

MS

PRIME MINISTER

Coal Dispute: Endurance

After your meeting with Mr. Walker last night, we spoke about the need to reassure the colleagues most closely concerned (Chancellor, Home Secretary and the Secretaries of State for Transport, Employment and Trade and Industry) that work was in hand to extend endurance. I suspect that the problems encountered in MISC 101 are borne of anxiety which in turn arises from Mr. Walker's understandable desire to keep his cards close to his chest. There are three ways in which the colleagues could be reassured:-

✓ MS

- i) You could speak to each of them individually to say that you had been over the endurance position with Peter Walker and Sir Walter Marshall. This had shown that it was possible to extend endurance into the summer months of next year provided the Notts miners were kept working and the coal they produced was transported to power stations.
- ii) You could ask Mr. Walker to speak to them in turn and we could make it clear to their Private Offices that he was doing so with your endorsement.
- iii) You could hold a short meeting of the inner group of MISC 101, possibly at 1800 hours next Thursday at which Mr. Walker would give an abbreviated version of Sir Walter Marshall's presentation.

There is something to be said for each course. Under (i) it would be made clear that, as Mr. Walker had promised at MISC 101, he had briefed you fully but this course would leave you in effect as guarantor of statements about endurance. It would avoid Mr. Walker having to deal with

SECRET

-2-

his colleagues directly. The advantage of (ii) is the converse, for Mr. Walker would have to take responsibility but it is not clear how open he would be. Under (iii) all the colleagues would get the same presentation but the atmosphere could be too close to that of MISC 101.

Which do you prefer?

We will need to think further about the nature of MISC 101 meetings. Either they can stay as they are, being largely a forum for the exchange of information and for the development of a publicity line being backed by smaller ad hoc meetings; or we should reduce them in size, allowing only principals and no alternates, with meetings only once a week rather than twice. We do not need to decide this now but should return to it after the holidays.

Duty Clerk
MP. V.T.

26 July 1984

SECRET