

COAL

Present Situation

45 Pits are working normally. 96,000 NCB employees and 65,000 members of the NUM are not on strike and more than 11,000 have returned in the last 2 weeks. Coal stocks remain strong.

NCB Manipulating Figures

I recall that the President of the NUM told his members on February 6 - 42 weeks ago - that there were only 8 weeks stocks of coal at power stations. If the hon Members opposite believe the leadership of the NUM after that they will believe anything!

NCB Figures Inconsistent with Previous Claims

I have made it clear in the House several times that since the beginning of the strike about 70,000 people have been working in the coal fields, of whom about 50,000 are members of the NUM. These figures are totally consistent with the ones to which I have referred today.

Church Leaders call for Further Negotiations

Throughout over 100 hours of negotiations the NUM have boasted that they have not budged an inch from their March 6th position. The NCB had made a generous offer and they are absolutely right to insist that the NUM should abandon their impossible demands before there can be any further negotiations:

Mr Hattersley's Position

I welcome the Rt Hon Members' conversion to the NUM leadership consulting its members. I recall that in April he urged Nottinghamshire miners to go on strike in direct contravention of their democratic vote. Perhaps he will tell the House now, does he think that the strike can end on the basis of the settlement reached between the NCB and NACODS?

Withdrawal of Hit List etc

The Rt Hon Gentleman just doesn't want to understand. All these matters, including the re-examination of the March 6th proposals, the position of the 5 pits and the Colliery Review Procedure, were all dealt with satisfactorily in the NCB agreement with NACODS. That agreement has been accepted by 2 of the 3 unions and a third of the membership of the NUM. Whose side is the Rt Hon Gentleman on?

30,000 Job Losses

The Association of British Mining Equipment Companies has indicated that there have already been a considerable number of redundancies amongst their members and sub-contractors as a result of the strike and if it continues, there could be as many as 30,000 jobs at risk.

22 November 1984