

Energy



10 DOWNING STREET

From the Private Secretary

1 September 1981

VJ/F 14/9/81

I enclose a letter to the Prime Minister from the TUC about Belvoir coalfield. Could you please let us have a draft reply for her signature by Wednesday 16 September.

I am sending a copy of this letter and enclosure to David Edmonds (Department of the Environment), Terry Mathews (Chief Secretary's Office, HMT) and Gerry Spence (CPRS).

M. A. PATTISON

J.D. West, Esq.,
Department of Energy.

VCS

MFJ

1 September 1981

I am writing on behalf of the Prime Minister to thank you for your letter of 27 August.

I will place your letter before the Prime Minister and a reply will be sent to you as soon as possible.

MAP

The Right Honourable Lionel Murray OBE



10 DOWNING STREET

PRIME MINISTER

Len Murray writes to stress the TUC's view of the importance of mining Belvoir.

We will let you have a draft reply.

*Account with
for draft*

1 September 1981

MP

TRADES UNION CONGRESS

CONGRESS HOUSE · GREAT RUSSELL STREET · LONDON WC1B 3LS

Telephone 01-636 4030

Telegrams TRADUNIC LONDON WCI

cc from

ms

YOUR REFERENCE

OUR REFERENCE LM/BC/DT/EK

DEPARTMENT Economic

August 27 1981

Rt Hon Margaret Thatcher MP
Prime Minister
10 Downing Street
LONDON SW1

Dear Prime Minister

Belvoir Coalfield

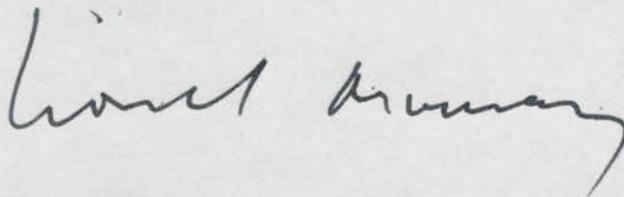
I have been asked by the TUC Fuel and Power Industries Committee to write to you, rather than to one of your Ministerial colleagues, about the NCB's proposals to develop the Vale of Belvoir coalfield, because of the project's intrinsic importance and because there is a clear need to take a view between the environmental and energy policy considerations.

You will of course be aware that summits at EEC and OECD level have repeatedly drawn attention to the need to develop indigenous energy sources and have frequently pointed to the important place of coal within that framework. This widespread recognition of the increasing importance of coal in meeting the world's energy needs was re-asserted most recently in the declaration of the Ottawa Summit.

It is also beyond question that the Belvoir coalfield is fundamental to the chances of the coal industry fulfilling its production targets, which have been agreed by successive Governments, the mining unions and the NCB. Agreement on the necessity of progressive development of new capacity was at the heart of Plan for Coal. It would be contradictory for the Government to say that it wants a modern, efficient coal industry and yet to block the development of new capacity. As you must know, the Leicestershire coalfield is coming to the end of its life and an early decision on Belvoir is essential in order to provide replacement capacity and jobs for those workers currently employed in the Leicestershire coalfield.

The TUC and the mining unions have supported a framework of policies based on a level of government support which recognises the burden of new investment and the degree of support given by other European countries to their coal industries; an end to unnecessary coal imports; and the maintenance and development of the existing UK coal industry. The TUC therefore welcomes the statement by the Secretary of State for Energy on June 16 as a first move back towards a more satisfactory set of policies for the coal industry. I must emphasise, however, that such confidence in the Government's approach as has been gained by the mining unions as a result of that statement would be completely lost if the Government were to oppose the Belvoir development.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Ernest Bevin". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style with a long, sweeping tail on the final letter.

General Secretary.