

(A)

~~CSAT~~

Notes of an Informal Meeting between Mr Ned Smith, Mr K Hunt,  
Mr P E Heathfield and Mr R Windsor

1. There is as yet no firm understanding that there should be a resumption of discussions.
2. Representatives of both sides will "report back" and consider if discussions can be resumed in a meaningful manner.
3. The NUM's consideration of whether meaningful discussions can be undertaken will be concluded at their Executive Committee on 24 January. They will contact the Board immediately thereafter to indicate their position and ascertain the position of the Board.
4. If discussions are resumed it should be in the early part of the week commencing 28 January. Apart from the need for an early resolution if one can be achieved, an early date for a meeting would be of assistance to the NUM in considering the advent or otherwise of their Special Delegate Conference.
5. Both parties accepted that it was still understood that discussions would be held as early as possible to consider Plan for Coal and any necessary revision.
6. On the question of the March 6th proposals, the Board's representatives indicated that there were only two months effectively left of the year 1984/85 in which the proposals for the reduction of 4m tonnes were to be enacted. They informed the NUM, however, that they could not anticipate any public statement from the Board with regard to the withdrawal of the proposals. The Board's representatives said that so far as the industry's requirements in 1985/86 and the immediate future were concerned, these might only be determined following a return to normal working and a review of the production capability and marketing requirements following the strike. No doubt there would then be an early meeting with the Unions to consider whatever was necessary. The NUM's representatives took note.

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7. On the question of the five pits, the NUM's representatives said that the Union's request that there should be a commitment for the pits concerned to be allowed to complete the objectives previously prescribed was based on the fear that, if this was not so, the Board's undertaking to leave the pits in operation for them to be considered within the Review Procedure might mean repeated proposals for closure within a very short time. The Board's representatives said that the Board had already made a major concession in agreeing that Polmaise and Herrington should continue in operation, subject to the Review Procedure in common with all other pits, and it was unlikely that the Board would change from this stance and treat the five pits exceptionally.

8. On the question of pit closures, the Board's representatives confirmed that it was Board policy that all colliery closures should be dealt with through the Colliery Review Procedure. They pointed out, however, that since the advent of Plan for Coal collieries had closed other than from exhaustion or safety reasons and that this process would need to continue within the Colliery Review Procedure to which had been added an additional stage of consideration, i.e. the Independent Advisory Body. The NUM's representatives pointed out that it had been Union policy for 40 years to oppose the closure of pits on economic grounds and they could not see the possibility of this policy being changed. The Board's representatives acknowledged that this was so but repeated that it had been the practice for pits to close other than by exhaustion or safety. Indeed, in the recent negotiations the Union had acknowledged that there should be a third category, the difficulty had been as to how this should be defined. A discussion ensued on how this de-facto situation might be phrased in any settlement.

9. The Board's representatives pointed out that there was a strong body of opinion that the strike was largely broken and would be ended by a return to work. The Union's representatives acknowledged that there was this view but pointed out that the main body of the strikers were still firm and that any policy directed toward an end to the strike on a return to work basis would result in a very protracted and bitter dispute situation.

10. Both parties agreed that if discussions were resumed there would need to be an understanding that a settlement must be reached quickly. Protracted discussions as had hitherto been the case would not be an acceptable route to either party.

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11. The NUM's representatives said that if discussions took place their full Executive would attend.. They recognised the difficulties of negotiation in a large forum, and would advise the Board on how they thought these discussions might be arranged from their point of view.

12. The NUM's representatives said that they thought that part of any settlement would have to be related to discussions on an amnesty. The Board's representatives said that this would not be acceptable to the Board. Their intention would be that a resolution to the dispute on closures should be achieved followed by immediate discussions on other related matters, e.g. dismissals and wages. The Union's representatives asked the Board's representatives to take further soundings on this point.

21.1.85



The position of the NUM in relation to the closure of capacity on uneconomic grounds is no different from that of any other union. They will agree to discuss the question within the context of a specific problem but they are not prepared to commit that as a matter of principle the NCB has their advance agreement to close down any colliery which, in the view of management, is uneconomic.

Within the context of any discussions that might take place on the future of any colliery the NUM does not rule out debate on the economic issues, eg, costs of production and investment. Tacitly they acknowledge management's eventual right to decide on the action to be taken and their right to react against any decision with which they disagree.

Specifically:

- 1) The NUM is no longer asking the NCB to withdraw the proposals of 6 March 1984 which formally related to 1984/5. They ask for the agreement of the NCB that in the light of developments these plans cannot now be implemented and that the objectives for the industry to 1985/6 should therefore be re-examined against current circumstances.
- 2) In relation to the five named pits, the NCB should agree that existing understandings regarding development, etc. should be honoured and that only then should they be dealt with under the review procedure.
- 3) Within the context of exhaustion of reserves, or closures, any colliery may be raised for discussion and <sup>the NCB</sup> either side may adduce any argument considered relevant, including the economic arguments. This, it is stated, is in accordance with the practice that already exists. The trade union has a form of words available for discussion.

In the view of ACAS officials, the position of the NUM has shifted since the breakdown of discussion on 31 October 1984 and this view has to be seen in particular against the decision of the NUM to involve their full Executive in any further negotiations that might take place.

Pol - 18th.  
 Controversial - 5 p.m.  
 Will publish record of Bill disc. after Exec.  
 or go ahead  
 Acq. - 9.15  
 Wed  
 Scargill etc. to know by Wed night response



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Text of the NCB STATEMENT

If, following the meeting of the NUM National Executive Committee, the National Coal Board receives written indication that they are prepared to help resolve the problem of dealing with uneconomic capacity, the National Coal Board will be prepared to re-enter negotiations with a view to resolving the current dispute.

The proposals must establish that the NUM recognise that management must deal with the problems of uneconomic capacity and that the NUM will cooperate in this essential task, recognising the other commitments that the Board are prepared to make on the future of their employees and the industry.



**NATIONAL UNION OF MINeworkERS**

ST. JAMES' HOUSE, VICAR LANE,  
SHEFFIELD, SOUTH YORKSHIRE S1 2EX

President A. SCARGILL

Secretary P. E. HEATHFIELD

Telephone: 0742 700388

Please quote our reference in reply:

Your Ref:

Our Ref: PEH/yf

Mr. Ned Smith,  
Director General  
Industrial Relations  
National Coal Board,  
Hobart House,  
Grosvenor Place,  
LONDON SW1

24th January, 1985

Dear Mr. Smith,

At our meeting on Monday 21st January, 1985, it was agreed that we would report back to the Board and NEC respectively to consider the possibility of resuming meaningful negotiations aimed at achieving a settlement of the current dispute in the industry.

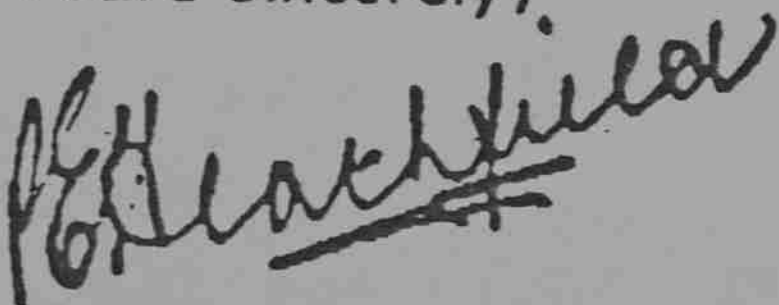
On the basis of our meeting the Union confirms its willingness to enter into negotiations without pre-conditions and also re-affirms that the full National Executive Committee will attend those discussions. For your information, I attach a copy of the National Executive Committee decision taken today, 24th January.

We are satisfied that there is the possibility of reaching an agreement on the various points discussed at our meeting on Monday and we believe it would be advantageous for you and I to meet prior to a formal meeting between the Board and Union early next week.

If you agree that a meeting between you and I should take place, it would be my intention to draft a number of points for consideration. Hopefully these will provide assistance in our discussion and to the Board and Union when formal negotiations take place.

I shall be pleased if you will confirm the Board's agreement that they are willing to resume negotiations and also offer a date and place for such talks.

Yours sincerely,



P. E. HEATHFIELD  
Secretary



SITUATION IN THE INDUSTRY

The Secretary reported that following informal discussions at a meeting of the Coal Industry Benevolent Trust on 16th January, an informal meeting had been arranged between the NCB Director General of Industrial Relations and himself, on Monday 21st January.

Monday's meeting agreed that the NCB and NUM would report back to the Board and NEC and consider the possibility of resuming meaningful negotiations. The Union for its part has agreed to contact the Board at the conclusion of the NEC, indicate their position and ascertain the position of the Board.

The Board and the Union also agreed that if negotiations are resumed it should be in the earlier part of the week commencing 28th January and it was also accepted by both parties that a resumption of negotiations should be on the understanding that a settlement must be reached quickly.

The National Officials also reported that a meeting had taken place between ACAS and the NUM in London on 22nd January and that the Conciliation Service had been in constant touch with both sides throughout the week.

Further clarification has been received from the NCB on Wednesday 23rd January and it is against this background that the National Executive Committee has considered its position.

The Union confirms its willingness to enter into negotiations without pre-conditions and also reaffirms that the full NEC will attend such talks. The Executive expresses the hope that the Board will respond positively to this decision in order that this long, damaging and costly dispute can be resolved as quickly as possible.

In view of the developments and series of meetings which now will take place next week, the NEC agrees that the Special Delegate Conference convened on Wednesday, 30th January, should be deferred.



13  
NI5048 3 XXX 21

CORRECTION - EXCHANGES

IN CLOSING FOREIGN EXCHANGES, TIMED 1801, PLEASE READ:

US 1.1185 - 1.1195

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241810 JAN 85

NI5049 4 XXX 253

WALKER BACKS NCB DEMAND

ENERGY SECRETARY PETER WALKER TONIGHT DENOUNCED AS "ABSOLUTE NONSENSE" THE NUM'S ALLEGATION OF SABOTAGE AFTER THE COAL BOARD'S DEMAND FOR A WRITTEN UNDERTAKING OVER UNECONOMIC PITS.

HE TOLD THE PRESS ASSOCIATION: "ALL THAT THE NCB HAS DONE, QUITE UNDERSTANDABLY, IS TO MAKE SURE THAT THE NEXT NEGOTIATION IS NOT AN EIGHTH WHICH ENDS LIKE THE OTHER SEVEN DID WITH GENEROUS OFFERS FROM THE NCB AND A TOTAL REFUSAL TO BUDGE AN INCH BY THE NUM."

THE COAL BOARD DOES NOT WANT TO "SCREW" MR ARTHUR SCARGILL AND THE NUM INTO THE FLOOR, SAID NCB SPOKESMAN MICHAEL EATON.

INTERVIEWED AT BOARD HEADQUARTERS IN LONDON, HE SAID OF TODAY'S NCB STATEMENT REQUIRING A WRITTEN GUARANTEE FROM THE NUM: "IT WAS NOT INTENDED TO BE A SCREWER INTO THE FLOOR.

"THE BOARD WANTS TO BE SURE THAT THE NEXT ROUND OF NEGOTIATIONS DOES NOT MISFIRE."

MR EATON SAID THAT INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS DIRECTOR NED SMITH WENT INTO TALKS WITH MR PETER HEATHFIELD, NUM GENERAL SECRETARY, AND MR MICK MCGAHEY, VICE-PRESIDENT, WITH THE FULL AUTHORITY OF COAL BOARD CHAIRMAN MR IAN MACGREGOR AND HIS DEPUTY MR JAMES COWAN.

"IT WAS TO SEE IF THERE WERE ANY JUSTIFIABLE GROUNDS FOR FURTHER NEGOTIATIONS. IT WAS A CORDIAL MEETING, BUT IT DID NOT MOVE THE CASE ANY FURTHER FORWARD."

HE BELIEVED THE NUM HAD SHIFTED ITS STANCE, AND MIGHT BE PREPARED TO TALK ABOUT PIT CLOSURES.

BUT IN VIEW OF ALL THE CONJECTURE, THE BOARD WANTED TO MAKE CERTAIN OF WHERE THE NUM STOOD BY RECEIVING A LETTER.

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241830 JAN 85

NI5052 4 XXX 265

SCARGILL'S STATEMENT

MINERS' PRESIDENT ARTHUR SCARGILL SAID THE NUM HAD TONIGHT WRITTEN TO THE COAL BOARD CONFIRMING ITS WILLINGNESS TO RESUME NEGOTIATIONS.

THE UNION HOPED THE BOARD WOULD AGREE TO TALKS WITHOUT PRE-CONDITIONS.

IN A STATEMENT TO THE PRESS ASSOCIATION, MR SCARGILL SAID: "IN AN EFFORT TO RESOLVE THE DAMAGING DISPUTE IN THE MINING INDUSTRY, THE COAL BOARD AND UNION MET ON JANUARY 21.

"ARISING OUT OF THAT MEETING, IT WAS AGREED TO REPORT BACK TO THE BOARD AND THE NATIONAL EXECUTIVE RESPECTIVELY IN AN EFFORT TO RESUME NEGOTIATIONS.

"THE CONCILIATION SERVICE ACAS, WHO HAVE ALSO BEEN INVOLVED IN DISCUSSIONS WITH BOTH SIDES, AND THE COAL BOARD'S INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS DIRECTOR BOTH CONFIRMED YESTERDAY THAT, IF THE NEC ACCEPTED THE REPORT BY PETER HEATHFIELD OF LAST MONDAY'S MEETING, THERE WOULD BE A RESUMPTION OF NEGOTIATIONS NEXT WEEK.

"THE NUM HAVE WRITTEN TO THE BOARD, CONFIRMED THEIR WILLINGNESS TO RESUME NEGOTIATIONS AND EXPRESSED THE HOPE THAT THEY, LIKE THE UNION, WOULD CONFIRM THEIR AGREEMENT TO PARTICIPATE IN TALKS WITHOUT PRE-CONDITIONS.

"THE UNION HAVE ALSO INFORMED THE COAL BOARD THAT, IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE AGREEMENT REACHED LAST MONDAY AND CONFIRMED LAST NIGHT, THAT IF THEY AGREED TO A RESUMPTION OF NEGOTIATIONS, THE NUM GENERAL SECRETARY (MR HEATHFIELD) AND THE NCB'S DIRECTOR-GENERAL OF INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS (MR NED SMITH) WILL MEET IMMEDIATELY.

"AT THIS MEETING, THE UNION WILL TABLE CERTAIN PROPOSALS WHICH IT IS HOPED WILL FACILITATE THE NEGOTIATIONS TO TAKE PLACE AND HELP RESOLVE THE DISPUTE."

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241835 JAN 85



Naigregor

- only possible basis  
of settlement that  
macroeconomic p's shall close  
No judging

- need to have in writing for  
N.U.M. that macroeconomic p's  
shall be through amended  
collective union procedures.

Rep. Naig - Guan - Spartan - Lalor, st. in

Document - No other agreement

Official N.U.M. policy for 60 years to open  
closure.

Form to accept.

Agree management rights to do this  
after proper procedures



File

PRIME MINISTER

MESSAGE TO ME FROM DAVID BASNETT

"He is now convinced, and so is the TUC, that Scargill is ready to talk. There is no doubt in their minds about this.

"He hopes that everyone in a position to make decisions will not make an error by missing the opportunity. If that were to happen, a great and golden opportunity would be missed and would cause great harm all round."



BERNARD INGHAM  
24 January 1985



NICK TOWERS

from Mike Grant  
D/PA

NUMIA 23/1/1

COAL INDUSTRY DISPUTE - EARLY REPORT FOR: 23 JANUARY.

Scamill telling to S. Derbyshire branches this a.m. 24/1  
158 pits with somebody at work.

Pit categories:

	<u>Number</u>
(i) working normally:	49
(ii) turning some coal:	26
(iii) some men present:	76
(iv) strike/picketed out:	23

293 new faces  
so far. (348 last week)  
2782 in week so far.

Comments on any changes:

Ellington (N.E) started production yesterday  
St. Johns (S. Wales) moved from (iv) to (iii).

NE figures to come  
+ afternoon shift.

Other News: NOT FOR PUBLICATION

AND: 61 New Faces: Bilston 516, Markham Hall 423, Killoch 813, Barony 260  
old 85, Polkhammat 423, Frances 31, Cackhill 19, Longannet 11, Solsgirth 7, Conist

EAST: 20 New Faces so far. Easington 55, Eppleton 90

WKS: 20 New Faces: Adkton Hall 22, Allerton Bywater 71, Frycton 13, Glasshoughton 26,  
gley 335, Ledstone Lush 29, Nostell 19, Prince of Wales 39, Savite 47  
iston 42, Wheldale 13, Wistow 208, Sarcroigne Wood 98, Rucall 97, Shillingfleet 57  
moor 6, N. Selby 2

ASTER: 13 New Faces: Askern 13, Bentley 63, Bradsworth 59, Fricley 5, Goldthorpe 1  
field 10, Markham 19, Rossington 37, Yorks Main 27, Hixleton 3

BLEY: 20 New Faces: Barrow 36, Bullcliffe Wood 35, Darfield 5, Denby Grange 247  
with 43, Emley Moor 99, Ferry Moor 7, Ginnethorpe 4, Haughton 24  
moor 10, Park Mill 54, S. Kirby 17, Woodley 36, Royston 6, Kinsley 2, Deane 2  
Valley

WKS: 53 New Faces: Barnburgh 14, Burskhouse 132, Cadeby 5, Corbomwood 20  
ington 147, Kiveton Park 248, Maltby 57, Manvers 49, Silverwood 24, Thurgroft 114  
ton 56, Wath 9, Manton 475, Shireoaks 312, Kiln Hurst 4

ABYS: 51 New Faces: Arkwright 223, Bolsover 378, High Moor 78, Ireland 190, Markham 501  
shaw Park 172, Shirebrook 748, Warsop 451, Whitwell 260

TERN: 27 new faces:

SALES: 27 new faces Abernant 9, Betws 1, Cynheidre 118, Cwm 5, Coedely 3, St Johns 17,