10 DOWNING STREET

Prime Minister (2)

To note

(i) that in w/e 17 November, the second of the return to work, there was little impact on production

(ii) stocks fell 70,000 tons

(iii) there is a major drop in coal consumption over Christmas - see second chart.

AT

27/11

undated

PM

Mrs McGibbon, Secretary of the Working Miners group, has just telephoned to say —:

(a) Many striking miners have been telling her, discreetly, that they intend to go back to work after Christmas, but not before, to avoid family intimidation over the holiday. She was expecting quite a flood back therefore after the holiday; (by todays news of likely New Year

talks, will certainly have a profoundly negative effect on this possible returning Hood after Christmas. I naturally said nothing, but promised to report to you.

MA

27/11/84

SECRET

Mr. Turnbull 10 B.

NOTE FOR THE RECORD

MR BUTLER

MINERS' STRIKE - TUC

I received a telephone call from Geoffrey Goodman, Daily Mirror, last night about a private dinner party between Peter Walker, Secretary of State for Energy, and Messrs Basnett and Buckton on Sunday, November 25, 1984. Mr Goodman said his publisher, Robert Maxwell, had a hand in setting up the occasion. The fact that the dinner had taken place was not known to the rest of the TUC.

Mr Goodman said that "things are moving a bit on the TUC side". There was to be a special meeting of the TUC group monitoring the coal strike, which was meeting the NUM today (Tuesday), immediately before the TUC General Council on Wednesday.

The objective of the operation was to persuade the NUM that the time had come "to negotiate seriously".

I asked about the chances of this succeeding. Mr Goodman said they were thought to be "fairly reasonable" because Scargill was now convinced there was a limit to what he would achieve by a strike and certainly a limit to what the TUC could or would be prepared to offer by way of help.

He said Scargill's card had been well marked. "Have no doubt about that". He had been told he must face the reality of the situation.

I asked what message Mr Walker had given. Mr Goodman replied: "The message was broadly as we discussed before", referring to my earlier meeting with Mr Basnett.

I said "I suppose that means Nacods or nothing".

Mr Goodman did not dissent that that had been Mr Walker's messsage. But, he said, the NUM would need a little more time to enable them to go back to their members.

I noted, without comment, this observation and also Mr Goodman's concluding point: "Everyone of course recognises that nothing can be done before the present return to work has been exhausted."

Comment

The latter comment does not apparently square with other reports that the TUC are trying to get negotiations resumed before the Kinnock/Scargill rally on Friday. On the other hand, resumed negotiations would no doubt discourage a further return to work.

BERNARD INGHAM
27 November 1984