

BF 29/10/84

PPS please NOT G/L 1

- 1. MR BUTLER ^{FERB}
- 2. PRIME MINISTER

cc Mr Alison

Caroline

Could you please fix this with Mr C.

Mr. Concannon

telephone request

DMB
24/10

Mr. Don Concannon has asked to see you for a brief word about the position of the Nottingham miners if they are laid off. Mr. Walker regards Mr. Concannon as generally moderate and sensible, and suggests that you agree to his request. He advises, however, that it might be better to postpone the meeting for a few days, until the Coal Board's attitude is clearer.

This suggests a meeting next Tuesday (30 October) at the House after Questions. Agree?

DMB

Yes no

Caroline ✓ 25/10

I've fixed this with Mr Concannon - to be reviewed in the light of events

23 October 1984

DMB
24/10

STATEMENT OF NATIONAL COAL BOARD PROPOSALS

AT MEETING WITH NACODS, TUESDAY 23RD OCTOBER 1984

Introduction

The Board accept entirely that a major component in the management of the industry depends on understanding and trust between the Board and NACODS. It is the Board's wish that such trust should be established and maintained.

You opened this morning by referring to a number of items previously discussed and I think agreed satisfactorily between us and indeed the Board's attitude confirmed to you in recent correspondence. However, I will refer to them again so that there may be no misunderstanding.

Officials' Attendance at Work - 1974 Guidelines

The Board have withdrawn the 15th August statement and management have been instructed to observe the pattern of behaviour which had been established in each Area with regard to the 1974 guidelines. Arising out of this affirmation, management has been instructed that payments arising shall be paid retrospectively to all Officials.

The points raised in this connection by you this morning will be pursued immediately. We hope to clarify the position later today.

It is our intention that all shifts in compliance with the 1974 guidelines are to be paid. If there are questions of compliance these must be resolved promptly.

Conciliation Procedure

The Board do value the conciliation procedure and it is our intention that it should be operated constructively and fairly at all times and at all levels of management.

As Mr. Jones observed this morning, the essence of this will be seen in the future but you may be assured of the Board's intent to obtain an arrangement satisfactory to both parties.

Supervision of Work in Cavities - The Hammond Case

As previously stated by the Board to you, we reaffirm that it is our intention that the Hammond case shall be pursued constructively along the lines as stated by Mr. Cowan in his letter of 17th July.

It is the Board's purpose that the case shall go to the House of Lords only on the basis of clarifying the legal ruling.

Closed Shop

As previously stated in our letter to you of 27th September, the Board acknowledge that we do at present recognise with you a de facto closed shop. The Board agree that this arrangement should continue into the future. Should the Association seek a formal agreement on this matter, however, it would have to be undertaken in compliance with current legislation.

The Five Pits

The Board undertake that Polmaise, Herrington, Bulcliffe Wood, Cortonwood and Snowdown will remain open to be considered in common with all other pits under the Co@liery Review Procedure.

March 6th Proposals

Again, as stated in our earlier discussions with you, the March 6th proposals will be reconsidered - in concert with all the Unions - in the light of the loss of output which has occurred as a result of the dispute and the changes in the needs of the market

arising also from the circumstances of the dispute. The Board will reconsider the proposals for the industry and revise the objectives for the individual Areas. A new set of objectives will be prepared for each area to reflect the production possibilities available at the time the dispute ends.

Colliery Review Procedure - Independent Review Body

The Association has asked for a revision of the Colliery Review Procedure to ensure that it operates effectively and fairly within the industry. In your document of 26th September you asked specific for:-

- (i) An early warning procedure where local members believe their colliery is deliberately, by various means, being run down as a prelude to closure investigations.
- (ii) Inside the Colliery Review programme, greater availability to Branch Officials, when preparing a case to oppose closure, of time and facilities to information.
- (iii) Any final notice of closure to be issued would allow National Officers time to consult the membership.
- (iv) Any final closure notice not agreed between the NCB and the Association to be subject to an appeal to an independent body.

As previously stated, the Board are very ready to re-examine the Review Procedure and to adopt any amendments which will improve its effectiveness. The Association will appreciate, of course, that this must be done in a way which will meet with the approval of all the parties concerned, including NUM and BACM.

The Board believe that the procedure as it stands is unique and is something that we should all make work. This will, of course, require the active effort of all the parties, not just that of management.

You clearly are concerned that the arrangements should work so that at local colliery level as well as area level there will be an early and continuing understanding of the prospects of the pit concerned. We believe our plans should be readily understood and updated in the form of two year plans reflecting both market and production opportunities. We believe that if this is done it should remove the fear you have that actions will be taken covertly which would shorten the life expectancy of a pit without reaching an understanding among all the parties concerned.

Given that this is done we would expect that there should not be conflict over investment or other operational decisions. If, however, such conflict arose, that could be dealt with from that early stage within the Review Procedure so that all parties could be given ample time to brief themselves adequately.

If, at the end of this process, the matter was still in conflict and might lead to a foreshortening of a colliery's life expectancy, this question, as has already happened in the past, can be referred for national consideration and, indeed, would then be subject to the Independent Review Body and full weight given to its findings, just as would be the case in any question of a distinct closure proposal.

23rd October 1984