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PRIME MINISTER

MISC 101(85)6th Meeting: Coal

You will wish to invite reports from:

i. the Secretary of State for Energy on:

- the number of pits and miners working (Monday's figures will be particularly significant in the light of the joint NUM/NACODS call for renewed negotiations and the generally 'bad press' the call received on Friday 8 February);
- coal movements; 930,000 tons
- the likelihood of NACODS striking (there are press reports that their NEC are to consider calling a strike ballot early in the current week);
- the NCB's thinking on the new independent advisory body
(Mr Walker told the Cabinet on 7 February that the NCB had provided further information and it is possible that the media may now concentrate on this subject in view of claims that the NUM/NACODS October 1984 agreement would be undermined if the NCB insist on written commitments from the NUM prior to re-opening negotiations. There has also been a press report that the President of NACODS claims the removal of machinery from Polmaise Colliery as evidence of the NCB's intention to break the agreement);

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- ii. the Secretary of State for Employment on:
- the likelihood of any further TUC or ACAS involvement;
 - the effects of the TUC's day of action in support of the miners called for 11 February, in the South East and Yorkshire/Humberside;
- iii. the Home Secretary on:
- law and order;
- iv. the Attorney General on:
- any significant developments in civil actions;
 - the significance of the acquittal on 7 February of 8 striking miners, charged at Sheffield Crown Court with unlawful assembly, in the light of the judge's reported comments casting doubts on the reliability of police evidence (there are said to be 300 more awaiting trial for unlawful assembly).

2. The Industrial Affairs item at Cabinet on 14 February will provide an opportunity for further discussion. The next MISC 101 meeting is arranged for Monday 18 February at 11.00 am.

PLG

P L GREGSON

8 February 1985

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