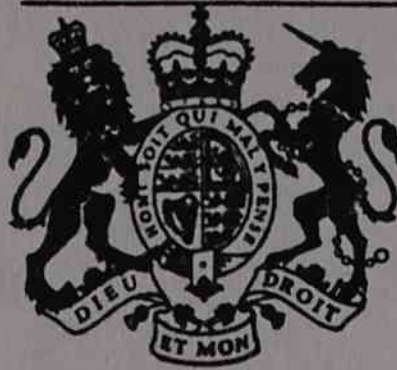


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10 DOWNING STREET

20 December 1985

From the Private Secretary

Dear Geoff

SECOND REPORT ON LESSONS OF THE MINERS' STRIKE

The Prime Minister yesterday held a meeting with your Secretary of State, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, the Home Secretary and the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster to discuss the second report on lessons of the miners' strike and your Secretary of State's minute of 12 December about coal stocks at CEGB power stations.

The meeting first discussed coal stocks. Your Secretary of State explained the position along the lines of his minute. With a "normal" coal purchase profile for the next financial year, coal stocks would increase to around 27 mt by the end of October 1986 without any special action, and at no cost to the P.S.B.R.. This would give 9 months endurance even if the U.D.M. were to join the N.U.M. in a strike. If the U.D.M. continued to work there would be stocks for 27 months endurance. In discussion it was recognised that in any further N.U.M. strike Mr Scargill would have to win a ballot and in that event deliveries of coal would probably be stopped more effectively than they had been in the 1984/85 strike. It was, however, agreed that stocks of 27 mt in October 1986 would provide adequate security. As proposed by your Secretary of State the position should be kept under close review so that the decision could be reconsidered if the industrial relations climate were to worsen over the coming months.

Two points arose in further discussion, both relating to the role of magistrates courts during the last dispute: first, the difficulties caused by local magistrates who were members of the N.U.M., and secondly difficulties caused by the way in which local benches had to arrange for court rooms and their staffing. The Home Secretary agreed to pursue these points.

On other matters, your Secretary of State described the position on miners' pay along the lines of his letter of 19 December; he referred to the expense of bringing the AGR power stations up to design capacity; he described the improvements in planning procedures for open cast coal mining and mentioned the difficulty of ensuring free movement of open cast coal in the event of another dispute;

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he outlined the position on pit closures; and in a brief discussion of policing, the Home Secretary said he was strongly against the creation of a separate police force trained specially to deal with severe disturbances.

The Prime Minister throughout emphasised the need to prepare for the worst case. The Government could not afford to be complacent about the risks of another dispute. The Prime Minister also urged that the greatest possible concern should continue to be shown to protect working miners and their families.

I am recording separately the Prime Minister's other comments on the second report on the miners' strike for the wider group to whom that report was copied.

I am copying this letter to the Private Secretaries to the Chancellor of the Exchequer, the Home Secretary, the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and to Michael Stark (Cabinet Office).

*James  
David,*

DAVID NORRGROVE

Geoff Dart, Esq.,  
Department of Energy.