

SECRET

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PRIME MINISTERMISC 101(85)8th Meeting: Coal

You will wish to invite reports from:

- i. the Secretary of State for Energy on:
  - the number of pits and miners working;
  - coal movements last week;
  - the prospects for maintaining the increase in the numbers now returning to work;
  - the NCB's intended course of action once more than 50 per cent of NUM members are working;

(Do we think that the return to work will accelerate further when the 50 per cent figure is reached? Or shall we be getting to the hard core? Will the return tail off when the tax benefits disappear? What do the NUM mean by guemilla warfare, and how should the NCB deal with it?)

- what NACODS might now do;  
(NACODS leaders expressed disappointment at the NUM rejection of the NCB document last week, but their Executive Committee is believed to be meeting on 1 March to consider their next step. It would be a pity if NACODS were to be given any pretext to give practical support to Mr Scargill, as their President is believed to be keen to do.)
- latest developments relating to the overtime ban in Nottinghamshire;

SECRET



SECRET

ii. the Secretary of State for Employment on:

- the outcome of the TUC Finance and General Purposes Committee meeting with Scargill, McGahey and Heathfield on 25 February;
- prospects of further action by the TUC;

iii. the Secretary of State for Transport on:

- prospects for a further improvement in the rail movement of coal;  
(The British Rail Board are scheduled to meet Messrs Buckton (ASLEF) and Knapp (NUR) on Tuesday 26 February to discuss union blacking of coal movements)
- movement of coal from the North East in ships;

iv. the Home Secretary on:

- law and order;
- current levels of policing in the coal fields;

v. the Attorney General on:

- any significant developments in civil court actions.

2. You may wish once again to get agreement on the line for Ministers to take should they need to make public comment on any aspect of the dispute.

3. The next opportunity for discussion will be under the Industrial Affairs item at Cabinet on 28 February. The next Misc 101 is arranged for Monday 4 March at 10 am.

  
P L GREGSON

25 February 1985