



10 DOWNING STREET

From the Private Secretary

Prime Minister

Mrs Irene MacGibbon rang earlier this afternoon about the announcement of "talks about talks". She said her telephone had not stopped ringing with working miners expressing their concern. They fear

- (i) the return to work will dry up
- (ii) the Government / NCB could allow victory to be snatched from them at the last minute and the working miners will be sold short.

I told her NCB (Michael Eaton) had frequently stated that negotiations could not be restarted without clear proof of a change of attitude by the NUM. I explained that the purpose of the talks was to establish if there was such a change of heart. She made the valid point that if no basis for restarting talks was found, the NCB should say so quickly and publicly.

AT 21/1