



10 DOWNING STREET

From the Principal Private Secretary

4 July 1985

I mentioned to you on the telephone that the enclosed paragraph in the diary of today's Daily Telegraph had caught the Prime Minister's eye. The Prime Minister asked me to draw this to your attention and to find out from you whether there is any truth in it.

I also record in this letter that I telephoned Mr. MacGregor this evening and reminded him that a reply to the Prime Minister's letter of 13 June was outstanding. Mr. MacGregor said at first that he was "contemplating" whether to reply though at a subsequent stage of the conversation said that he would reply. This was accompanied by a series of bitter comments on the difficulty which he and his Board had on defending the working miners when their actions in dismissing people responsible for intimidation were overturned by industrial tribunals and were criticised in the House of Commons. I pointed out to him that, in asking the Board to make effective arrangements to look after working miners, the Prime Minister and the Board were entirely on the same side.

F22B

Geoff Dart, Esq.,
Department of Energy.

DAILY TELEGRAPH DIARY EXTRACT: 4 JULY 1985

Black mischief

WORKING MINERS in Kent who resigned from the NUM in disgust over the strike are now being told by the Coal Board that if they want transfers to less hostile areas they will be expected to rejoin the union.

About 160 miners in Kent, traditionally one of the most militant coalfields, defied the strike, and since then have suffered constant abuse as "scabs," have been assaulted underground and had their cars and homes daubed with graffiti.

Sickened by the intimidation many of them have sought transfers to a pit in south Derbyshire which worked throughout the strike. The Coal Board is officially sticking to its policy that it is not a condition of employment to belong to the NUM but has, I understand, unofficially put pressure on applicants to rejoin.

Behind the scenes the Coal Board is anxious to mend fences with the union. Stabbed in the back by their employers who pleaded for every bit of support in the dark days of the strike, most working miners in Kent have now opted for a quiet life, either agreeing to rejoin or accepting voluntary redundancy.