000	1,305	14,305
30	14	2,650	14,000	1,450	15,450
31	15	2,815	15,000	1,595	16,595
32	16	2,980	16,000	1,740	17,740
33	17	3,145	17,000	1,885	18,885
34	18	3,310	18,000	2,030	20,030
35	19	3,475	19,000	2,175	21,175
36	20	3,904	20,000	2,320	22,320
37	21	4,366	21,000	2,465	23,465
38	22	4,861	22,000	2,610	24,610
39	23	5,389	23,000	2,682	25,682
40	24	6,450	24,000	2,755	26,755
41	25	6,697	25,000	2,827	27,827
42	26	6,945	26,000	2,972	28,972
43	27	7,192	27,000	3,045	30,045
44	28	7,440	28,000	3,117	31,117
45	29	7,687	29,000	3,190	32,190
46	30	7,935	30,000	3,262	33,262
47	31	8,182	31,000	3,335	34,335
48	32	8,430	32,000	3,407	35,407
49	33	8,677	33,000	3,480	36,480

Men 50 and over — married with average weekly earnings of £165

Age	Years of service	LUMP SUMS				WEEKLY BENEFITS				
		State redundancy lump sum	Redundant Mineworkers' Payments Scheme lump sums	Mineworkers' Pension Scheme		Total lump sums	RMPS	UB	MPS	Total
				Lump sum on redundancy	At age 60 to 64					
Column 1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
		£	£	£	£	£	£pw	£pw	£pw	£pw
50	30	3,553	14,531	4,184	—	22,268	8.18	43.75	26.82	78.75
51	31	3,625	14,923	4,184	—	22,732	8.18	43.75	26.82	78.75
52	32	3,698	15,316	4,184	—	23,198	8.18	43.75	26.82	78.75
53	33	3,770	15,708	4,184	—	23,662	8.18	43.75	26.82	78.75
54	34	3,843	16,101	4,184	—	24,128	8.18	43.75	26.82	78.75
55	35	3,915	7,830	—	4,184(60)	15,929	60.40	43.75	—	104.15
56	36	3,988	5,982	—	3,897(61)	13,867	60.40	43.75	—	104.15
57	37	4,060	4,060	—	3,611(62)	11,731	60.40	43.75	—	104.15
58	38	4,133	3,100	—	3,325(63)	10,558	60.40	43.75	—	104.15
59	39	4,205	2,103	—	3,039(64)	9,347	60.40	43.75	—	104.15
60	40	4,278	—	—	—	4,278	60.40	43.75	—	104.15
61	41	4,350	—	—	—	4,350	60.40	43.75	—	104.15
62	42	4,350	—	—	—	4,350	60.40	43.75	—	104.15
63	43	4,350	—	—	—	4,350	60.40	43.75	—	104.15
64	44	4,350	—	—	—	4,350	60.40	43.75	—	104.15

ABOUT THE TABLE

Column 3 — Is based on earnings of £145, the current maximum weekly pay permitted for calculating State redundancy lump sum. Men earning less than this would get smaller lump sums.
Column 4 — Combines two lump sums. One is based on percentage of weekly pay (without the limit of £145 being imposed) for each completed year of service from age 20.

The percentage for men aged 50 to 54 is 150 per cent. The other is calculated on a percentage of State redundancy lump sum (see note 3) — 200 per cent at ages 50 to 55, 150 per cent at 56, 100 per cent at 57, 75 per cent at 58 and 50 per cent at 59.
Columns 5 & 6 — MPS lump sums are payable immediately on redundancy to ages 50 to 54. They do not become payable until after the five year basic benefit period for age 55 and over.

Column 8 — For ages 50 to 54, this represents the amount of make-up to bring MPS pension up to £35 per week. For ages 55 to 64 the amount shown is the weekly basic benefit payable for the first five years of redundancy only. After this, up to age 65, MPS pension made up to £35 and unemployment benefit equivalent are payable while unemployed.
Column 9 — Unemployment benefit is normally paid by the State during the first 52 weeks of redundancy. After this, an equivalent amount is paid under the RMPS to age 65 while unemployed and not receiving State sickness benefit.
Column 10 — The MPS pension is payable for life.
RMPS = Redundant Mineworkers Payments Scheme.
UB = State unemployment benefit.
MPS = Mineworkers' Pension Scheme.

Aim is to keep long-term jobs safe

IMPROVEMENTS to the Redundant Mineworkers Payments Scheme are designed to help create in a humane and civilised way an effective and viable coal industry offering secure employment in the longer term. Energy Under-Secretary Giles Shaw said this when the House of Commons agreed the changes on March 28.

They added up to an important package underlining the Government's continuing support for those affected by redundancy, he said. They included a lump sum of £1,000 for every year of service for men aged 21 to 49, weekly benefit for men aged 55 and over to be paid for holidays abroad and protection for those whose redundancy payments would otherwise be reduced by breaks in service due to illness or injury.

Balance

MPs also agreed an Order enabling the Government to maintain the level of mineworkers' pensions.

Explaining the redundancy payment improvements, Mr Shaw said in the year just ended there were 15 closures and

several mergers and about 20,000 miners left the industry voluntarily. For 1984/5 the Board had announced a similar reduction in capacity of about four million tonnes.

All they sought to do was to get a better balance between what the market would take and what the industry produced, by reducing the least profitable parts of the industry's network. When a pit closed it was the NCB's policy wherever possible to offer men wishing to stay in the industry alternative jobs at other pits and make redundant older men wishing to leave on the terms available.

Of the men affected by pit closures in the year which has just ended — and not retained on salvage work at their pits — over 75 per cent were found jobs at other pits.

"It is a measure of the success of this policy that, despite a reduction in mining manpower of about 20,000, there were no compulsory redundancies among men wishing to stay in the industry," said Mr Shaw.

The Government believed it right to help the Board maintain

the policy of avoiding compulsory redundancy.

In many instances older miners at pits remaining open had volunteered for redundancy so that younger men at closing pits might be found additional jobs. He was aware of no formula to calculate how many men under 50 would be involved in redundancy in the coming year, but the Government felt it right to make the necessary provision.

Labour view

Labour spokesman Stanley Orme (Salford East) said they did not oppose the orders which improved redundancy payments and made modest improvements in the Mineworkers' Pension Scheme.

Some might say the proposals were extremely generous but he did not think they were because they were talking about young people who might have great difficulty in finding other employment.

The £1,000 for every year of service might seem large, but some skilled miners might be lost for all time.

"To some extent one can appreciate and support what is being done for the older miners who have had to face dust and the possibility of pneumoconiosis, but it is the young people whom the industry will need in the future.

"When the upturn in the economy arrives, we shall start getting gas, oil and chemicals from coal. We should be planning for the future, but the Government are not making any plans at the moment."

The opposition wanted to see an end to the present coal industry dispute as soon as possible, so the talking must start.

The Government should play a part in bringing the sides together to sit down and discuss the important issues. There were real alternatives based on consultation, shelving the Board's proposals and ending pit closures, he said.

In a three-hour debate arguments ranged from a claim that the orders were "about sacking more miners" to complaints of massive redundancy payments for miners while private industry got none of these benefits.

Racetrack thrills without the spills

PITMEN are enjoying the thrills of high speed competition driving without any of the dangers — thanks to the fast-growing hobby of model car racing.

And for the members of Donisthorpe miners' welfare Model Car Club, there is as much enjoyment in building and maintaining their radio-controlled cars as in dicing with opponents round the track.

Secretary Roy Statham, a fitter at Donisthorpe Colliery, was one of the six founder members two years ago who decided the welfare car park would be suitable for a track.

A meeting attracted 12 enthusiasts and the club was formed. "We organised our first race meeting . . . and 42 turned up. It was hectic," admits 32-year-old father of two Roy.

Since then the club has grown. "We took over a bit of spare land and laid our own track and now have a computerised lap counter, caravan, race control shed and drivers' stand — and membership stands at 53."

The club give displays at charity shows locally and plan a hobbies and modelling open day with a model flying club also based at the welfare. "Any leisure or hobbies group is welcome to join us," says Roy.

He became interested in model cars four years ago. "I was looking for a hobby and my brother was into model aeroplanes. I could not get interested in that, so I went to have a look at a model car club."

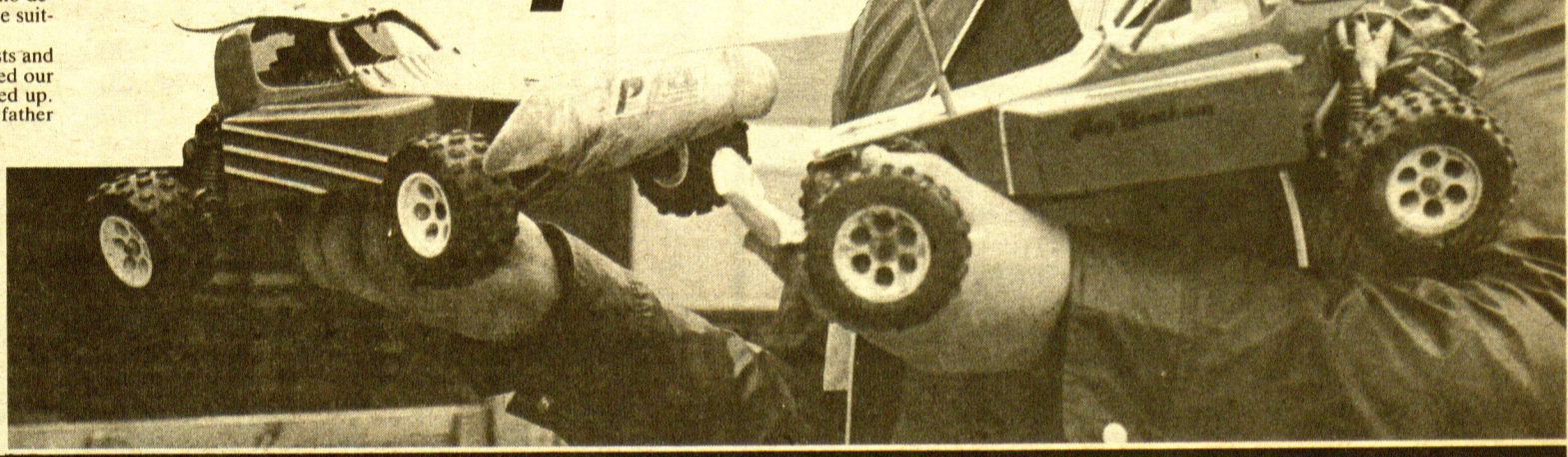
Meetings

He started with indoor racing but reckons that has become too competitive and expensive with the birth of league racing.

Some Donisthorpe members enter national events, but most confine their racing to club meetings. They are, however, planning inter-club and open meetings in May, August and October.

Says Roy: "When we started, we were one of only three permanent outdoor tracks in the country — now there are at least six in the Midlands alone."

A beginner's kit, ready to build, costs about £100, although more experienced racers buy the best parts of various kits and build their own, conforming to regulations about width, length and items of equipment.



HOT-SHOT race man Roy Statham with two of his beach buggy-type cars.

DOWTY BAND START IS THEIR 'BEST YET'

SOUTH Midlands Area's premiere banding outfit are on course for their best yet contest season.

The nationally-renowned Leicestershire Desford Dowty musicians swept to victory in the Midlands Area Championship at De Montfort Hall, Leicester last month, their second win in two outings so far this season.

They played their way to a total of 195 points — three more than nearest rivals GUS band — for a performance which earned

a four minute ovation from the packed audience.

Explained Rawdon Colliery training officer Peter Stirland, the band's vice-president: "Winning this contest was very important. It automatically gives us entry to some of the most prestigious events in the banding calendar, such as the BBC TV Best of Brass competition, as well as qualifying us for the National Championships down in the Albert Hall in October.

The band's first 1984 triumph was the NCB Midlands Region heat in Febru-

ary, which qualified them for the NCB Championship in Blackpool.

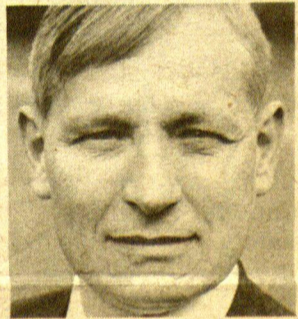
Added Peter: "This year seems to be running in parallel with the results we achieved during 1982 — and that turned out to be our best season ever so far.

"Our wins included the Best of Brass, Granada Band of the Year and the NCB national title.

"What we are hoping for

is a repeat of that performance this year, but also we would like to add some of the titles that have so far escaped us like the National and Open Championships.

"We have had quite a few new faces in the last couple of months and they all seem to be settling in very well — so with a bit of luck 1984 could turn out to really be Desford's year."



RALPH RAWLINSON

DIRECTOR MOVES TO LONDON

SOUTH Midlands Area director for the past 11 years, Ralph Rawlinson has left to take up a new post as technical director of the NCB based at national headquarters, Hobart House.

His new position involves overall responsibility for mining department, Mining Research and Development Establishment, overseas mining department, scientific control and the Operational Research Executive — responsibilities held by Board member John Mills before his retirement. Mr Rawlinson joined the Board in 1947 as an underground worker at Bullcroft Colliery, Yorkshire. In 1951 he was selected as a directed practical trainee and for five years up till 1959 he worked as an undermanager in South Yorkshire until moving to Leicestershire and South Derbyshire. He held colliery manager jobs at Bretby/Stanhope, Measham and Cadley Hill before becoming first a group manager, then a deputy Area production manager in the old No 7 Area.

After the formation of South Midlands Area in 1967, he held the posts of production manager and deputy director (mining) before his appointment as Area director in 1973.

Aged 59, Mr Rawlinson, OBE, is a past president of the National Association of Colliery Managers. A Fellow of the Institution of Mining Engineers, he is also a past president of the South Staffordshire and South Midlands Institute and is currently national president.

He was made a serving brother of the Order of St John in 1974.

Promotion for two

TWO new appointments have taken place in South Midlands Area Headquarters secretariat, based at Coleorton Hall.

New head of secretariat is 28-year-old Peter Barnard. He joined the industry as an administrative assistant at National Headquarters in 1978 and was seconded to staff department, secretariat, industrial relations and opencast — including a spell at Coleorton. In 1980 he joined South Midlands staff department.

And 40-year-old Malcolm Darby has been appointed head of general services. He joined the Board in 1960 as a postal reception clerk at Coleorton and for the last 10 years has been a member of secretariat in general services, also holding responsibility for visits and travel.

AIDERS' DOUBLE TRIUMPH

THERE was double success for smokeless fuel plant specialists when they walked off with two top awards at the national mining first-aid championships at Blackpool.

Teams from Coventry Homefire Plant took the main awards in the senior and junior sections of the contest, dealing with a range of patients suffering mock injuries.

The victories came against opposition from 41 other teams from coal plants throughout the country. Homefire now go forward to the British industrial finals at Buxton on April 11 — with the chance of a place in the Grand Prior finals.



SENIOR and junior coal products champions Coventry Homefire after their double win. Left to right: Allan Morrissey, Terry McFegan, Mark Bickley, John Sullivan, Mick Ferguson, John Millar Thomson, Mick Loftus, Reg Whitwood, Jas Sahota, George Stephenson.

Slimmer Steve splashes out for home

HANDICAPPED folk are more than £500 better off thanks to the efforts of mining man Steven Murfin — and he has ended up fitter into the bargain.

Steven, 26, a market man on Rawdon Colliery's 129 district, raised the cash for the Stephenson House day centre, Coalville, with a sponsored 60 lengths non-stop swim at his local baths.

Explains Steven: "I wanted to lose a bit of weight and get myself fit as I aim to get into the Mines Rescue team, so decided to

for home

by Paul Dennis

try swimming and dieting.

"I go to the baths virtually every day and thought it would be nice if I could also raise some money for charity at the same time. I put in a lot of training and knew I could do the 60 lengths."

He decided to make his effort for the Stephenson House centre, which he used to visit during a social-services course when he was at school. "I met the people there and used to

help out," says Steven.

"The centre has been broken into a few times recently, so I thought it would be nice to raise money to help replace some of the things stolen."

The swim took him 40 minutes at the Hermitage Leisure Centre, Whitwick, and measured about one mile. "I felt all right afterwards and had a couple of pints in the bar to celebrate," he says.

Chuffed

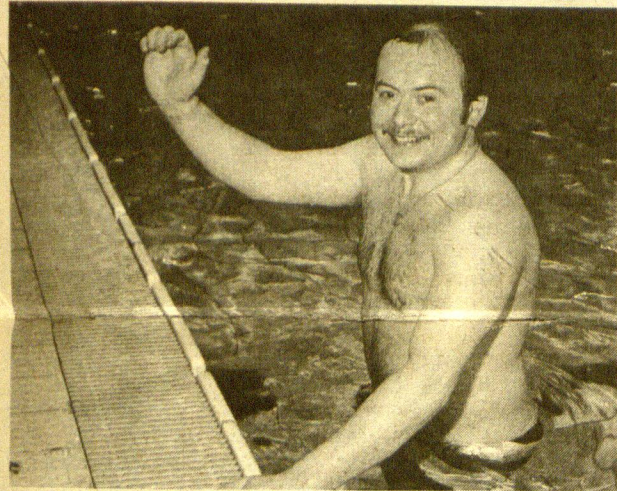
At 5ft 5ins tall, Steven's weight had reached about 12½ stone over Christmas. "My weight should be 11 stone, so I now have another 4lbs to lose."

First job after the swim was to ring wife Dawn, who had been unable to watch him because of illness. "She was dead chuffed and thinks my weight loss is great," he adds.

● Marathon charity worker Michael Clifford is aiming to step out again for handicapped children — this time with a sponsored walk from Liverpool Cathedral to Coventry's.

Coventry Colliery supplies man Michael has already raised more than £6,000 for charities over several years of walking, including the "classic" from John o' Groats to Lands End.

His latest 115-mile stint starts on Wednesday, April 18. Michael, who admits to being "about 61", has completed several 40-mile walks and three Coventry marathons.



SLIMMER swimmer Steven Murfin.



WORLD War II ... Norman Norris, right, guards the Burma Road.

From Burma Road to Hobart

EXHIBITIONS man Norman Norris has kept a secret from his workmates for 47 years — until now when he and his one-man mining roadshow go their own routes.

For 40 years ago he was following a road of a different type — helping to build the Burma Road during the Japanese campaign ... as a highly decorated private.

Norman — he retires at the end of this month after clocking more than 600,000 miles nationwide with his mobile Mining Today exhibition — explains: "I had joined the Army at 18 and was sent to the Middle East."

"During very heavy fighting some eight of us advanced with an officer — an action which earned him the Military Cross. But he made sure that we troops were also recognised."

Norman was awarded the Palestine medal with bar.

And it was the Army which helped him develop his photography.

He had been given a £15 Ex-acta camera by a relative. "I had no idea how to take a photograph, but the Army realised I had a bloody good camera so got me to do work for them," he says.

Seven years later — now a



NORMAN TODAY

clerk with the Coal Commission — he took a taxi from his office in Lansdowne House carrying a typewriter and five-tier tray. Destination: the second floor at Hobart House. Date: December 31, 1946.

"Nationalisation was next day. As the Army moved out we moved in. The second floor — or one side of it — was all there was then of national headquarters."

Norman joined exhibitions branch in 1957.

Pit gear winds up as a monument

A SPECIAL piece of South Midlands mining history is being readied to go on show in a place of honour — to remind townsfolk of their solid fuel heritage.

A winding wheel from now-closed Newdigate Colliery is being cleaned and painted to be erected as a monument in Bedworth Miners' Welfare park. Donated to the town by the Coal Board, it was loaded at the old pit site watched by the Mayor of Nuneaton and Bedworth council, John Haynes, and councillor Albert Walker.

The 5.3-metre diameter iron wheel, weighing 9.25 tonnes, was cast by local firm Thompson and Southwick of Tamworth — and had to be cut in half for transport from the colliery. As part of a community programme it will go on show later this year.

The occasion had a special meaning for the councillors. Mr Haynes' stepfather Alexander Cunningham spent the last part of his working life at Newdigate, while Mr Walker's dad Albert and grandfather worked there.



WHEEL meet again ... councillor Walker and Mayor Haynes renew family memories.

Full agenda for Power delegates

YEARLY conference of the Power Group Area of the NUM is scheduled for the Cliffs Hotel, Blackpool, on Monday and Tuesday, April 2-3.

Nearly 40 resolutions will be debated by 21 delegates on topics ranging from re-organisation of the union to nuclear missiles.

A motion from the executive council, calling for pay settlement periods of three years with built-in cost-of-living increases, is among those on the agenda.

For four weeks ending February 18

O-M-S Tonnes

Face (tonnes) a day

Colliery	Face	O-M-S Tonnes	Face (tonnes) a day
90 to 119cm			
Whitwick/SL S17	15.84	538	
Donisthorpe 136	12.23	461	
Rawdon 217	14.91	443	
Measham K21	15.87	386	
Measham K40	10.22	212	
Rawdon 129	7.17	191	
Ellistown S52	9.65	123	

120 to 149cm			
Ellistown F69	25.09	839	
Whitwick/SL F01	15.93	620	
Ellistown N35	15.73	595	
Cadley Hill K03	15.24	571	
Whitwick/SL F14	18.26	493	
B Coppice S11	29.38	448	
Baddesley S52	16.19	424	
Baddesley B62	13.75	381	
Cadley Hill W22	6.50	221	

150 to 179cm			
Donisthorpe 143	13.51	569	
Tilmanstone N19	8.80	436	
Tilmanstone N08	7.13	346	
Tilmanstone N14	8.54	336	
Measham W38	10.36	228	
Snowdown N31	6.13	202	
Cadley Hill S05	2.01	153	
Betteshanger N24	3.35	150	
Betteshanger N04	2.87	143	

180 to 209cm			
B Coppice S10	29.09	1084	
Rawdon S97	16.45	599	

Area Face Leagues

Bagworth M46	23.07	584
Baddesley N07	13.93	380

Over 209cm			
Daw Mill T62	50.64	2917	
Coventry RS1	26.32	1293	
Baddesley T24	12.17	726	
Daw Mill T73	12.17	717	
Baddesley N08	20.92	439	

Retreat and part-retreat up to 150cm			
B Coppice 70A	43.49	596	
Betteshanger N58	13.83	561	
B Coppice B53	16.47	185	

Over 150cm			
Bagworth F36	53.94	1519	
Bagworth F19	79.52	1173	
Cadley Hill M74	27.03	973	
Donisthorpe 215	23.17	668	
Donisthorpe 412	7.54	491	
Rawdon M36	14.66	480	
Rawdon 300	35.34	449	
Betteshanger N57	8.63	279	
Betteshanger N08	6.26	213	
Ellistown M89	14.01	122	

HEDGES L260 SNUFF

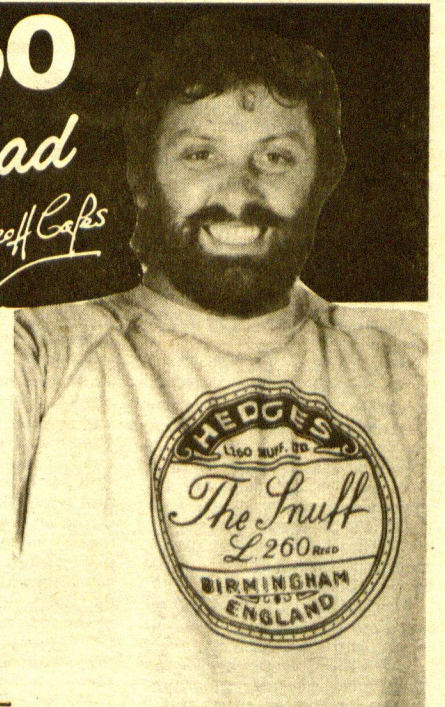
Winner by a clear head

Geoff Capes

Europe's strongest man is now helping to promote Hedges L260 Snuff at major athletic events around the UK and abroad. Geoff Capes likes a pinch of Hedges before competing. "It really clears my head and helps my concentration" he says.

HEDGES L260 SNUFF A Pinch of Fresh Air

P.O. Box 71, 1205 Stratford Road, Birmingham B28 9AG. Telephone: 021-777 5285



Southern
COAL NEWS

FACTS ABOUT CLOSURES

BEWARE OF FALSE ALARMS

More back at work

THE fourth week of coalfield strikes opened with more pits and more miners working than at any time during the previous fortnight.

Forty-eight pits were producing coal (with 43 of them working normally) and some men were working at an additional seven pits - 55 altogether.

These included: all the pits in Nottinghamshire and South Midlands (apart from Kent) and most of the Western Area pits - covering Staffordshire, Lancashire, North Wales and Cumberland.

About 12 per cent more men were also at work - 35,440 compared with 31,625 a week early.

At 120 pits, men were either on strike or had been picketed out - 12 fewer than a week earlier and the lowest number for a fortnight.

Earnings losses

The strikes were in the Scottish, Yorkshire, North East, North Derbyshire, South Wales and Kent coalfields.

In the first 20 weeks of the overtime ban miners' earnings losses totalled £93 million - and over the past four weeks these have escalated as miners on strike have each lost, on average, more than £160 a week.

In addition, no-one has benefitted from the Board's 5.2 per cent offer on grade rates (up to £6.8 a week) - which would have increased total earnings by more than £25 million since November 1 last.

The NCB's wages offer has been accepted by members of NACODS and BACM.

THE National Coal Board have rejected allegations by the NUM of extensive pit closures. "The intention of the people circulating these reports can only be to try and spread alarm and despondency in the coalfields," the Board stated.

The Board stressed that in the year ahead it is proposed to reduce output by only 4 per cent by taking out 4 million tonnes of loss-making capacity - of coal which could not be sold.

The expected reduction in mining manpower would be the same as last year - about 20,000, NOT 40,000 and NOT 70,000.

The reduction was achieved last year with no compulsory redundancy. And it is the Board's firm objective to do everything possible to avoid compulsory redundancies in the coming year.

When these proposals were announced to the Coal Industry National Consultative Council on March 6, it was stated that details of the Area budgets should be discussed locally by management and union leaders using the jointly

agreed colliery review procedure.

The Board have not broken off discussions. At the next CINCC meeting on March 20, all other unions attended but no-one from the NUM came. How could anyone say the Board had stopped consultation when the NUM failed to attend the meeting?

The NCB completely reject the NUM's allegations of what they call the Coal Board's "ultimate intention" of extensive pit closures - as these replies show.

NUM: The shutting down of half the South Notts. coalfield.

NCB: There are to be no closures in South Nottinghamshire Area this year (1984/5). The two that are due to take place in the

future have been known and agreed by the local unions for years.

NUM: Closing 20 collieries in Yorkshire.

NCB: Untrue. Discussions have taken place with union leaders in three of the Yorkshire Areas and those in the fourth Area were overtaken by the dispute. What is proposed is a relatively small reduction in output in Yorkshire in 1984/5. All men who want to stay in the industry will be offered jobs and redundancies will be on a voluntary basis.

The long-term programme for Yorkshire is clearly one of expansion, and opening new mines. Of the industry's total capital expenditure on major colliery projects since 1974 about 70% (£2.3 billion)

has been spent in Yorkshire. The £1,000 million Selby project continues to be developed. The total reconstruction of Thorne colliery is going ahead and major development of new reserves will take place at Maltby. Two of the largest coal preparation plants in the country are being constructed in Yorkshire. In addition, normal colliery development and reconstruction schemes are costing £100 million a year.

NUM: Cutting down the North Western Area's pits by half.

NCB: There are no such proposals.

NUM: Closure of 60 per cent of the pits in the North East.

NCB: The North-East has no more immediate measures to take other

than those already notified to the unions. Although some smaller pits will become exhausted in the next few years, the Area will continue to be a major contributor to the industry, based on its long life pits with investment at the rate of £45 million a year.

NUM: Shutting down of half of North Derbyshire's pits.

NCB: No closures are envisaged in North Derbyshire, until the natural exhaustion of Whitwell Colliery near the end of the decade. The plan has the support of the local unions.

NUM: Closing down 70 per cent of the collieries in South Wales.

NCB: Also untrue. A major mining industry will be maintained in South Wales. Extensive exploration is going ahead with the full support of the local unions to try to develop and expand anthracite production.

STOP PRESS

Nottinghamshire NUM branch delegates were meeting on April 5 to decide whether or not to recommend miners to cross picket lines.

Leicestershire NUM secretary Jack Jones told a National Union of Railwaymen delegation that he hoped they would 'continue to move our coal.'

FACTS ABOUT COAL

WHEN he challenged the accuracy of statements relating to the coal industry made by NUM President Arthur Scargill in the programme TV Eye on March 29, the interviewer Alastair Burnet, told him: "A number of people will disagree with a number of figures you have given - but all these can be checked".

The National Coal Board checked them and confirmed that many of the figures and statements made by Mr. Scargill were incorrect - and had been proved false in the past. A Board spokesman gave these factual replies:

Mr Scargill: We in Britain produce the cheapest deep-mined coal in the world.

FACT: This is not true. If it was, the British coal industry would be able to sell all its coal in home and overseas markets and would not be holding massive stocks of unsold coal.

The equivalent pit-head prices of comparable deep-mined coal were:

New South Wales, Australia, £16 to £19 a tonne.

Appalachia, USA, £23 to £27 a tonne.

Britain £46 a tonne.

Mr Scargill: If you take the subsidies into account in the USA, their coal is much more expensive.

FACT: The NCB do not know of any Government subsidies for deep-mined coal production in the USA. In the USA and Australia the coalmining industries make substantial tax payments to Government.

Mr Scargill: Mr. Ian MacGregor announced a drop in output - comparing budget with budget - of 8.2 million tonnes in the forthcoming year. That may include a loss not merely of 20,000

to 25,000 jobs - it could include a loss of up to 40,000 jobs immediately.

FACT: The NCB discussed with the unions the industry's budget for the year 1984/5 showing a reduction of 4 million tonnes of loss-making capacity - from 101.4 million tonnes (without the NUM's overtime ban and strikes) this year to a deep-mined coal output of 97.4 million tonnes next year. The Board stated that this 4 per cent reduction could be made with about the same reduction of 20,000 in mining manpower as in the year just ending. This has been achieved without compulsory redundancy, on terms acceptable to the men involved and it is the Board's objective to continue in the same way in the coming year.

Mr Scargill: We are going to

be reduced to 100 pits and 100,000 jobs - that means the loss of over 70,000 jobs. That's devastation as far as the mining communities are concerned.

FACT: More figures Mr. Scargill has invented - presumably to frighten people into thinking his way. It was explained to the unions that the reduction of 4 million tonnes in high cost output would bring production and sales into balance. Further investment would eventually increase output to 100 million tonnes - with the real prospect of selling the coal produced by a high volume, low cost industry.

Mr Scargill: Plan for Coal only envisaged closures due to exhaustion.

FACT: The jointly agreed Plan for Coal envisaged during the period 1974 to 1985 an average of 3 to 4 million tonnes capacity a

NCB correct claims made on TV

year likely to be lost mainly through exhaustion of mines and also through possible exceptional mining difficulties.

Mr Scargill: The increase in the productivity rate has gone on from 1974 on average by about 4 or 5 per cent.

FACT: Plan for Coal was based on overall productivity (output-per-manshift) rising by 4 per cent a year. This has never so far been achieved. Overall productivity was 2.15 tonnes a manshift in 1973/4 and 2.43 tonnes a manshift in 1983/4 - representing a yearly average increase of 1.3 per cent. We were on target to achieve an increase of 4 per cent in 1983/4 until the NUM started their overtime ban on October 31 last.

Mr Scargill: Last year the direct grant from the Government was £530 million and in the coming year it will be a little over £600 million. The rest of the money (Alastair Burnet said the Government will be paying the industry £1.1 billion) is not being given to the industry. It is money advanced either in the form of investment or aid which has to be repaid - at interest rates of up to 17 per cent.

FACT: The NCB's budget for

1983/4 anticipated a deficit grant requirement of £600 million plus social grants of £230 million. However, because of the NUM's industrial action, the industry will now need total grant support (deficit and social grants) of about £1.1 billion. These would be grants not loans.

Mr Scargill: In the Yorkshire coalfield 86.3 per cent voted for strike action.

FACT: That was three years ago. In the last national NUM ballot on pit closures held a year ago 54 per cent of Yorkshire miners voted for a strike - 1 per cent below the majority needed in the union's rules for action to take place. There has been no ballot in Yorkshire since. Yorkshire miners have been called out on strike by a decision of a delegate conference.

Mr Scargill: The Central Electricity Generating Board are down to no more than 9 to 10 weeks' coal supplies.

FACT: The CEBG say - "Coal stocks at power stations remain high and have not been running down faster than expected. We are confident we can maintain supplies of electricity for several months".

'A time for cool heads and clear thinking'

SECURING COAL'S FUTURE

THE National Coal Board's proposals for the future of the industry were explained to all the unions at a meeting of the National Consultative Council last week.

They are all set out on page two but the main points are:

- The Board are confident they can create a high volume, low-cost industry with a capacity of 100 million tonnes as a first step.
- They stressed they had no intention of running the industry down but again planned to invest during the coming year between £700 million and £800m in new mines and in modernising existing pits.
- About 80m tonnes of output is already profitable (that is, it can be sold at a price equal to the cost of producing it) or is within reach of becoming profitable. The intention is to build that up to 100m. All Areas have some profitable pits and some that could be made profitable. And that is the way to job security for the people of the industry.
- A reduction of about 4m tonnes of loss-making capacity is proposed in the coming year — that is, about the same size as in the 12 months now end-

ing. This will bring the budgeted output down to 97.4m tonnes and further investment will increase it to the 100m planned in due course. The table inside shows the effect on each Area.

- The reduction in mining manpower of about 20,000 will again be about the same as we have just seen. In the past year there was no compulsory redundancy.
- Since the meeting with the unions the Government have announced that, subject to the approval of Parliament, they will improve the benefits under their Redundant Mineworkers Payments Scheme. The particulars are set out on page 4.
- Twelve months from now, with demand for coal already steadying after 16 years' uninterrupted decline, output and sales will be roughly in balance.
- The industry will then have stabilised and be able to grow in size to meet new marketing opportunities as they arise.

CHAIRMAN of the Board, Ian MacGregor, wants everyone to know the facts about our future. He said: "All we are planning to do is to continue for one more year the re-structuring of the industry that began 12 months ago."

"We have proved that it can be done without making redundant any man who wants to stay in the industry."

"The new Government terms show that they, as well as the Board, are concerned that when pits close, there is no hardship to the people on the payroll."

Asked about the coalfield strikes earlier this week he said: "This is a time for cool heads and clear thinking. Many men have shown they want to go on working. The future of the industry should not be decided by groups of mineworkers picketing other members of the same union."

'Right to vote'

"A miner said on BBC radio: 'I am entitled to have a vote'. I agree with him."

"I hope the NUM will give every man a chance to register his vote for or against a strike. It is *his* job, *his* prosperity and *his* family's well-being that is at stake."

He had this to say about picketing: "Our management staff will do their best to keep safe the pits where men are on strike so that they will have jobs to go to when the dispute is over. But if they are threatened or intimidated, or if insufficient numbers are allowed into the pits, we shall not expect them to cross picket lines. Under no circumstances will their safety be put at risk."

Pit abandoned

"The pits will be abandoned. Bogside, a Scottish mine, has already been lost during the overtime ban because of the lack of safety cover in time to stop it from flooding and filling with gas. I hope there will be no more cases of that kind."

"I hope every mineworker will claim his right to vote on the important issue of *his* industry's future. If he thinks quietly about the facts set out in this issue of Coal News I am sure he will realise that a strike could only harm his hope for a secure, well-paid job."

THIS Coal Board policy commitment was given to union leaders at last week's National Consultative Council meeting:

WE are determined to create and maintain a high volume, low-cost industry which will be able to supply all this country's needs for coal and compete successfully for export business as well. In the process we shall aim to maximise employment prospects and continue to keep miners high in the industrial earnings league.

THE RIGHT BALANCE

THE coal industry is on its way to a secure future.

Output and the demand for coal from our customers will be balanced a year from now.

And a 'reasonable degree of stability' then lies ahead.

That promising message was given by the National Coal Board to union leaders in London this month at a meeting of the Coal Industry National Consultative Council.

Market base to build on

THE opportunities and the problems of the markets for coal were reviewed at this month's National Consultative Council meeting.

Energy demand in Britain fell sharply and in 1982/3 was at its lowest level for 16 years.

The big surplus of high-cost steam coal has built-up in the last two years record stocks at customers' premises and at the pits.

"Now it is beginning to look as if demand has at last stabilised," the Board explained. "It could still be some time before it starts to grow but at least we have a floor on which we can build up again if we get our costs right. The competition is great, especially from coal imported into Western Europe at sharply lower prices."

"We need all the customers we can get. The one thing we cannot afford is to lose the confidence of our present customers — and those potential customers we are working hard to persuade — by actions which threaten our ability to maintain their supplies."

Marketing prospects depend on two things:

- Low costs and prices.
- Dependability.

"Without these we can achieve nothing," the statement continued.

The Board are responsible for managing the industry in the best interests of all concerned. With understanding and recognition of the problems the Board are confident the industry's difficulties can be overcome in a way that will help mineworkers by:

- Maximising job opportunities.
- Keeping them high in the industrial earnings league.
- Providing the industry and those who work in it with a secure future.

COAL'S YEAR AHEAD...

COAL NEWS summarises the prospects facing the National Coal Board's 12 Areas during the year 1984/5 — beginning in April. The table shows the comparatively small reduction in deep-mined output planned for the year and the 'budget' for Area profits or losses.

North Derbyshire

AREA output will be maintained at its present level throughout the coming year 1984/5 — says Area director Ken Moses.

"In the 12 month period which ends in April, we will have produced 7.5 million tonnes of coal, which matches exactly our projected budget figure for 1984/5," he explained.

"Contrary to recent rumours circulating in this coalfield, we have no need for further contraction of capacity at the present time.

"In fact we now have the happy situation whereby market demand perfectly balances our output. And this should give us the prospect of another five years without losing any more pits."

"These circumstances have been achieved by ending production at two of our collieries (Pleasley and Westhorpe) and running down capacity at a third (Arkwright). But we have reached our target capacity without abandoning any coal reserves and without a single compulsory redundancy."

"Providing costs remain at last October's level, the recession as far as North Derbyshire is concerned is over, and we should not see another pit shut until Whitwell exhausts in the late 1980s."

Nottinghamshire

THERE will be no closures and no compulsory redundancies in 1984/5 and Area boundaries will be forgotten to help ensure continuing employment in the Nottinghamshire coalfield.

Although there is a small planned cutback in output from the older South Nottinghamshire pits, the impact is being softened by a helping hand from neighbouring North Nottinghamshire. "Over many years we have been able to accommodate miners from contracting areas," says North Nottinghamshire Area director Jack Wood.

"Therefore it is only natural we shall do all we can to minimise the effect on jobs in our own county in the current situation.

"Quite recently we have been able to help out with a few jobs for men from Pleasley Colliery in Derbyshire. We took 65 men from New Hucknall in South Notts, when that pit closed. We are working very closely together to absorb men wherever we can."

North Nottinghamshire are budgeted to maintain output at 12 million tonnes at an improved output-a-manshift of 3.45 tonnes. And Mr Wood points out: "We are looking forward to maintaining similar rates of production in the future."

South Nottinghamshire are anticipating a reduction in output to 7.2 million tonnes in 1984/5 at a productivity rate of 2.92 tonnes-a-manshift. While this represents a reduction in manpower of 1,700, deputy director (mining) Harold Taylor emphasises: "It is going to be accomplished without compulsory redundancies."

"Older men will be offered voluntary redundancy. For others, there will be transfers to long life pits such as Calverton, Cotgrave, Gedling and, indeed, into North Notts."

South Midlands

HIGHLIGHT of 1984/5 will be the start of work on the new £400 million mine at Asfordby. Says Area director Ralph Rawlinson: "I expect work to begin in the early autumn."

"Investment in the Area in long life collieries will continue, with new underground roadways and improved equipment for coal faces and elsewhere below ground."

Added Mr Rawlinson: "We have had the maximum co-operation from the men and the unions in the rationalisation plans that we have completed in the current year. With the same co-operation in the coming year, the Area will be on course for a good future."

A budgeted output of 7.1 million tonnes is the

target for 1984/5. This represents a modest reduction of some 300,000 tonnes on what would have been produced this year had output not been affected by the overtime ban.

Western

PLANS outlined to Staffordshire, Lancashire and North Wales mining trade union leaders by Area director John Northard, and acknowledged as being 'fair and achievable', reflect growth rather than contraction of mining operations.

Western Area collieries are being asked to produce 10.3 million tonnes in the year beginning in April. And, says Mr. Northard: "Every colliery in Staffordshire, Lancashire and North Wales has a plan for the year which not only accounts for the bulk output required, but for the type and size of coal needed for the various markets and the underground development yardages necessary for the successful phasing of mining operations."

"The significant feature of the budget package for each colliery is that they are all attainable. They can be achieved by repeating the levels of output and productivity we were recording before the present overtime ban began last November."

"It means our workforce can look ahead with renewed confidence. The budgets set for Western Area collieries, will I hope, be a morale booster and inspire men to attain the individual colliery objectives. It is absolutely essential however, that

these results are attained to ensure the continued confidence of the Coal Board in this region."

Achieving the budget package and holding costs will result in each colliery recording a profit. The plan also caters for the phased redeployment of mining skills at Cronton Colliery, where all but a handful of the 550 workforce have indicated whether they wish to take advantage of redundancy terms or transfer to other West pits. Salvage work has commenced at Cronton and is expected to take approximately three months.

Added Mr. Northard: "We can sell all the quality coal we can produce from our collieries providing our costs are right, and we have a growing industrial market on our doorstep."

"Attainment of our targets next year will result in profitability, and profitability means security."

Miners at each colliery have been given the output, manpower, productivity and profitability targets for their unit for the next year by their colliery managers. The budget plans for Cumbria's Haig colliery were being discussed with Area officials as this special edition of Coal News went to press.

North East

NO new closures or large-scale manpower reductions not already announced — that is the message to the coalfield from Area director David Archibald.

The reduction in capacity for 1984/5 to achieve a production target of 1.2 million tonnes less than last year will be achieved largely through measures which have already been taken. These include the closure of East Hetton and Bearpark, the merger of Lyncemouth with Ellington and other mining proposals already subject to consultation with the unions.

A planned reduction in manpower of about

2,000 will be reached without difficulty, Mr Archibald says.

About 500 men have already accepted redundancy terms and a further 1,400 have expressed firm interest in early retirement. Natural wastage is expected to account for nearly 400 more men.

Mr Archibald gave this assurance to North East's 23,000 miners:

"There will be no so-called butchery of the industry. On the contrary, capital will continue flowing at the rate of £45 million a year into our pits and the North East will remain one of the biggest operational Areas in the UK."

He stressed that a major effort would centre on the financial aspect of the budget.

"We are set to achieve a £20 million improvement on the end-of-year figure and we can do this by working together and successfully implementing our mining plans."

● This difference of 200,000 tonnes (see table) represents the rate of excess production above budget which the Area was achieving before the overtime ban.

North Yorkshire

TWO pit closures are scheduled in the North Yorkshire Area — at Glasshoughton and Savile colliery. Both have been agreed with the local unions and are to take place on a phased run-down basis, with mineworkers transferring to the Sel-

by coalfield project — also in the Area — and to other local mines.

About 4,000 transfers or retirements have been arranged over the past five years, as some seven worked-out pits have closed, the latest being Rothwell, near Leeds.

The build-up of the Selby coalfield continues with almost half the 4,000 workforce now in their new jobs. The Area's long-term aim is to increase output from the present level of 9.1 million tonnes this year to 9.3 million next year and on to 16 million as Selby comes on full stream.

Apart from the £1,000 million being spent on the 10 million-tonnes-a-year Selby mining investment, projects have been completed at Kellingley, Prince of Wales, Ackton Hall and Allerton Bywater collieries and a £11 million project is half way to completion at Sharlston.

Doncaster

DONCASTER Area output budget for 1984/5 is 6.3m tonnes — in line with production for the year just ending. The aim is to reduce the total workforce to an average manpower of 12,400 (now about 13,400) by early retirement, voluntary redundancy and relocations.

With the exception of Goldthorpe/Highgate Colliery, the Area has tremendous reserves and good geology. It could be among the top three profit-makers in the industry, but needs to achieve the national level of face productivity — 10.4 tonnes-a-manshift compared with the recent 8.2 tonnes.

Under Plan for Coal since 1974 the Area has received £360 million of capital but losses in that time have exceeded £130 million.

Retreat mining, now almost 30 per cent, is ex-

Output and cash budgets for all NCB Areas

Area	Deep mined output — million tonnes			1984/5 Operating profit (loss) £ million
	1983/4 (adjusted to include overtime ban losses)	1984/5 budget	Difference	
North Nottinghamshire	12.0	12.0	—	Profit £96.2 million
Barnsley	8.0	8.2	+0.2	
North Yorkshire	9.1	9.3	+0.2	
South Yorkshire	7.6	7.1	-0.5	
North Derbyshire	7.5	7.5	—	9.5
Western	10.7	10.3	-0.4	
South Nottinghamshire	7.7	7.2	-0.5	(3.3)
Doncaster	6.3	6.3	—	(9.1)
South Midlands	7.4	7.1	-0.3	(20.5)
North East	11.9	10.5	-1.4	(41.1)
Scottish	5.9	5.15	-0.75	(55.1)
South Wales	7.3	6.75	-0.55	(70.7)
Britain	101.4	97.4	-4.0	£104.5m loss

...a budget for Britain's miners

10 years planning and investment," says Mr. Keirs. "With three of Europe's most modern coal washers coming on stream in the next few months, the future for this Area is very bright indeed."

An attempt by the Board to keep the Bullcliffe Wood mine going by re-allocating two coal faces at the neighbouring long-life Denby Grange Colliery was rejected by the Denby Grange men. It was hoped to keep the Bullcliffe men together so they could transfer en bloc to the new £24 million Calder Drift mine when it opens in summer 1985.

On NUM allegations that the Board were planning to 'privatise' a washery at Ferrymoor/Riddings Colliery, Mr Keirs said:

"This is a temporary washer which has just been completed. We discussed the scheme more than 18 months ago with the local NUM branch and they were in complete agreement."

"Ferrymoor/Riddings' coal cannot be cleaned without a washer — which incidentally has not cost the Board a penny and would have enabled all three pits to work at full capacity. The planned increase in output at the East Side pits was greater than the available washing capacity."

"There is nothing unique about this contract washer — a similar one was used at Deane Valley colliery between 1977 and 1981."

South Yorkshire

THE Area will be producing 7.1 million tonnes of coal in 1984/5 — a reduction of half-a-million tonnes compared with this year.

The greater part of this capacity reduction has already been achieved with the closure of Elsecar Colliery last October and the withdrawal from the Swallow Wood and Beamshaw seams at Cadeby Colliery in November.

Area director George Hayes has announced that Cortonwood Colliery would be the only closure necessary in the Area to meet the year's budget.

He pointed out that the total reduction would leave some room for increased output at other pits in the Area.

Proposals for closing Cortonwood, announced at a quarterly review meeting at which representatives of all trades unions were present, were for older men to be offered early retirement, and younger men transferred to other collieries. The Yorkshire NUM action has prevented discussions with colliery union branches taking place. The pit employ 820 men, of whom 189 are aged over 50.

Cortonwood, sunk in 1873, produces coking coal, for which there is no market. At present there are about 120,000 tonnes stocked at the pit.

South Wales

AN output target of 6.75 million tonnes from Area collieries in the next 12 months will be a minimum objective — because markets exist to sell more coal at the right price.

Area director Philip Weekes believes that output is likely to be nearer seven million tonnes to match customers' needs in five main markets — power stations, steelworks, the domestic anthracite trade, Phurnacite smokeless fuel and exports.

"We have raised productivity by seven per cent in 1983/4 and we have reduced our costs by more than £20 million, which is a tremendous achievement," says Mr Weekes.

"If we can repeat that progress in the coming 12 months, with the benefit of open-cast profits, we should be well on the way towards solvency and in a fitter condition to attract more capital."

Mr Weekes said there was no disguising the fact that old, exhausted pits would continue to have to close, but he explained: "We will make sure that our employees are treated fairly. They'll get a more generous deal from us that they could obtain in most other industries."

Against the background of sound markets, Mr Weekes scotched the notion that the Area would lose a third of its capacity overnight and would then be quickly reduced to six pits. "That has no credibility in fact or in fantasy," he said.

With major investments announced for Deep Navigation and Betws collieries in the last 12 months, together with an £11 million vote of confidence in the Ancit process at Aberaman, Mr Weekes said he was confident more good news was to come. It was possible a new anthracite mine near Cynheidre could be announced within a year.

Scotland

A LARGE part of the coalfield's streamlining has taken place in the past year as the Board plan to balance coal supply with demand.

Area director Albert Wheeler says: "We have to reduce our capacity by about 750,000 tonnes in the year 1984/5. But with trade union co-operation, this can be achieved largely by voluntary redundancy."

Over £36 million has been invested in Scottish pits in the last year to improve their efficiency. At Castlebridge, £50 million is being spent on a new shaft to gain access to 11 million tonnes of rich Hirst reserves for the Longannet complex of mines.

Redundant Mineworkers' Payments Scheme

PROPOSED NEW DEAL FOR UNDER-50'S

THE Government have proposed improved lump sum benefits from the Redundant Mineworkers Payments Scheme (RMPS) — based on £1,000 for every year of service for men aged 21 to 49.

This is to help make sure that no hardship arises from the restructuring of the industry.

Other benefits

NO changes are being proposed to any of the RMPS financial limits.

For example, the limit on pre-redundancy earnings for calculating weekly basic benefit for men aged 55 and over remains at £160 per week. The weekly basic benefit table is revised to take account of changes in other state benefits so that the total combined sums remain the same.

The new terms, if approved by Parliament, will apply to men made redundant between April 1, 1984 and March 30, 1986.

How the scheme works for men aged 50 to 54 and 55 and over is well known at the collieries as it has operated in its present form since April 1983.

Every individual gets different amounts depending on age, married or single, earnings and years of service. The following two examples indicate the different payments miners aged 50 and over can get.

● A man aged 50, married with weekly earnings of £180 and 30 years service when made redundant will get lump sums totalling £23,305 — £3,553 from the State, RMPS payments of £15,205, and an MPS lump sum of £4,547.

In addition he will get a weekly MPS pension of £29.15 made up to £35 by the RMPS, and a further weekly payment of £43.75 unemployment benefit which for the first year is paid by the State and after this by the RMPS. So his total weekly income before tax will be £78.75.

He will also get concessionary fuel.

● A married man aged 55 earning £165 a week made redundant after 35 years service will get £11,745 immediately in lump sums — £3,915 from the State and £7,830 RMPS.

For the first five years he will get weekly RMPS basic benefit of £60.40 and State unemployment benefit or its equivalent from the RMPS of £43.75. Total weekly income before tax to age 60 is £104.15, which is about 90 per cent of take home pay before redundancy.

After that he will receive an MPS lump sum of £4,184 plus a weekly pension of £26.82 made up to £35. Added to the continuing unemployment benefit equivalent of £43.75, this will give him a weekly income before tax of £78.75 until age 65, (assuming he remains unemployed) when he will get his State retirement pension with his MPS pension of £26.82. The MPS pension will have been increased to allow for cost of living subject to the fund's resources.

The approval of Parliament will be sought later this month.

No change is proposed in the amounts for men aged 50 and over on redundancy.

They get lump sums and weekly payments.

Benefits

The RMPS, introduced in 1967 and last updated in 1983, covers mineworkers and most other industrial workers in the Mineworkers' Pension Scheme (MPS) and officials and weekly paid industrial staff who are members of the NCB Staff Superannuation Scheme.

If the proposals are approved lump sum benefits previously paid from the RMPS to men aged 21 to 49 will be replaced by a single lump sum for those who became redundant on or after April 1 1984. This will be calculated on the basis of £1,000 for each complete year of aggregate coal industry employment since the age of 16.

The new lump sum will be in addition to the state lump sum under the Employment Protection (Consolidation) Act 1978. Examples of what men will get are shown in the table.

Two further minor improvements are proposed:

● Basic weekly benefit for men aged 55 and over payable for up to four weeks holiday abroad each year.

● A make-up for a man whose state redundancy lump sum has been reduced due to an earlier break in service, when he received an industry incapacity pension.

EXAMPLES OF BENEFIT FOR AGE 21 TO 49

Assuming average weekly earnings of £165

Age	Years of service from age 16	RMPS existing Lump Sums £	RMPS proposed Lump Sums £	State redundancy Lump Sum £	Total Lump Sum £
21	5	182	5,000	217	5217
22	6	365	6,000	290	6290
23	7	547	7,000	435	7435
24	8	730	8,000	580	8580
25	9	912	9,000	725	9725
26	10	1194	10,000	870	10870
27	11	1508	11,000	1015	12015
28	12	1856	12,000	1160	13160
29	13	2236	13,000	1305	14305
30	14	2650	14,000	1450	15450
31	15	2815	15,000	1595	16595
32	16	2980	16,000	1740	17740
33	17	3145	17,000	1885	18885
34	18	3310	18,000	2030	20030
35	19	3475	19,000	2175	21175
36	20	3904	20,000	2320	22320
37	21	4366	21,000	2465	23465
38	22	4861	22,000	2610	24610
39	23	5389	23,000	2682	25682
40	24	6450	24,000	2755	26755
41	25	6697	25,000	2827	27827
42	26	6945	26,000	2972	28972
43	27	7192	27,000	3045	30045
44	28	7440	28,000	3117	31117
45	29	7687	29,000	3190	32190
46	30	7935	30,000	3262	33262
47	31	8182	31,000	3335	34335
48	32	8430	32,000	3407	35407
49	33	8677	33,000	3480	36480

BALLOTS FOR MINERS TO DECIDE

BALLOTS on whether or not to take strike action are being organised this week by NUM areas in Nottinghamshire, North Derbyshire, South Derbyshire, Midlands, Lancashire, Cumbria and Northumberland.

The ballots will enable mineworkers in these coalfields to make up their own minds.

The NUM National Executive Committee meeting on March 8 sanctioned strikes in Yorkshire and Scotland and offered to support similar action over pay and pit closures in any other area.

The following Monday about half the pits were unaffected by strikes. But the day began with

strikes at 82 pits — all 53 in Yorkshire, 10 in South Wales, seven in Scotland, nine in Durham and three in Kent. In addition, miners at 10 South Wales pits reported for work but did not cross the picket lines.

The 83 pits not affected by the strike were eight in South Wales, three in Scotland, eight in Northumberland and Durham and all collieries in all other coalfields.

Television viewers saw scenes of heavy and sometimes violent picketing. In these circumstances, miners at some pits

did not cross picket lines and the next day about 100 pits were on strike or had been picketed out.

After 19 weeks of the National Union of Mineworkers' overtime ban, the main effects were:

● Miners lost earnings totalled more than £70 million — in excess of £380 for each man.

They have also so far not received £20m extra wages under the Coal Board's 5.2 per cent pay offer from November 1 1983.

● Coal stocks at the end of the winter remain high.

Pithead stocks on February 25 were 22.67 million tonnes. They fell by only 1.7m tonnes since the ban started and are about the same tonnage below a year ago when there was no overtime ban.

Power station stocks by March 3 were the highest ever at that time of the year. At over 26.8m tonnes they were 700,000 tonnes more than at the same time last year and nearly double what they were in 1982.

● Output lost was just over eight million tonnes. Most would have gone to stock because the supply of coal exceeds customers' demand.

There have been NCB savings on wages, stocking and other costs. However, the financial consequences of the overtime ban will result in an increased loss of £135m in the Board's accounts for 1983/4.