

Prime Minister ②

AT 22/11

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Daily Coal Report - Thursday 22 November 1984

	<u>Number</u>
(i) Working normally	45
(ii) Turning some coal	14
(iii) Some men present	73
(iv) On strike/picketed out	42

ms

By 5.00 pm a further 856 striking miners had returned (compared to 722 last Thursday). This brings the weekly total to 4,926 and the total since 5 November to 12,141.

In Scotland a further 70 men reported on the morning shift. The best news came from Bilston Glen where 785 men reported. According to the Board, more than 50 per cent of the total NUM membership at this pit is now back at work.

In England there were increased attendances in all areas. 327 new faces reported in the North East (Ellington 474, Whittle 413). There were a further 169 in Yorkshire, and 158 in North Derbyshire.

Coal Movements

192,000 tonnes were moved yesterday.

34 coal trains ran.

Law and Order

There were the usual reports of skirmishing, barricades being built, etc in the North East, Yorkshire and Wales, but fortunately no reports of major incidents.

Between 13 March and 16 November 1,162 police have been injured in the dispute.

High Court

The High Court has rejected an appeal by four striking Yorkshire miners against conviction for obstruction following their arrest at a road block on the M1. Mr Justice Skinner said the police were justified in thinking that a breach of the peace was imminent.

Supplementary Benefit Changes

An aide memoire produced by DHSS is attached.

Line to Take

More than 12,000 miners have returned to work in the last two weeks alone. There could be no clearer evidence that ordinary miners recognise there is no industrial justification for this dispute, and no clearer rejection of Mr Scargil's political campaign of violence and intimidation.

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STRIKERS' DEDUCTION FROM BENEFIT

Main rules of entitlement

People involved in trade disputes are not entitled to supplementary benefit for their own requirements. They are entitled to benefit for dependants (eg wife at non-householder rate + children). Housing costs are paid on top if they receive sup ben.

Since 1980 a "specified sum" is deducted from any supplementary benefit payable. From 26 November this sum will be £16.

Why deduct £16?

It is not reasonable for the taxpayer to meet the full costs of looking after the dependants of someone on strike. If a person is involved in a strike it is fair to assume he has made some provision for their needs.

Does the deduction assume the strike is official or that strike pay is paid?

No. The deduction applies to those involved in trade disputes. (Whether strike pay is paid or not is a matter between the striker and his union.)

Why uprate the specified sum?

Section 6(2) of the Social Security Act 1980 requires that the specified sum is increased at the time of the general benefit uprating. It has therefore been uprated every year as follows:

1980	£12
1981	£13
1982	£14.50
1983	£15
1984	£16.

How is the uprating calculated?

Section 6(2) of the Social Security (No 2) Act lays down the uprating formula. Broadly, the specified sum is uprated in line with the RPI (5.1% this year) and the result is rounded to the nearest 50p.

How many strikers gain/lose?

About 85% of striking miners receiving supplementary benefit will have a net increase in benefit at 26 November, because the higher sup ben rates are more than the increased deduction. Almost all the rest will have no change, because the extra £1 deduction equals their benefit increase. A very small number (those with no wife but with one child (whatever age), or 2 children (but only if under 11)) will lose up to 55p. Precise numbers are not available, as the return to work is changing the picture daily and statistics on those without dependant wives are not kept. But estimates suggest around 30,000 gainers, 6,000 with no change and possibly 100 - 200 losers.

Illustrative changes

	Scale rate increase 26.11.84	Net effect after extra £1 deduction
Wife only	£1	neutral
Wife + 1 child under 11	£1.45	+ 45p
Wife + 2 children under 11	£1.90	+ 90p
Child under 11	45p	- 55p
2 children under 11	90p	- 10p
2 children, 1 under 11, 1 between 11 and 15	£1.10	+ 10p