

Pne Minto

Daily Coal Report - Friday 19 October 1984

Jr 46

	<u>Number</u>	<u>plus on holiday</u> 19/10
(i) Working normally	45	-
(ii) Turning some coal	10	-
(iii) Some men present	23	-
(iv) On strike/picketed out	96	-

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Attendances again show slight, though encouraging, increases:

- In Scotland a record 343 men reported, including 191 at Bilston Glen.
- In the Coal Board's western area (Lancashire, Staffordshire, Cumbria and North Wales) there was a new 24 hour attendance record of 8,903 - the third consecutive day that the numbers have risen.
- In North Derbyshire there was a new 24 hour attendance record for a Friday of 1,003.
- In Yorkshire 76 miners reported plus the usual number of contractors' men.

Coal Movements

A further good day yesterday. 181,000 tonnes were moved.

39 trains ran.

Law and Order

This morning there were large numbers of pickets at Brodsworth and Denby Grange in Yorkshire.

SECRET AND PERSONAL

In Ollerton village (North Notts) youths created disturbances last night and threw bricks at police vehicles.

The number of police injured in the coal dispute has now risen to 914.

Industrial Relations

The Coal Board repeated again today their willingness to talk at any time. This is a reflection of the attitude they have maintained consistently throughout the dispute. There are however no specific initiatives in prospect, and indeed little to be gained whilst the NUM maintains its intransigent attitude. Mr Scargill confirmed to the media this afternoon that the union's position was unchanged.

Power Workers Reject Scargill

The 43,000 members of the electricians' union (EETPU) have decisively rejected industrial action in support of the NUM. Nearly two-thirds of the membership voted in their secret ballot. 84 per cent decided against taking industrial action. This must be seen as a major blow to Scargill. It should make NACODS think. It also undermines the credibility of the TUC's sabre-rattling on supportive action.

Line to Take

Stress key elements of Coal Board offer (as detailed in yesterday's report).

NACODS members in particular should recognise that since their recent ballot the Coal Board has met their wishes. There can be no justification for a strike now.

Welcome the decisive result of the power workers ballot.

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SECRET AND PERSONAL

AT file

COAL STRIKE

BACKGROUND NOTE - 19 OCTOBER

At the request of NACODS the National Coal Board agreed to enter into negotiations with the NUM under the auspices of ACAS. At the beginning of the meeting the NUM had their proposals tabled. These were unacceptable and would in fact have given the NUM power to veto any closure, thereby making it impossible to deal with the problems of uneconomic pits. Mr Scargill has repeatedly endeavoured to describe these proposals as an ACAS paper. In fact the paper made it clear that it was a distillation of the views of the NUM.

Following this, the NCB tabled a paper which accepted that the Board would agree to an independent review body on pit closures, would give proper consideration to any views which the body expressed, but obviously would retain the Board's right to take management decisions.

Following this ACAS put forward a formula which used the following wording on the question of pit closures:-

"Any colliery not covered by geological exhaustion or safety dangers may be brought forward by either party for discussion and investigation in line with the principles of the 'Plan for Coal' under the colliery review procedure.

"The colliery review procedure will be amended to include as a final stage an independent review body whose function would be to consider a reference from any one of the parties on any closure matter about

which there is disagreement.

"Full weight will be given by the parties to the advice of this independent review body."

The NCB immediately accepted this wording - the NUM totally rejected it. We therefore have a position where NACODS requested the NCB to go to ACAS, having heard both sides ACAS produced a formula which the NCB accepted but which was totally rejected by Mr Scargill.

The comprehensive package on offer to the miners is as follows:

1. A wage increase backdated until last November which is greater than that already accepted by many groups of workers, including those in the power, gas, railway and water industries.
2. An undertaking that any miner who wishes to continue working in the coal industry will be able to do so. There will be no compulsory redundancies.
3. For miners in any pit which is going to close, an opportunity to go for voluntary early retirement on terms more generous than in any coal industry in the world, and any other industry in this country.
4. A continuation of a capital investment programme in new machinery, new collieries and new coal faces, which will enable the industry to produce cheap coal and therefore to expand its markets. A sharp contrast to socialist France where the mining industry is to be cut by half.

5. The creation of a new enterprise company which will provide finance, advice and accommodation for new businesses and new enterprises in any mining community adversely affected by closures. During the eleven year period in which Labour governments closed 330 pits (many more pits than exist at present) there was no such generous programme for the communities, and there were no such provisions for early retirement.
6. To amend the colliery review procedure previously agreed between the National Coal Board and the mining unions so that an independent review body can, if asked to do so, give its views on a closure. This would be coupled with an undertaking that full weight will be given by the NCB to any advice received from the independent review body.

In total this package must be better than anything that has been offered to the miners since nationalisation. There has certainly never been any justification for the current industrial action. We have reached a position where Mr Scargill wishes to continue with conflict, for it is only by means of conflict that he hopes to achieve his political purpose.

Our stocks of coal at the power stations remain very good. Indeed for some weeks now we have succeeded in moving more coal to the power stations than has been burnt. At the moment our coal stocks at power stations are higher than they were nearly two months ago.

There can be no way that the Government or the National Coal Board can meet the totally unreasonable demand of Mr Scargill that no uneconomic pit shall be closed. This

demand has never previously been made by any leader of the miners, never been contemplated by a Labour government and is not operated in any coal industry in the world. Neither must we be seen to be moved by leaders who use the methods of the mob and victimisation.

The police have now made more than 7,000 arrests during the dispute. They have to date succeeded in repelling every attempt to close a working colliery, a steelworks, a power station or a coke works by means of mob violence.