

Power station coal stocks likely to last into autumn

By David Young, Energy Correspondent

Improved weather and long-range forecasts for a warm summer have stretched the potential life of coal stocks at power stations in England and Wales well into the autumn.

Mr Giles Shaw, Under Secretary of State for Energy, said in a Commons written answer yesterday that stocks are now estimated to last "for many months". New figures calculated by the Central Electricity Generating Board showed that demand for power has dropped by almost 40 per cent from mid-January's peak.

The board estimates that by May 1 demand will be running at around 3.5 billion units a day and by June 1 that figure will drop to 3 billion units. At the height of winter, demand was slightly over 5.5 billion units a day.

The board has also increased its oil burning to preserve coal stocks and had been using the massive Dinorwic hydro-power station in Snowdonia to meet peak demand such as during an episode of the television serial *The Thorn Birds* and when Torvill and Dean skated to their world championship victory.

The Dinorwic station is to be officially inaugurated by the Prince of Wales on May 9. Although it can feed power into the national grid for only five hours and uses six hours' worth of off-peak electricity to be pumped back up to operational readiness, it has proved that it can be successfully used to meet

sudden surges in demand at short notice.

The network of nuclear stations is maintaining output at around 14 per cent of base load and output has been gradually stepped up at the big five oil-burning stations at Pembroke and Fawley, where oil is piped direct from adjoining refineries, and at Ince on Merseyside, and Littlebrook and Isle of Grain on the Thames Estuary.

The generating board's oil-fired stations have the capacity to produce 8,782 megawatts of the total 53,749 megawatts of capacity (16.3 per cent). However, oil-derived electricity normally accounts for about 4 per cent of supply - the figure was 27 per cent in the mid 70s before oil prices rose and the board closed several of its smaller oil-fired stations - and the board will not officially divulge the extent of the increase.

However, incursions into the Rotterdam spot market for half a million tonnes of heavy fuel oil at a cost of £50m, has pushed the spot price up by \$10 to \$175 (£121) in the past month.

● The Scottish trade union movement yesterday called on its members to give maximum support to a day of action on May 9 to support the miners' strike.

Rallies will be held in Glasgow, Edinburgh, Aberdeen and Dundee, with dozens of smaller demonstrations in Scottish towns.

Labour levy planned to aid the miners

By Philip Webster, Political Reporter

The Labour Party yesterday allied itself more firmly to the miners' fight against pit closures by calling on its members to contribute more than £100,000 a week to the National Union of Mineworkers' strike fund.

In a move which marks a political escalation of the dispute, and for which there appears to be no precedent in modern times, the party's national executive committee decided to ask constituency Labour parties to raise money for the strike fund by levying a minimum of 50p a week from members.

Parties are being asked to forward money direct to the strike fund. No central total will be kept and no conditions are being attached by the party to the uses to which it will be put, although Mr James Mortimer, the party secretary, said last night: "I have no doubt that the great bulk of the money will go on the alleviation of hardship."

The Labour Party has about 270,000 members. The levy is voluntary and a fair proportion of the numbers are pensioners but, even if they were excluded, the party could manage well over £100,000 a week if its members were willing to pay.

A motion passed unanimously by the executive stated: "We recognize that the strike is entering a new and decisive stage. The establishment of a Tory 'War Cabinet'; the buying of extra oil for the power stations; and the penal operation and manipulation of the social security payments system - all indicate clearly that the Tory Government is trying to starve the miners back."



Prison protest: Miners demonstrating at Lincoln jail in support of four pitmen held on remand.

The Libyan bureau crisis

'Student' sent back to Tripoli

By Stewart Tandler, John Witherow and Henry Stanhope

A third Libyan was put on an aircraft back to Tripoli and 11 more were awaiting a Home Office decision on their immediate future last night as Britain continued to tighten its immigration rules after the break in diplomatic relations with Colonel Gaddafi's Government.

The figures were released in Whitehall after a day which also saw the start of talks between

told he could stay for only 48 hours to collect his belongings.

Mr Matoq Matoq, the last of the four students who took over control of the bureau in February, looked likely also to be deported within the next day or two.

The Cabinet's emergency committee, code-named Cobra, met yesterday for about 90 minutes and Mr Leon Brittan,

official in Tripoli with the rank of a deputy minister, the delegation left their hotel early yesterday in separate cars to start the talks. Although they do not seem to have visited the bureau, they are reported to have been in contact by telephone with the people inside.

The announcement that the Saudi embassy in Belgrave

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