

Prime Minister ①

6

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Daily Coal Report - Tuesday 5 March 1985Return to Work

The Coal Board estimate that around 60,000 NUM members returned to work today, bringing the total not on strike to around 160,000 ie 85 per cent of total membership.

Of the 26,000 who stayed out, the majority were in Yorkshire where Kent miners picketed several pits.

Kent miners also picketed some South Wales pits but most of the areas miners went to work.

In Scotland nearly 7,000 men reported - 56 per cent of the workforce. They included 712 new faces. Scottish miners' leaders will meet tomorrow to reconsider their decision to stay on strike.

A more detailed round-up is attached.

The Coal Board tonight called upon miners to rebuild relationships, and to pay special attention to safety especially in those pits which have been standing idle.

High Court

The Durham area of the NUM today failed to overturn a High Court injunction banning it from expelling nine miners under its new "Star Chamber" disciplinary code. The Judge ruled that the injunction must stand. He ordered an early trial of the working miners' claim for damages against the NUM.

SECRET AND PERSONAL

Line to Take

Today's massive return to work shows that the strike is effectively at an end. Every miner should now have as his goal restoration of the industry to normal working in a spirit of harmony and reconciliation. It is only by this means that the industry, and individual miners and their families, will be able to take advantage of the considerable opportunities that are available to them.

Daily Coal Reports

We propose to continue with these daily reports until the end of this week, by which time the situation in the coalfields should hopefully have settled down. Subsequent reports will be made if circumstances so require.

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SECRET AND PERSONAL

## SCOTLAND

2 new faces today, 56% of the NUM workforce are back.

Attendances south of the Firth are largely back to normal with 94% back at Barony, 91% at Killoch, 77% at Bilston Glen, 73% at Polkemmet and 58% at Monkton Hall.

The Scottish Area NUM Delegate Conference is to reconvene to consider an end to the strike.

NACODS were reported to be working normally at most pits.

## NORTH EAST

An orderly return, the Board expect the NUM attendance to reach around 90% by the end of today.

The only problems have been at Bates and Wearmouth and concerned shift rotas. Bob Clay MP was arrested with a number of others after a meeting of 500 miners at Wearmouth.

## YORKSHIRE

Today's attendance is estimated at around 25,000, some 50% of NUM on books. Men returned today at 26 pits and the Selby sites. The Board expect a further 10,000 or so new faces tomorrow. 11 pits, including Cortonwood, are idle today because of the refusal of returning strikers to cross picket lines (mostly of Kent miners). The Kent pickets have now dispersed but the Area Board have no indication whether they will return tomorrow.

Savile, (N Yorks) produced coal for the first time today at Kiveton Park, bringing to an end the 24 hour protest. The men are expected to return at Manton in the morning. Kellingley, where there was a NACODS picket this morning, remains strikebound.

## NORTH DERBYSHIRE

1166 new faces have reported back so far today, with a further shift to come. Attendance is already over 90% and no problems have been reported.

NOTTINGHAMSHIRE

574 new faces so far today. No problems reported.

SOUTH MIDLANDS

Kent excepted the remaining strikers have returned en masse. Only about 30 men are still on strike at Coventry but more are expected to return on later shifts.

KENT

Only 42 new faces today (only around 13½% are back).

WESTERN

1,663 new faces today. Only 295 NUM men (under 2%) are still on strike. This mornings problems at Bold, Hem Heath and Lea Hall have all been largely resolved. The largest remaining block of strikers remains at Bold where 90 are still out but 280 returned today.

SOUTH WALES

The area has returned to work en masse. All NUM and NACODS are now working normally at all pits.

Coal file

cc: AF  
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JC

Mrs McKinney (HMS)

Peter Walker speaking to IRN this morning (5 March 1985)

Asked about privatisation he said:

"I don't think there is any possibility of privatisation of the coal industry in its present state. Even without the strike it was needing £1.3 billion to keep it solvent. Now I think that if one goes into the future and one has an efficient and successful coal industry I think it would be well worth discussing with miners the potentiality of them having a real interest in their industry - a real stake in their industry. But one could not ask them to do that when of course it is a major loss making industry. But if it moves into being a profit making industry I think there is a lot to be said for discussing the concepts of the workers co-operative and management concepts and bringing a personal participation into it. But that is a long way ahead and certainly Government have considered no plans as far as privatisation is concerned .....

By the way I have given no thought to this at all, I am just saying that as a general objective if in the years hence you had a situation, and I think the basic feeling of the miners for historical reasons - their passionate desire to have nationalisation is an important factor and I think a factor which they may well in the future - young miners particularly - in view of the future that if it is a successful industry and making good profits, I think they would feel they would like to participate in that. Now there is no Government plan for this, there is no detailed concept of this. It is something which I think personally I dislike the system where people employed in an industry have no direct participation in it and therefore if in the future - this is a personal view - not a government view - there were ways of seeing that happen I would like it. But there is nothing going to happen in the next few years.

Lifetime of the present Parliament?

"No. If you look at the timescale of this government it is a timescale where the difficulties of getting this industry into

-2-

a good and successful shape and one which will take advantage of the very good coal reserves we have got it is certainly going to take the lifetime of this Parliament."