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NATIONAL COAL BOARD
HOBART HOUSE
GROSVENOR PLACE
LONDON SW1X 7AE

8th February 1985

P.E. Heathfield Esq.,
Secretary,
National Union of Mineworkers,
St. James' House,
Vicar Lane,
Sheffield,
South Yorkshire S1 2EX

Dear Mr. Heathfield,

In my letter of the 1st February I said that I would be in touch with you again this week. I also expressed the Board's concern at the many public statements made by leaders of the NUM in categorically refusing to agree to closures on uneconomic grounds. Again since you received my letter Mr. Scargill has confirmed in public that there is no change in his position on this issue.

Against this background we do not find a basis for entering into useful negotiations.

Yours sincerely,

H.M. Spanton.

NATIONAL COAL BOARD
HOBART HOUSE
GROSVENOR PLACE
LONDON SW1X 7AE

1st February 1985

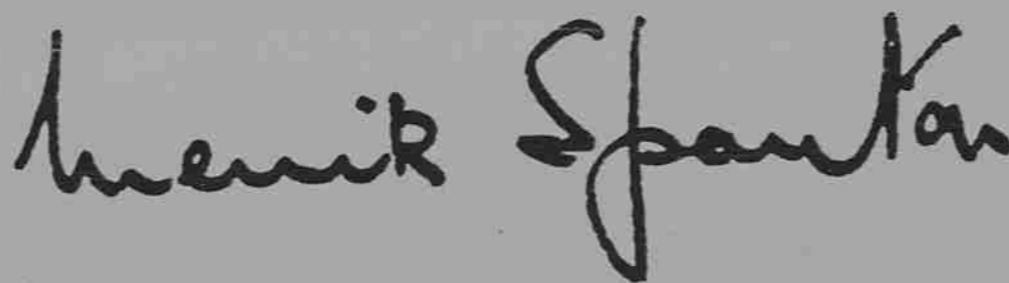
P.E. Heathfield Esq.,
Secretary,
National Union of Mineworkers,
St. James' House,
Vicar Lane,
Sheffield,
South Yorkshire S1 2EX

Dear Mr. Heathfield,

Your letter of today's date does appear to give some encouragement. On the main issue however there is no indication that there is any change in the policy of the NUM towards dealing with the industry's problem of the closure of uneconomic capacity. In view of the many public statements made by leaders of the NUM in categorically refusing to countenance the procedures that could lead to closures on uneconomic grounds. It remains essential that the National Coal Board is satisfied that this no longer remains the position of the leaders of the NUM.

I now wish to study your letter with care with my colleagues and will be in touch with you again early next week.

Yours sincerely,



H.M. Spanton

NATIONAL UNION OF MINeworkERS

ST. JAMES' HOUSE, VICAR LANE,
SHEFFIELD, SOUTH YORKSHIRE S1 2EX

President A. SCARGILL

Secretary P. E. HEATHFIELD

Telephone: 0742 700388

Please quote our reference in reply:

Your Ref:

Our Ref: PEH/MF.

- 1 FEB 1985

1st February 1985.

Mr. M. Spanton,
National Coal Board,
Hobart House,
London, SW1.

Dear Mr. Spanton,

I am in receipt of your letter dated 31st January 1985, and must express great disappointment at the Board's response to the Union's initiatives.

The five proposals of the Union are undoubtedly positive initiatives to provide the basis for resumed negotiations, and pay due regard for what has taken place in the Industry over the past eleven months.

1. PLAN FOR COAL

This proposal is based upon previous submissions by the Board which have been accepted by the Union.

2. FUTURE OF COLLIERIES/UNITS

The Union's proposal takes account of the Board's own suggestions when we met with ACAS. This would provide for all matters relating to the future of Collieries/Units to be dealt with in accordance with procedures operating prior to 6th March 1984, and of course the Union have previously accepted an amendment to the procedures to provide for an Independent Review Body, and we feel that the broad recognition given to this proposal during informal discussions could lead to agreement in negotiations.

3. FIVE COLLIERIES

The Union's proposal accepts that these five pits remain within the procedure on the understanding that undertakings given by the Board within the Procedure will be honoured. This new proposal also provides for any unforeseen major mining problems to be discussed in the normal way, and we feel this point is manifestly fair and sensible.

NATIONAL UNION OF MINeworkERS

ST. JAMES' HOUSE, VICAR LANE,
SHEFFIELD, SOUTH YORKSHIRE S1 2EX

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-2-

Mr. M. Spanton

1st February 1985

4. MARCH 6TH PROPOSALS

The Union's proposal is, of course, a statement of the present situation and has been publicly acknowledged by the Board's spokesman, Mr. Eaton, in an Independent Radio News interview on 31st January.

5. AMNESTY

It is inconceivable that in any discussions leading to a resolution of this dispute that the question of dealing with those men who have been dismissed in the course of the dispute cannot be a matter for discussion between the National Coal Board and the National Union of Mineworkers.

Indeed, in my meeting with Mr. Smith on the 21st January, it was acknowledged that the Union would pursue this matter when negotiations resumed.

It seems a matter of equity that the same principle applied in 1972 and 1974 be applied in the current situation. *principle*

I find your refusal to resume negotiations without precondition extremely disappointing. Should the Board change its mind, however, and decide that it does want to see a settlement of this dispute, I reiterate that the Union's National Executive Committee is available for talks at any time.

Yours sincerely,



P. E. Heathfield
SECRETARY

Press Release

Public Relations

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Telephone: 01-235 2020

Mr Dyham

'NO GROUNDS FOR PRESENT ROUND OF DISCUSSIONS TO CONTINUE'NUM Avoid the Central Issue of Uneconomic Capacity

After today's (Friday's) meeting the National Coal Board made this statement:

"The National Coal Board regret that the National Union of Mineworkers have provided no further grounds to enable the present round of discussions to continue, because they have publicly and rigidly refused to move from their impossible demand that all uneconomic pits should remain open.

"The Board remain ready to resume negotiations when the Union make it clear they are prepared to have meaningful talks to accept the procedure to deal with the problem of uneconomic coal mining capacity.

"This is the central issue to resolve in order to reach a negotiated settlement of the NUM's dispute. However, in all the correspondence of the past few days, a procedure to deal with uneconomic capacity has not once been mentioned by the union.

"A way to deal with the problem of uneconomic capacity is the essential issue in view of the many public statements that have been made by the leaders of the NUM.

"The Board made it clear to the Union, at Tuesday's informal talks and in writing, that they required the NUM to put forward proposals to provide a basis for the Board to determine that it was worthwhile to enter negotiations to reach a settlement of the dispute.