

ROBIN / PRIME MINISTER

The state of the NUM/NCB talks

It is not absolutely clear whether there will be talks. The NUM replied in the following terms:

"We hope you will attend so that the matter on which talks foundered will be resolved. We hope too that you will drop your demand for closure of so-called uneconomic pits which sparked off this dispute and which is in violation of Plan for Coal."

It is not clear whether this is simply a statement of the line which the NUM would take at the meeting or whether it is a condition which they want the NCB to accept before there will be a meeting. Judging from the brief interview with Mr. Scargill it appears that the NUM would be prepared to go to the meeting without requiring the NCB to accept this condition. We will not know until tomorrow whether the NCB will take the view that it is better to get straight down to talks or whether they will only meet if some change of attitude is indicated by the NUM.

I will report as soon as I have been able to clarify this in the morning.

Andrew Turnbull

5 September 1984

NAT IWD PT 12
COAL

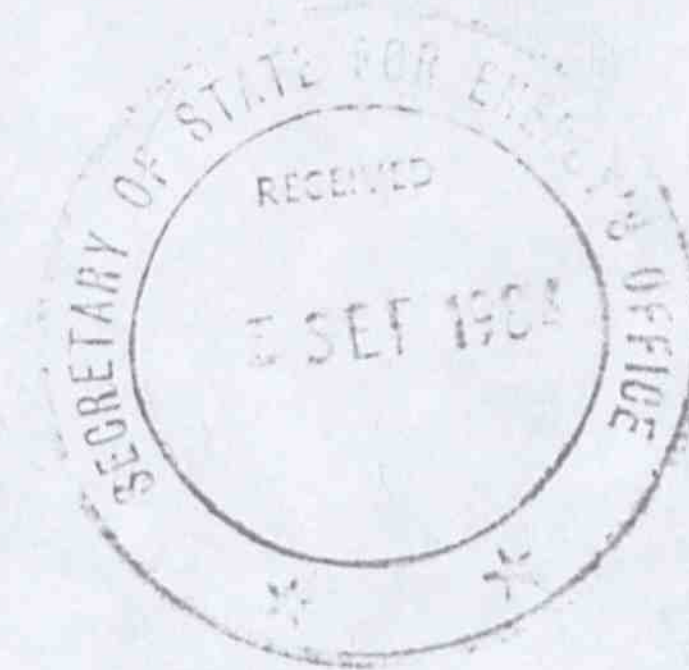
TELEPHONE
01-235 2020

TELEX 882161 HOB

Coal file
NATIONAL COAL BOARD
HOBART HOUSE
GROSVENOR PLACE
LONDON SW1X 7AE

5 September 1984

P E Heathfield Esq
Secretary
National Union of Mineworkers
St James' House
Vicar Lane
SHEFFIELD
S1 2EX




Dear Mr Heathfield

Following the Chairman's most recent offer, I confirm that we will be at a mutually agreed location at 7.00 p.m. on Sunday 9 September. If the time or date are inconvenient to the NUM, we will agree with you a mutually convenient arrangement.

I hope that you will attend so that the problem upon which our talks broke down in July can be solved, and that the closure of uneconomic pits can be dealt with in accordance with the principles of the various Reports on the Plan for Coal. I hope also that you will constructively discuss the manner in which the huge investment that we are willing to make in the industry can be applied and operated so as to create a successful, solvent and prosperous industry to the benefit of the miners, their families and the nation. I expect to see you on Sunday or at as early a date thereafter as is mutually convenient.

In the absence of Mr Smith, I hope you will be in touch with me as soon as possible to make appropriate arrangements.

Yours sincerely


K Hunt
for Ned Smith