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PRIME MINISTER

MISC 101(84)18th Meeting: Coal

Before moving on to discussion of policy issues you will want brief reports on the situation on the ground with particular reference to:

- any evidence of a drift back to work
  - the extent and nature of picketing
  - the amount of coal being moved by rail and road.
2. The main issues of policy which are likely to be raised are:
- the NCB/NUM talks
  - the handling of the Orgreave situation and the related question of the British Steel Corporation's recourse to the civil courts.

NCB/NUM talks

3. The Secretary of State for Energy will not wish, in this larger gathering, to go over the ground he discussed at your small meeting last week. But MISC 101 ought to be given some idea of the prospects for the NCB/NUM talks and the tactics for handling a breakdown, especially in relation to Thursday's debate and miners' lobby of Parliament.

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Orgreave and the civil law

4. At the last meeting (MISC 101(84)17th meeting) it was explained that there would soon be no more coke to move from Orgreave, that this would need careful handling to avoid the impression of a victory by the pickets, and that imported supplies would have to be used. The Secretary of State for Energy was asked to pursue this with the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry and the Chairman of the BSC and they will in fact be doing this immediately before your meeting.

5. The situation at Orgreave has also drawn public attention to the fact that BSC has not sought civil remedies against the pickets. This will no doubt have been discussed at the meeting with the Chairman of the BSC. The general issue of the legal options is discussed in the Attorney General's report which he is hoping to let you have this evening.

Next meeting

6. There will be an opportunity for further discussion under the Industrial Affairs item at Thursday's Cabinet.

*PLG*

P L GREGSON

4 June 1984

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