

SUBJECT cc MASTER



File AFJ  
Meeting Record.

10 DOWNING STREET  
LONDON SW1A 2AA

23 September 1986

*From the Private Secretary*

Terry Lewis, M.P., met the Prime Minister this afternoon to discuss the closure of Walkden Workshops. David Hunt was also present.

Mr Lewis had two concerns. The first was the closure itself which he claimed had been implemented too quickly and would have an adverse effect on the economy of the area. Secondly he was unhappy that skilled men at Walkden were being offered voluntary redundancies when he, and the NUM, felt that their skills could be redeployed in the Lancashire area at various coal-faces, with redundancies being offered to those he said the NUM described as the "sick, lame or lazy".

The Prime Minister explained that the smaller number of more efficient pits now being worked required less workshops and two were therefore being closed. She fully appreciated the concerns of the workforce during a period of uncertainty, but understood that the reasons for the closure had been discussed with and accepted by the men. She understood that of the 250 men involved 78 had been offered jobs elsewhere (this figure did not come from your briefing) and that they were generally quite content with the transfer allowances on offer. A substantial number had accepted voluntary redundancy and about 100 were using part of their redundancy money to set up small businesses.

Mr Lewis seemed generally content with the reasons for the closure and accepted that it was proceeding. But he queried the figures and claimed that only 15 people were setting up in business by themselves. Mr Hunt explained that this was not right. The 15 people to which Mr Lewis referred were all involved in just one business, but there were many others and 100 was about right. He also explained that all the workforce had received individual counselling and did understand and accept the rationalisation.

LB

The meeting was generally relaxed. Mr Lewis did, however, say that he would be watching the figures of staff taking the various routes very carefully and I should be grateful if you could let me know if there are any significant changes.

P.A. Bearpark

Mrs Judith Harris,  
Department of Energy.