

Prime Minister 2

MR NORRGROVE

3 October 1985

COAL - NOTTS BREAK-AWAY MOVEMENT

I understand from Energy and Employment that, as early as this weekend, news could break of favourable developments for Roy Lyngk and his Notts break-away movement.

Contrary to some press reports, it seems that the Certification Officer has moved swiftly in processing the draft Instrument of Amalgamation (between the Notts union, the small independent Colliery Trade and Allied Workers Association, and the South Derbyshire union). Preliminary indications are that the Certification Officer - and, for that matter, the courts - are favourably disposed to the Notts union because it is independently listed and certified as such; and because the members have clearly demonstrated in a ballot (73% majority) that they are opposed to the strongly centralised character of the NUM under the new Rule Book.

Barring successful intervention by the NUM, the likely sequence of events would be as follows:

- Around 4 October 1985: Certification Officer formally approves the Instrument of Amalgamation.
- Mid-October: Notts union ballots member on proposal to amalgamate, with the objective of preserving the autonomy of the Notts union on the basis of their existing Rule

Book, within a new federation of like-minded mining unions.

- **Early December:** If ballot successful (simple majority required) the amalgamation comes into effect.

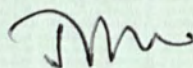
- **Later in December:** Notts union delegate conference to tidy up existing Notts Rule Book consistent with the new amalgamated federation.

The NUM will no doubt try to thwart this process by whatever means they can. But unless the NUM can mount a substantial legal challenge, they will probably be rejected by the courts - whose sympathy is likely to lie with the Notts union, for the reasons indicated above. Meanwhile, the NUM may yet be tripped up by Scargill's tactical manoeuvring at the time of the NUM's Rule Book delegate conference. The courts are soon due to hear challenges to the propriety of the procedures under which the new NUM rule changes were made.

A delicate question for the NCB is what posture to adopt vis-à-vis Lynk and his Notts union. The annual wage increase negotiations are imminent. On the one hand they want to enhance Lynk's credibility and stature in the eyes of his members. On the other hand, Lynk must not be perceived as a lackey of the NCB.

The issue
of the Notts
concerns
about
this.

The odds are probably now better than evens that the Notts break-away will be successfully achieved, perhaps before the end of the year. .



JOHN WYBREW