

Prime Minister

Mr Walker and Chancellor are in dispute about what figures to give on cost of strike - see attached letter. I hope they will resolve their differences but it could come up at the meeting. My hunch is that Mr Walker is going too far to play down the figures and may end up losing credibility. Chancellor wants to soften up public for PSBR overrun in 1984-85

P.01411

SECRET

PRIME MINISTER

AT
26/10

MISC 101(84)46th Meeting: Coal

After the usual reports from the Secretary of State for Energy on the number of pits and miners working and coal movements and from the Home Secretary on law and order, you may wish to concentrate the discussion on the following matters:

- i. the progress of the NCB/NUM talks at ACAS;
- ii. any developments arising from the sequestration of the NUM's assets;
- iii. press reports about contacts between the NUM and the Libyans;
- iv. what efforts should be made from now on (notably by Mr Eaton) to influence striking miners to return to work.

BR: talks with unions about BREL

2. The Secretary of State for Transport may raise the question of whether the Chairman of British Rail can now go ahead with talking to the rail unions about the future of British Rail Engineering (BREL). When he mentioned this at the Cabinet on 18 October he was asked to ensure that any meeting on this subject was postponed. Now that the NACODS strike threat has been lifted, he may feel that BR should be allowed to go ahead with the meeting, so long as there is judged to be little risk of provoking industrial action by the rail unions. The Secretary of State for Energy will need to give his views.



SECRET

Next meeting

3. There is a meeting of MISC 101 provisionally arranged for Wednesday 31 October at 3.45 pm. There is however very heavy pressure on Ministerial time that day (notably arising from the public expenditure discussions). Unless developments over the weekend suggest otherwise, you may be content to cancel the Wednesday meeting and resume discussion at Cabinet on Thursday 1 November.

PLG

P L GREGSON

26 October 1984