



BRIEFING FOR PRIME MINISTER'S QUESTIONS: 24 JULY 1984

COAL INDUSTRY DISPUTE

Additional Background

There are 26(+20) pits working normally this morning; 6(+2) are turning some coal; 2(+2) have some men working and 43(+74) are idle. Figures in brackets refer to pits on holiday that would normally be in each of the categories. Among pits on holiday this week are 13 in Nottinghamshire.

Bilston Glen (Scotland) returned yesterday after 3 weeks holiday. There were 300 pickets and only 15 men crossed the picket lines although some coal was produced. This morning there are 500 pickets and around 20 arrests have been made, but 25 men are working. At another Scottish pit, Monktonhall, 2 men are working, but the pit is still classified as idle. A private mine nearby (Blinkbonnie) where the men belong to the Monktonhall NUM branch has voted to return to work.

In North Derbyshire there are 900 pickets at Bolsover (191 men working); 100 pickets at Shirebrook (90 men) and 50 pickets at Warsop (62 men). There is to be a meeting of the North Derby NUM executive this morning but it is unlikely that any change of position will result.

A meeting of the newly elected Nottinghamshire NUM area council yesterday was thought likely to censure the President and General Secretary, Messrs Richardson and Chadburn, for supporting the strike; in the event no such move was made.

Yesterday afternoon there were 1000 pickets at Agecroft (Lancs) where a bus was damaged by bricks. This morning there are 200 pickets at Golborne and again there has been damage to vehicles. Neither action affected attendance.

Miners this morning blocked the Humber Bridge for about an hour but were moved on by police.

The NCB have today renewed their campaign to get men back to work, with advertisements in the popular press together with a number of letters and telephone calls at local level from pit managers.

While attendances in the industry were down yesterday as a result of pit holidays, 87 ex-strikers returned in the day.