

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.

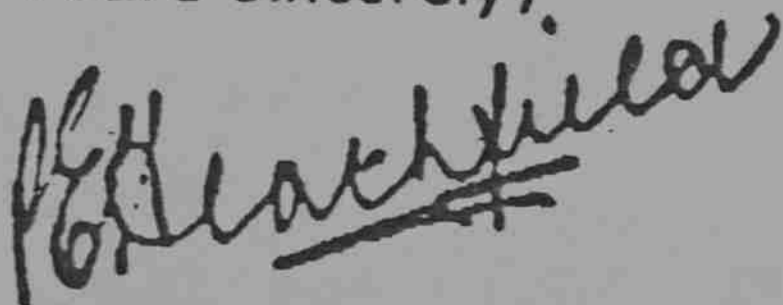
On the basis of our meeting the Union confirms its willingness to enter into negotiations without pre-conditions and also re-affirms that the full National Executive Committee will attend those discussions. For your information, I attach a copy of the National Executive Committee decision taken today,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

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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

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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/b shall close
No judging

- need to have in writing for
N.U.M. that macroeconomic p/b
shall be through amended
collecting 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