

SECRET AND PERSONAL



SUBJECT CC MASTER

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meeting record

10 DOWNING STREET

LONDON SW1A 2AA

CC M. AUSON

From the Private Secretary

4 November 1986

Dear Geoff,

UNION OF DEMOCRATIC MINEWORKERS

The Prime Minister this afternoon discussed the position of the Union of Democratic Mineworkers with your Secretary of State, the Paymaster General, Mr. David Hunt and Sir Robert Haslam, Chairman of British Coal. Mr. John Wybrew, Policy Unit, was also present.

The Prime Minister expressed her strong concern that everything possible should be done to help the UDM.

Sir Robert Haslam said the Board of British Coal had been very supportive of the UDM. However, the leadership was naive and inexperienced, and they did not want to seem to be a management union. They were not easy to help and management had to be circumspect. The Board also had to take account of the fact that there were 99,000 members of the NUM as well as 27,000 members of the UDM. There was a good deal of restlessness in the pits, with brush fire disturbances, and the position of NACODS was also worrying. The NUM had 3,000 key people in the Nottinghamshire area and if the 50 per cent plus one rule were to be breached this would give minority rights to the NUM in Nottinghamshire and other areas. In the latest pay discussions management had proposed the introduction of two bonuses which would substantially help the UDM and which would be unacceptable to the NUM. However, the UDM were refusing to accept the proposals. Sir Robert noted finally that the NUM were in great trouble financially, arising from their financial support for miners who had been dismissed. The members' contribution to the NUM might well need to double, at least.

In discussion it was noted that one of the UDM's major problems was the lack of forceful and articulate leaders. This might be helped by offering help in training good younger people. It was agreed that it would be worthwhile if one of the large educational foundations, for example the Wolfson Education Foundation, could be persuaded to help. Lord Chapple might also be willing to help.

Your Secretary of State noted that Energy Ministers and British Coal management had bent over backwards to help the UDM. The position of the UDM would also be improved by the

SECRET AND PERSONAL

JB

SECRET AND PERSONAL

2

Coal Bill proposed for the coming Session.

The Prime Minister concluded the meeting by urging in the strongest possible terms that everything should be done to help the UDM. The proposal to encourage the provision of training courses for UDM leaders and potential leaders should be followed up.

I am sending a copy of this letter to the Private Secretaries to the Paymaster General, Mr. David Hunt and to Trevor Woolley (Cabinet Office).

Yours,

David

(DAVID NORGROVE)

Geoff Dart, Esq.,
Department of Energy.

SECRET AND PERSONAL