

PERSONAL AND CONFIDENTIAL



10 DOWNING STREET

From the Principal Private Secretary

13 May 1985

Andrew Turnbull has written to you separately about the main part of the discussion which the Prime Minister had with Mr. Ian MacGregor this morning. This letter is about assistance to working miners who may be particular targets for the reprisals of militant colleagues.

The Prime Minister emphasised the paramount importance of the NCB's supporting those miners who stood by the Board and exercised their right to work during the dispute. She pointed out that, if the Coal Board did not support fully such people on this occasion, it could not expect the support of them and their colleagues in a future dispute.

Mr. MacGregor referred to the difficulty of arranging transfers for those miners in striking areas who returned to work before the end of the strike, bearing in mind that there were up to 30,000 of them. He also referred to the difficulty of discriminating between one case and another in giving financial help. Nevertheless, he acknowledged that there were some cases which required special treatment and said that he was in touch with the President of the Working Miners Committee, Mr. Colin Clarke, who was providing him with a list of people with special grounds for help. In such cases Mr. MacGregor said that help would be given.

I think that it would be worth reminding Mr. MacGregor of the importance which the Prime Minister attaches to this by my replying to his letter of 8 May about the Fjaelbergs. Could you please let me know whether you would be content for me to reply to Mr. MacGregor's letter in the attached terms.

FERB

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Department of Energy

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DRAFT LETTER FROM MR BUTLER TO MR IAN MACGREGOR

The Prime Minister was very grateful to you for your letter of 8 May about Mr and Mrs Fjaelberg, about which she had a word with you on Monday morning.

The Prime Minister has noted and warmly applauds the firm action which the Board has taken to prevent intimidation and to protect the miners who supported the NCB by working during the strike, often at great cost and risk to themselves. She thinks it essential that the Board should stand by these employees.

Mrs Thatcher also accepts that the Board cannot give financial help with transfers to all miners who exercised their right to work during the strike. Nevertheless she takes the view that the policy must be sufficiently flexible to allow assistance to be given to people who were prominent in leading their colleagues back to work and therefore are particularly vulnerable to reprisals by militant colleagues. The Prime Minister was therefore particularly glad to hear that you had a source of advice on the names of people who required such special help and would be making the necessary arrangements to provide it.