

BRIEFING FOR PRIME MINISTER'S QUESTIONS: 17 MAY 1984

## COAL INDUSTRY DISPUTE

### Additional Background

The number of pits working has now been stable each morning for two weeks: 43 working normally; 6 turning some coal; 5 with some men working and 121 idle.

Picketing is largely confined to North Nottinghamshire and has been heavy at several pits in the area on the last two afternoons. This morning there are 230 pickets at Mansfield colliery; 150 at Ollerton and 120 at Creswell. Yesterday there was an increased incidence of women on the picket lines and Mrs Scargill was arrested at Silverhill colliery.

The one colliery outside Nottingham to be heavily picketed this morning is again Bolsover, with 550 pickets. Attendance there is steadily improving.

Stanley Orme is reported to have had talks with Arthur Scargill and is now seeking a meeting with Ian MacGregor in order to act as a mediator in the dispute.

### Inland Steel

The NCB have confirmed reports that the first cargoes of blast furnace coke necessary to fill the order from Inland Steel of Chicago have been bought on the European spot market. Despite appeals to union officials, the NUM have refused to allow the coke to come from the Durham coke ovens and the terms of the contract require that deliveries start now. This is the first order for coke from America for over 10 years.



MAJOR INDUSTRIAL DISPUTES

National Coal Board, (NUM)

[Dept of Energy is briefing separately on this]

1. An overtime ban has been operating since 31 October in protest at the NCB's closure programme and its pay offer of 5.2% on basic pay rates.
2. On 8 March the NUM National Executive Committee approved the local strikes which had been called from after work on 9 March in Yorkshire and Scottish Areas of NUM; and approved in advance any strike action called in other areas. Decisions on whether to strike were left to individual areas, rather than to a national ballot. Ballots on strike action in various areas produced majorities against striking. A special delegates conference held on 19 April decided not to hold a national ballot at that stage; and that the majority required to authorise strike action in such a ballot should in future be a simple majority, rather than the 55% which the rules previously demanded.
3. In the early days of the strike, and following extensive unlawful picketing in various areas, the National Coal Board obtained an injunction which ordered the Yorkshire Area of the NUM to withdraw its instructions to members to engage in picketing at pits other than their own, and required the union not to encourage or assist in unlawful picketing on Coal Board premises, including financing and encouraging flying pickets. On 19 March the NCB was granted an indefinite adjournment of its application for contempt of court proceedings against the Yorkshire NUM; but the NCB can return to the High Court on giving two days notice to the Yorkshire NUM.

Teachers (E&W) (NUT, NAS/UWT)

4. Teachers in England and Wales are "withdrawing goodwill" after their representatives rejected a 4.5% pay offer. A one-day strike took place on 9 May as the precursor of an intended programme of selective strike action; NUT are balloting their members in particular schools to test their willingness to mount a series of 3-day selective strikes.