

6 August 1981

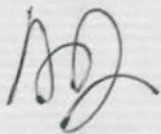
MR LANKESTER ✓

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cc Mr Hoskyns
Mr Ingham
Mr Vereker

BR STRIKE? MISC 57 IMPLICATIONS

1. John Vereker's note of today's date says that CCU agreed that we ought not to lose the opportunity for consulting BR management about training drivers to operate the merry-go-round. I entirely agree. The merry-go-round has been identified by MISC 57 as the crucial point of vulnerability in the system. It is vulnerable to either a coal strike or a rail strike. I cannot therefore see why we should wait until the end of August to consult BR management. The present threat provides a heaven-sent opportunity to do so. (Up to now, officials have been most unwilling to contemplate even asking BR management about this problem.)
2. I understand from John Vereker that some people feel we ought not to consult BR because we ought not to let them realise how worried we are about the prospect of losing the merry-go-round. But surely any intelligent manager at BR - or intelligent union official - knows very well that coal stocks are at around 7½ weeks and that the merry-go-round is crucial to their being maintained. I don't think we should pretend to ourselves that others don't realise this.
3. So I see no advantage in delay.



ANDREW DUGUID

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MR. DUGUID

cc. Mr. Ingham
Mr. Lankester

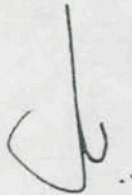
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British Rail Strike: MISC 57 Implications

. After this morning's meeting of the CCU, Robert Wade-Gery had a brief private discussion, at which I was present, on the implications of a rail strike for the work of MISC 57. We agreed that we ought not to lose the opportunity provided by industrial action on the railways for consulting British rail management about the extent to which they could help train drivers to operate the merry-go-round trains to deliver coal. We have here an alibi for such consultation which we do not, in the case of the much more hypothetical work of MISC 57.

Accordingly Mr. Howell is going to minute the Prime Minister suggesting that such consultations should take place at the appropriate moment, which will be about the end of August.

And if the strike does go ahead, it was agreed that we would need to look again at the case for building up oil stocks, and indeed for enhancing coal stock accumulation after the strike ends.



J. VEREKER

6 August, 1981

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