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NATIONAL COAL BOARD
HOBART HOUSE
GROSVENOR PLACE
LONDON SW1X 7AE

Your ref: PEH/yf

25th January 1985

P.E. Heathfield Esq.,
Secretary,
National Union of Mineworkers,
St. James' House,
Vicar Lane,
Sheffield,
South Yorkshire S1 2EX



Dear Mr. Heathfield,

Thank you for your letter of yesterday addressed to Mr. Smith following your Union Executive Committee meeting. We note that your Union is willing to enter further negotiations. Before further negotiations can commence, we agree it is essential to draft the parameters of the discussion at an informal meeting. The Board would therefore suggest that a meeting should take place next Tuesday, January 29th, when those discussions on the Board's behalf will be led by me.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads 'H.M. Spanton'.

H.M. Spanton

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.

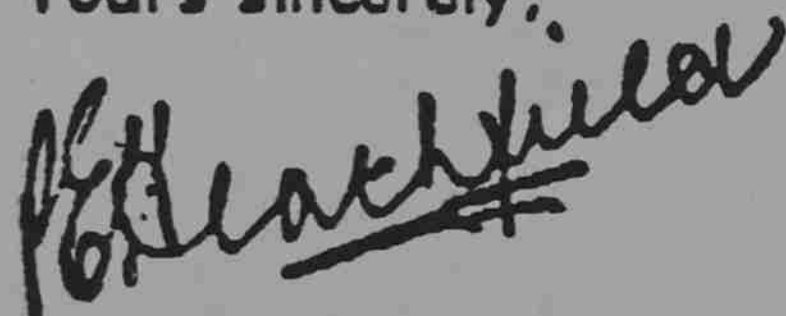
On the basis of our meeting the Union confirms its willingness to enter into negotiations without pre-conditions and also re-affirms that the full National Executive Committee will attend those discussions. For your information, I attach a copy of the National Executive Committee decision taken today,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



Public Relations

National Coal Board
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NCB'S POSITIVE RESPONSE

Meeting to Draft "Parameters for Discussion"

The National Coal Board today (Friday) responded positively to the letter from the National Union of Mineworkers on the possibility of resuming meaningful negotiations.

The Board's reply states that before further negotiations can commence, there should be a preliminary meeting with the NUM to draft the essential parameters for discussion.

That informal meeting can take place early next week.

Press Office (1999)

January 25 1985.