

CONFIDENTIAL

MR VEREKER

cc Mr Rickett
Mr Wolfson ✓
Mr Mount

THE MINERS - GOVERNMENT PUBLICITY

You invited comments on the Manley/Smith correspondence.

My feeling at this stage is that the NCB is working well and that the Government could only damage its efforts by getting overtly involved, except in three respects:

- to bring out by Written Answer the extent to which the taxpayer subsidises miners and how we could fuel ourselves more cheaply;
- in a similar way to set out the extent to which the country is prepared for a long stoppage; and
- preferably by oral Answer the Government's determination not to undermine Management.

But I am sure this should be done without fuss. Any hint that the Government is panicking would be disastrous. If information is on record we can ensure it reaches the most telling places.

It also seems to me that we are letting Scargill get away with too much - vide his interview with Carol Thatcher. It would be unhelpful to discredit his cavalier use of statistics on the basis of his interview with Carol Thatcher. But Scargill will be mouthing these untruths or selective untruths at every opportunity. Nor will he stop if challenged.

But could we not persuade the Sun to do a centre page spread on King Arthur's amazing way with figures based on the analysis of his interview claims?

The NCB are seeking to raise an issue a day while Scargill is on his tub thumping tour - eg, £4 attendance money and free transport. The Scargill list of lies could form one such effort.

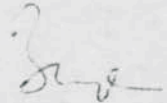
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

-2-

I am inclined to agree with you that we do not have a clearly understood strategy for the dispute as a whole. We are organised for the run up to the ballot and have a system for tactical fine-tuning. But now is the time to identify issues for the two periods following an adverse ballot result - ie, between the result and a strike afterwards.

I think it would be useful to have a fairly small meeting on these two points of the overall strategy. I think it should be a mixed meeting of officials - Manley, Smith, Vereker, Gillis, Moorey, Ingham, plus whoever else Messrs Stanley and Smith wish to have along.



B. INGHAM

19 October 1982

CONFIDENTIAL