



File

10 DOWNING STREET

Prime Minister (2)

I don't agree that the time  
has come to switch from the  
cannot to be stuck. The  
back pay card is the  
next one to play.

Withdrawing the job  
guarantee and the redundancy  
terms would represent a  
major change of course  
by NCB / Government. It  
should not be undertaken  
other than as a last  
resort.

AT

I agree with  
you

13/11

mf

SECRET

39

MR TURNBULL

13 November 1984

COAL DISPUTE

Next Monday is the last day for strikers to return to work and still qualify before Christmas for the £1,400. Although the return to work will still continue after this date, the rate is likely to fall off for a while. We must therefore ensure that the maximum number return over the course of this week, and particularly next Monday.

Ministers could consider statements along the following lines:

"We believe the NCB has done all that is humanly possible to try and reach an agreement with the NUM, in fact, if anything we believe Mr MacGregor has gone too far. Mr Scargill boasts that he has not moved an inch. Many former strikers have recognised that far from securing the continuance of their jobs in the mining industry, this strike is having exactly the opposite effect, and for that reason they have had the courage to brave the violence and return to work. We hope this return to work will continue.

The lengthy strike is causing inexorable geological destruction of faces and whole pits. Regrettably this, together with lost markets for coal sales, must at some stage make it impossible for the NCB to continue to guarantee that no striker will ever face compulsory redundancy. Indeed, the NCB may also have to question whether the redundancy terms - surely the most generous ever offered to any group of workers anywhere - can still be afforded given the financial damage inflicted by the strike".

SECRET

SECRET

The time to put this message out is now, so as to maximise the numbers returning. It will no doubt be hailed as a threat, but as this whole strike is about economic reality, the answer to that accusation is again economic reality, and to ask what realistic alternative our opponents have.

*Peter Warry*

PETER WARRY

SECRET