

MR REDWOOD

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4COAL DISPUTE

It is easy to look at weekly snapshots and lose sight of the trends. To put the current position into perspective, I had a discussion last Friday with Sandra Browne, Department of Energy Coal Division. The picture is encouraging, for example:

Status of Pits

	<u>Working</u> <u>Normally</u>	<u>Turning</u> <u>Coal</u>	<u>Some Men</u> <u>Present</u>	<u>Strike-bound</u> <u>Picketed Out</u>
01/04/84	40	7	9	120
01/09/84	45	9	14	106
01/11/84	45	10	24	95
18/01/85	47	25	75	27
21/01/85	49	24	77	24
22/01/85	49	25	76	24

Today's figure of 1,774 "new faces" reporting for the day shift compares with 935 this time last week and 800 the week before. The wider perspective for that is the following table:

<u>Week ending</u>	<u>NUM members</u> <u>not on strike</u>	<u>'New faces'</u> <u>(for the wk)</u>	<u>Nos. rejoining</u> <u>strike</u>
Nov 02	53,259	365	10
Nov 09	55,431	2,201	22
Nov 16	60,409	5,032	98
Nov 23	66,227	5,959	123
Nov 30	68,288	2,159	194
Dec 07	68,763	667	79
Dec 14	69,264	521	34
Dec 21	69,422	174	Nil
Dec 28	holiday	-	-
Jan 04	70,026	712	61
Jan 11	71,797	2,365	2
Jan 18	74,667 (Prov)	2,870	N/A

NCB estimate that the true NUM membership of working and non-working miners is now about 182,000

The pattern which seems to be emerging is for a "bridgehead" to be established at a strikebound pit; perhaps 50 or more of those most anxious to return will go in together, often on a Thursday or Friday, when their action attracts less attention. Thereafter, things can move fast. For example, at Kiveton Park in South Yorkshire 150 new faces reported for today's morning shift. With nearly 350 men present, Kiveton Park is beginning to turn coal.

Production figures are slower in coming, but the trend is evident.

Production 1000 tonnes/week

	<u>Deep-mined</u>	<u>Open-cast</u>	<u>Licensed</u>	<u>Total</u>
Mid-October	530	285	20	835
End-November	590	265	20	875
Mid-December	650	260	25	935

Early in the dispute around 65% of UK coal production potential was shut in. Now the figure is likely to have dropped to little more than 50%. Thus, on an annual basis, the current production rate is likely to be at least 50 million tonnes. Normally, the CEGB has been consuming 70-75 million tonnes and Scottish power stations about 5 million tonnes. However, with new nuclear power stations coming onstream, the demand for coal as a feedstock for power stations is falling and some scenarios put the future demand for coal to all UK users as low as 80 million tonnes per annum.



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