

Prime Minister ① ~~48~~AT
18/2

Daily Coal Report - Monday 18 February 1985

	<u>Number</u>
(i) Working normally	54
(ii) Turning some coal	26
(iii) Some men present	76
(iv) On strike/picketed out	18

MB

Oakdale (South Wales) has moved from category (iv) to (iii).

By 6.00 pm 1,044 new faces had reported, bringing the total for this year to 17,903. In all the circumstances this was a good figure. The Board were especially pleased that 50 more miners returned in South Wales - tangible evidence of a change of mood in an area of fierce traditional loyalty to the union.

Area attendances were as follows:-

			<u>Change on</u> <u>last Monday</u>
Scotland	(24 hr attendance)	5,015	+ 375
North East	(24 hr attendance)	7,845	+ 541
Yorkshire	(24 hr attendance)	7,009	+ 481
North Derbyshire	(24 hr attendance)	6,275	+ 43
Western	(morning shift)	6,758	+ 419
South Wales	(morning shift)	468	+ 83
Kent	(morning shift)	169	+ 2

Coal Movements

868,000 tonnes were moved last week - lower than the Board hoped but the weather was to blame. However 200,000 tonnes were moved on Friday - an encouraging sign for the week ahead.

51 coal trains ran on Friday.

Law and Order

Generally quiet.

NUM

Little indication of any change of heart by Scargill: the question is whether he and his fellow extremists can be isolated by the moderates. The media are giving some prominence to his comment on the lunchtime ITN news that "the decision to go and see the Prime Minister was taken by the TUC and not the NUM".

In a South Derbyshire area pit head ballot, in which 80 per cent of the area's miners voted, 78.4 per cent supported the case for a rule change to give the area greater independence from the national NUM. The area's general secretary today stressed there would be no immediate action - the final decision on whether the rule change should go ahead would depend on whether the national union decided to discipline the area's working miners, and on how the strike developed nationally.

High Court

The High Court this morning refused to end the sequestration of NUM assets. The Judge said the union's contempts were "flagrant" and its attitude was "still one of open defiance of the courts".

There are reports that the shipowners whose coal ships have been blacked in the North East have been successful in obtaining injunctions against the NUS. No further details are available at the time of writing.

SECRET AND PERSONAL

Line to Take

Please draw on text of today's Parliamentary answer by Secretary of State for Energy - attached.

Distribution: Members of MISC 101, Paymaster General
Sir Robert Armstrong, Mr Gregson (Cabinet Office)

Enquiries: Michael Reidy, PS/SOS for Energy, Tel: 211 6070

SECRET AND PERSONAL

With permission, Mr Speaker, I will answer this question and numbers 3, 6, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13 and 19 together.

Since I last made a Statement to the House more pits have returned to normal working, more pits have started to produce coal, and so far during the first few weeks of 1985 more than 17,000 miners have returned to work. Movements of coal and coal stocks at the power stations have remained at a very high level. 61 coal faces have unfortunately been lost since the start of the dispute, including 38 working faces.

During the past week Mr Norman Willis, on behalf of the TUC, has held a series of talks with the Chairman of the National Coal Board. As a result of these talks a document was prepared which dealt with a number of crucial matters in connection with the dispute. The National Coal Board stated that they were willing to accept this. The document outlined the duty of the NCB to manage the industry efficiently, it recognised the responsibilities and rights of the unions in representing their members' interests, it outlined a plan to prepare a revised "Plan for Coal" within six months, it set out the need for urgent talks to create the early establishment of the modified procedures agreed with NACODS, and it stipulated that any future closures for any reason would thereafter take place under the modified colliery review procedures, and that all parties would be committed to give full weight to the view of the independent review body.

Unfortunately this statement was not acceptable to the National Union of Mineworkers, and Mr Willis outlined to the Coal Board changes that they would seek in such a statement. In the view of the Board those changes would have meant the document failed to meet the main issue of the dispute, and I regret that only yesterday Mr Scargill, as president of the NUM, made it clear that he would never agree to any closures.

The Government naturally regrets that these latest efforts have failed to bring an end to this dispute, particularly in view of the fact there is on offer a substantial investment programme, good pay for miners, a closure procedure better than has ever been previously available, generous early retirement provisions and substantial resources to bring new enterprises and businesses to mining communities. The Government continue to hope that the damaging industrial action which has taken place without a ballot will swiftly be ended.