

## COAL

### Present Situation

45 Pits are working normally. 96,000 NCB employees and 65,000 members of the NUM are not on strike and more than 11,000 have returned in the last 2 weeks. Coal stocks remain strong.

### NCB Manipulating Figures

I recall that the President of the NUM told his members on February 6 - 42 weeks ago - that there were only 8 weeks stocks of coal at power stations. If the hon Members opposite believe the leadership of the NUM after that they will believe anything!

### NCB Figures Inconsistent with Previous Claims

I have made it clear in the House several times that since the beginning of the strike about 70,000 people have been working in the coal fields, of whom about 50,000 are members of the NUM. Those figures are totally consistent with the ones to which I have referred today.

### Church Leaders call for Further Negotiations

Throughout over 100 hours of negotiations the NUM have boasted that they have not budged an inch from their March 6th position. The NCB had made a generous offer and they are absolutely right to insist that the NUM should abandon their impossible demands before there can be any further negotiations.

Mr Hattersley's Position

I welcome the Rt Hon Members conversion to the NUM leadership consulting its members. I recall that in April he urged Nottinghamshire miners to go on strike in direct contravention of their democratic vote. Perhaps he will tell the House now, does he think that the strike can end on the basis of the settlement reached between the NCB and NACODS?

Withdrawal of Hit List etc

The Rt Hon Gentleman just doesn't want to understand. All these matters, including the re-examination of the March 6th proposals, the position of the 5 pits and the Colliery Review Procedure, were all dealt with satisfactorily in the NCB agreement with NACODS. That agreement has been accepted by 2 of the 3 unions and a third of the membership of the NUM. Whose side is the Rt Hon Gentleman on?

30,000 Job Losses

The Association of British Mining Equipment Companies has indicated that there have already been a considerable number of redundancies amongst their members and sub-contractors as a result of the strike and if it continues, there could be as many as 30,000 jobs at risk.

22 November 1984

SECRET

LS 4.

MR TURNBULL

22 November 1984

COAL DISPUTE

There are not enough men returning to work this week to sustain the momentum once the Christmas offer has expired. The new backpay offer will help but only marginally: money is only one element in the return to work decision. There is a real danger that we are already losing the initiative.

If the momentum is lost, then we could be locked into a new status quo for many months, albeit at a slightly higher level of working, until some conjunction of events creates sufficient stimulus for a new wave of returns. Once it is evident that the momentum has collapsed, it will be much harder to up the stakes by for example withdrawing capital investment plans. It will also have less effect.

We would suggest raising the stakes now. Eaton could question whether, if the strike continues, the NCB can justify its capital expenditure plans. He must also make banner headlines with the attached cutting from today's Daily Telegraph. This will give the NCB backpay offer a little more impetus and perhaps regain our initiative. It will be risky, but to do nothing could be more risky.

**FIRE THREATENS  
500 PIT JOBS**

A coal face at the strike-bound Ackton Hall colliery, Featherstone, near Pontefract, has been sealed off because of a fire and 500 jobs are threatened, the Coal Board said yesterday.

"This is the main production face and there is no way we can find work for all 1,200 men," a spokesman said.

*Peter Warry*  
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