

Pit strike 'has cost CEGB £1.8 bn'

By Barrie Clement
Labour Reporter

The pit strike has cost the Central Electricity Generating Board as much as £1.8 billion, according to leaked documents.

They show the board could incur a loss of up to £2 billion this year, compared with pre-strike estimates of a deficit of £200 million.

The most important factor in the cost of the stoppage has been oil substituted for coal, according to *Channel Four News*, which obtained the papers. They were said to have the board's highest security rating.

The sum is higher than previous estimates and will be used by the National Union of Mineworkers as an argument against the National Coal Board's policies.

In normal times 80 per cent of electricity comes from coal-fired power stations. By August last year electricity from coal was meeting only 40 per cent of demand.

The Electricity Council, which runs the electricity industry's finances, said last November that if the financial burden of the strike were to be borne solely by the consumer, prices would have to rise by 10 per cent. According to Channel 4 researchers the leaked documents suggest the rise would be twice that.

● Miners' leaders in Yorkshire yesterday decided to call off mass picketing to comply with a High Court ruling, in the face of threatened proceedings for contempt of court.

● The National Union of Mineworkers may recall its delegate conference in response to a proposal from striking pitmen in South Wales.

● Leaders of the pit deputies' union, Nacods, were told last night at a "soothing" meeting with Mr Peter Walker, Secretary of State for Energy, that their deal last year with the coal board is not under threat.

● A total of 243 striking miners on the day shift returned to work for the first time yesterday, according to the coal board.

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