

SUBJECT

CC MASTER

NOTE FOR THE RECORD

MEETING WITH SIR ROBERT HASLAM

Sir Robert Haslam yesterday called to see the Prime Minister with the Secretary of State for Energy.

The Prime Minister said that her first concern was that British Coal should keep on side with the UDM, though this was not always easy. The pressures UDM members had faced during the coal strike should never be underestimated. If the NUM were to win concessions, the UDM would be put in difficulty. The UDM were now upset that some of their members had lost £23 a week by being compelled to accept a deal British Coal had done with COSA*. The power of Scargill should never be underestimated. He had a tremendous hold on the NUM Executive, and it would be quite wrong to expect the Executive to be reasonable. The NUM rule book had been redrafted to comply with the Act in relation to the election of officers, but not in relation to strike votes. They were still able to call a strike area by area. The Prime Minister said she would be prepared to face another strike provided there were good coal stocks, and the UDM stayed at work. The Prime Minister expressed the hope that the power stations had all the flashing oil and the like that they needed. It should never be assumed that if we had had one strike, there would not be another. Management should never forfeit the right to manage. There should be no agreement on arbitration.

Sir Robert said that the disciplinary code had been in force since 1981, and had been revised only to cope with violence and intimidation. Four (three from Notts) had been sacked in August, and three more had been warned. The Coal Board management had "gone over the top" for the UDM, and they were determined to protect and help the UDM in every possible way, but the UDM did not wish to be regarded as a sweetheart union. On the point about the staff losing money, this was the result of consolidation of bonuses which was being done to make NACODS members and other supervisory staff feel more like

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* Colliery Officials and Staffs Area

management. Some staff had gained, and others had lost from the consolidation, and the change had been popular on the whole. Kevin Hunt, Industrial Relations Director, showed no favouritism either to the NUM or to the UDM.

The Secretary of State for Energy said that Walter Marshall was quite confident that the electricity industry could survive a year long coal strike even if the UDM stopped work.

Sir Robert Haslam said the Board was investigating the legal situation, but was receiving conflicting advice.

The Prime Minister, concluding the meeting, said that the most important thing was to win the battle in the media. The UDM had to be kept at work, and the Board should never give in to the NUM. The redundancy payments asked for by Sir Robert Haslam would be money well spent.

JKW

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18 September, 1987.

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