



SECRETARY OF STATE FOR ENERGY
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A. Walters 2
A. Duguid

*at the instn
of the Sec*

Denis Austin

T P Lankester Esq
Private Secretary
10 Downing Street
London SW1

24 June 1981

~~The campaign should be
started before the
proposed campaign
starts after the
NUM conference
in early July.
He will be
examining further
proposed
brief for use
on a non-attributable
basis.~~

Dear Tim,

THE COAL INDUSTRY

Your letter of 19 June about the coal industry asked for early advice on what form a campaign of public persuasion might take, when it should be mounted and by whom.

The Chancellor of the Exchequer discussed (in his minute of 13 May) the possibility of such a campaign, on a non-attributable basis, to bring home to the public the real burdens imposed on the economy by the in-efficiencies of the NCB and the attitude of the miners to closing down uneconomic pits (and on wages too for that matter).

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In his minute of 1 June, my Secretary of State agreed with the need for such a campaign but also argued that careful thought would need to be given to the timing. We now have the Tripartite behind us but it seems to us that the campaign should not start until after the NUM Conference in early July. Thereafter, however, it could form a very significant part of our strategy towards the industry in the run up to the next round of NUM wage negotiations.

As to the form the campaign should take, my Secretary of State agrees with the Chancellor that the aim should be to get across to the public the costs imposed on the taxpayers and the economy by the coal industry. Officials here are preparing a background brief for Ministers on the facts that need to be put across. We will be discussing that brief with others concerned in the near future.

When it is finally agreed, it will be available to Ministers for use in unattributable briefing as part of whatever careful, selective but sustained campaign best fits with our developing strategy towards the coal industry, in the light of the NUM Conference, the NCB wages claim and our own deliberations (eg on the CPRS report).

CONFIDENTIAL



My Secretary of State will write further when the brief is ready in its final form.

I am copying this letter to the Private Secretaries to the Chancellor of the Exchequer, the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and the Secretary of State for the Environment as well as to Sir Robert Armstrong, and Mr Ibbs.

Yours ever,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'J D West', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

J D WEST
Private Secretary

conqueror