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*File*

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Andrew Turnbull Esq  
Private Secretary  
10 Downing Street  
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12 July 1984

*Dear Andrew,*

DOCK STRIKE

My Secretary of State thought colleagues might find the attached note useful in responding to questions about the Dock Strike over the weekend. The unions and employers may meet \* during Friday morning so the conclusion is necessarily vague.

I am copying this to the Private Secretaries to all Cabinet Ministers, and to Sir Robert Armstrong.

*Yours sincerely*

*David Normington*

DAVID NORMINGTON  
Principal Private  
Secretary

\* meeting now  
fixed for  
Friday 11.0 a.m.

## THE DOCK STRIKE

### Points to make

IT IS DIFFICULT TO UNDERSTAND WHAT THE STRIKE IS ABOUT.

### THE DOCK LABOUR SCHEME IS NOT UNDER ATTACK

- Employers have promised to continue to accept their obligations under the Scheme.
- The Government have no plans to abolish the Scheme.
- The National Dock Labour Board have found in the unions favour over the incident at Immingham.

### THE TGWU

- have ignored the Local and National Dock Labour Boards usual procedures for resolving disputes about the application of the scheme;
- have also ignored the industry's agreements about procedures to be followed and notice to be given before strikes take place;

### CONCLUSION

Cannot see why the unions and employers should not settle this quickly through their normal negotiating machinery.



APPENDIX I

PORTS TO WHICH SCHEME RELATES

SCHEME PORTS

See map below

File

A. Tyne and Wear Ports:

The following Ports:—

- (1) Blyth
- (2) Dunston
- (3) Gateshead
- (4) Newcastle
- (5) North Shields
- (6) Seaham Harbour
- (7) South Shields
- (8) Sunderland

B. The following Ports:—

- (1) Middlesbrough
- (2) The Hartlepoons

C. The following Ports:—

- (1) Hull
- (2) Goole

D. The following Ports:—

- (1) Grimsby
- (2) Immingham

E. Wash Ports:

The following Ports:—

- (1) Boston
- (2) King's Lynn
- (3) Wisbech

F. East Anglian Ports:

The following Ports:—

- (1) Great Yarmouth
- (2) Ipswich
- (3) Lowestoft

G. The Port of London:

H. The Medway and Swale Ports:

The following Ports:—

- (1) The area of the Conservators of the River Medway
- (2) The area of the Commissioners of the Faversham Navigation

- (3) The area of the Conservators of Milton Creek
- (4) The harbour area of the Queenborough Corporation
- (5) Whitstable

I. South Coast Ports:

The following Ports:—

- (1) Poole and Hamworthy
- (2) Southampton
- (3) Weymouth

J. The Port of Plymouth:

K. The Cornish Ports:

The following Ports:—

- (1) Charlestown
- (2) Falmouth
- (3) Fowey
- (4) Hayle
- (5) Newlyn
- (6) Par
- (7) Penryn
- (8) Penzance
- (9) Porthleven
- (10) Portreath
- (11) Truro

L. Bristol and Severn Ports:

The following Ports:—

- (1) Bristol
- (2) Gloucester
- (3) Sharpness

M. South Wales Ports:

The following Ports:—

- (1) Barry
- (2) Cardiff and Penarth
- (3) Newport
- (4) Port Talbot
- (5) Swansea

N. The following Ports:—

- (1) Birkenhead
- (2) Bromborough
- (3) Garston
- (4) Liverpool
- (5) Widnes

O. The following Ports:—

- (1) Ellesmere Port
- (2) Manchester
- (3) Partington
- (4) Runcorn
- (5) Weston Point

P. ~~The Port of Preston~~

Q. The Port of Fleetwood:

R. The following Ports:—

- (1) Barrow-in-Furness
- (2) Silloth
- (3) Whitehaven
- (4) Workington

S. Ayrshire Ports:—

The following Ports:—

- (1) Ardrossan
- (2) Ayr
- (3) Irvine
- (4) Troon

T. The Clyde Ports:

The following Ports:—

- (1) Glasgow
- (2) Greenock

U. The Port of Aberdeen.

V. East of Scotland Ports:

The following Ports:—

- (1) Birtisland
- (2) Dundee
- (3) Grangemouth
- (4) Granton
- (5) Kirkcaldy
- (6) Leith
- (7) Methil
- (8) Tayport

W. The port of HUNTERSTON

In this Appendix port means the area of that port as laid down by or under any Act of Parliament, Order-in-Council, provisional Order or any instrument made under an enactment passed or made with reference to that port, except where otherwise defined for the purposes of any dock labour scheme referred to in Clause 1(3) of the Scheme, in which case it shall have the meaning set out in that dock labour scheme.



Meyer Nør Scheer park '000 tons

Dore	6,300
Folkestene	<del>4,400</del>
Felvestene	4,900
Hornvik	3,000
Parksten	700
Nestor	1,000
Storvæn	3,000
Misc harbours & wharves	3,000

PS/Secretary of State

cc: PS/Mrs Chalker  
 PS/Mr Mitchell  
 PS/Mr Lazarus  
 PS/Lord Lucas  
 Mr Knighton  
 Mr Dempster  
 Mr Walker  
 Mr Fells  
 Mr Devereau

## DOCKS STRIKE

Present Position

There has been an intensification of industrial <sup>action</sup> since yesterday. Eight ports which were working normally yesterday now have RDWs on strike. These are: Ayr and Troon, Plymouth, Lowestoft, Port Talbot and the four north-east ports where dockers belonging to the GMBATU have just voted to join the strike (Tyne, Sunderland, Blyth and Seaham).

The port of Hunterston is also reported to be on strike - along with the remaining Clyde ports - but supplies to the Ravenscraig steelworks are still getting through with the help of BSC-employed staff at Hunterston. This work does not, apparently, normally involve RDWs and does not, therefore, constitute a breach of the Scheme.

A list of those ports definitely on strike is at Annex A.

National Joint Council Meeting

The NJC for the Port Industry met for seven hours yesterday evening. The employers' side say they were unable to agree to the demands of the TGWU; these are understood to have been two-fold - first, that the employers should undertake never again to permit any breach of the Scheme and, second, that the unions should become the arbiters of what constitutes a breach. The employers' side were willing to go no further than a reaffirmation that they were willing to abide by the rules of the Scheme.



Next moves \*

There are several TGWU docks meetings today - most importantly the dock workers' delegate conference. Current indications are that they will, at best, confirm support for the strike and there are suggestions that they may seek to intensify it, perhaps by urging a ban on the movement of unaccompanied freight by ferries.

The substance of the dispute

We now have both the employers' and the TGWU's versions of the incident which gave rise to the dispute. The BSC, in a letter to the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry (copy at Annex B) say that there is an agreement with the TGWU branch covering Immingham, dating from 1979, which states that "the loading schedules for the supply of bulk materials ..... shall be maintained and that ships shall be continuously discharged as quickly as possible without restriction by reasons of origin or destination of materials or method of loading or transport." BSC say that the agreed practice at Immingham is for a contractor's specialist front-loading shovel with driver to be brought in to load materials with the TGWU having two dockers "standing by" whilst loading takes place. BSC say that they approached the TGWU at local level on Thursday 5 July to explain that they proposed to implement "usual contractor stand-by arrangements" to move iron ore. They say that the local dockers seemed ready to accept but that the TGWU Dock Committee withheld agreement on the advice of the TGWU national docks officer, (Mr Connolly). BSC made it clear that lorry convoys would start at 2 pm on Friday 6 July; the TGWU requested a delay of 2/3 days in order to await the outcome of NCB/NUM negotiations. BSC were unable to accept a postponement of the lorry operation which started at 3 pm on Friday.

\* See note at Annex C.

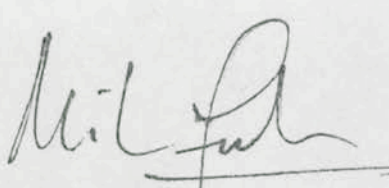


The TGWU perspective accords broadly with BSC's except for one important detail. The Union say that they indicated to BSC on Friday morning that any attempt to move the ore using non-registered labour would constitute a breach of the Scheme and thus be likely to trigger a strike. The TGWU allege that BSC ignored that warning and that when it became clear that dockers would not handle the iron ore sent home, on full pay, those dockers involved. The TGWU allege that as soon as their dockers had left the port premises the BSC brought in contractors to load the lorries.

#### National of Seamen

The Executive Council of the National of Seamen are meeting in regular session this morning. They are bound to discuss the implications of both the ~~coal~~<sup>coal</sup> and dock disputes. On the latter they seem likely to instruct members not to permit vessels to be diverted from strike-bound ports to those which are still working. This instruction would not apply to deep-sea vessels, but cross-Channel services could be affected.

The NUS will also be discussing Sealink privatisation; the General Secretary (Mr Slater) indicated in a radio interview this morning that his Executive may instruct members to restart their campaign of industrial action in protest against privatisation - perhaps by banning the movement of unaccompanied freight - *now confirmed from midnight Friday 13 July (Sealink ferries only).*

  
M J FUHR  
RC/TIR

11 July 1984



Scheme ports with rdws on strike

PLA )  
Liverpool ) and non-rdws  
Bristol )  
Hull  
Goole  
Southampton  
Fleetwood  
Barrow (BNFL dockers only)  
Garston  
Barry (except for dockers handling perishable cargoes)  
Tees/Hartlepool  
Ipswich  
Manchester  
Workington  
Whitehaven  
Aberdeen  
Dundee  
Forth  
Grimsby/Immingham  
Weymouth (freight traffic only - passenger traffic has a  
dispensation)  
Clyde  
Fowey  
Par  
Ayr and Troon  
Lowestoft  
Plymouth  
Tyne  
Sunderland  
Blyth  
Seaham



Scheme ports where rdws are still working

Poole

Non-scheme ports where rdws are striking

Lerwick - ~~except~~ for specified dispensations

Montrose



BRITISH STEEL CORPORATION

ROBERT HASLAM  
CHAIRMAN

10 July 1984

The Rt. Hon. Norman Tebbit, MP  
Secretary of State for Trade & Industry  
Department of Trade & Industry  
1 Victoria Street  
London SW1

Herewith I am attaching a brief note on the background to the Dockers strike at Immingham. Dr. Grieves is to see Mr. Finnie the Director of The National Association of Port Employees immediately after lunch to discuss the situation and we will let your office know how things develop.

cc: Mr. N. Lamont  
Mr. B. Murray  
Mr. R. Mountfield



Background to Dockers' Strike at Immingham

1. As a result of the agreement between NUM, NUR, ASLEF, TGWU and NUS to blockade coal and iron supplies to Steelworks, the rail unions refused to run iron ore trains from Immingham to Scunthorpe past a picket line just outside Immingham as and from 10.00a.m. 3rd July 1984.
2. Scunthorpe management decided to use road vehicles to move the iron ore.
3. Unlike BSC's other dock facilities (Port Talbot, Redcar and Hunterston), the agreement at Immingham gives TGWU dockers the work on both Ship and Shore i.e. unloading operations and reloading on to transport to Scunthorpe. All our docks employ dockers under the National Dock Labour Board Scheme.
4. Therefore discussions were held on 5th and 6th July with the TGWU Docks Committee (Immingham and Grimsby Branch) on the loading of road vehicles with iron ore.
5. The 1979 agreement with the TGWU Branch covering Immingham, clause 1.2 states:-

'This agreement shall cover the import of iron ores and bulk materials associated with the iron and steelmaking activities of the British Steel Corporation. It is accepted that the loading schedules for the supply of bulk materials as at Appendix 6 shall be maintained and that ships shall be continuously discharged as quickly as possible without restriction by reason of origin or destination of materials or method of loading or transport.'



6. This clause clearly anticipates use of transport other than rail (which would be the normal system). The clause was clarified in writing in June 1979 to include 'rail and road' and not 'rail, road and barge' as originally required by management.
7. Loading of road vehicles has taken place frequently since 1979, the tonnages being:-

1979 -	90,000 tonnes )	
	)	
1981 -	10,000 tonnes )	Ferrous raw material
	)	
1983 -	33,000 tonnes )	
	)	
1984 -	9,500 tonnes )	
8. The practice that has developed (by agreement with the dockers) is for a contractor's specialist front loading shovel with driver to be brought in to load, with the TGWU having 2 dockers 'standing by' whilst the loading takes place.
9. The shovel driver is not a registered docker. The provisions of the NDLB Scheme allow employers to agree the use of non-registered workers for certain specialist work. The system outlined above was agreed in a meeting including local NDLB representatives.
10. In the meeting on Thursday 5th July the above arrangements were outlined by management and it was proposed that the usual contractor standby arrangement be implemented for the iron ore movement.
11. The local dockers appeared prepared to accept management's requirements but the issue was contested by the local Docks Committee members. The arguments varied between:-



- (i) BSC has no right to use non-registered dockers. The previous practice was portrayed as having been very rarely used and contrary to the NDLB provisions.
- (ii) The iron ore was 'blacked' due to the refusal of rail crews to handle it, therefore dockers would also refuse.

The officials stated that they had taken advice from Mr. J. Connolly, TGWU National Officer, who was encouraging their refusal.

- 12. After assessing the clear intent of the agreement to allow road operations and the means and frequency of using lorries by the stated method of loading, the TGWU representatives asked for 24 hours to take further advice. Management stated that the lorry convoys would start at 2.00 p.m. on Friday 6th July (i.e. effectively delaying 24 hours).
- 13. A further meeting took place on the morning of Friday 6th July attended by the Works Director and Personnel Director from Scunthorpe. The same ground was covered. The TGWU however, would not agree to the introduction of a contractor's shovel and driver. Support for the NUM dispute, and rail unions 'blacking' of the ore, was clearly the predominant motive.
- 14. Whilst again noting the content of the local agreements for loading lorries, the TGWU requested a delay for 2/3 days in the hope that the NCB/NUM negotiations might achieve an end to the dispute. Scunthorpe Management explained that the material was required at Scunthorpe urgently to secure the correct belnded supply for the blast furnaces, and that therefore the lorries would start at 3.00 p.m. that day.
- 15. Lorries were loaded and ran at an intensive rate throughout the weekend.



16. The local dockers Branch held a mass meeting on the morning of Monday 9th July. By a narrow majority (25 in 500) they decided to go on strike immediately and to have a further mass meeting on the morning of Tuesday 10th July. They requested that the lorries should be stopped for the 24 hours of the strike, which was rejected.
17. The National Dockers Committee of the TGWU also met on Monday 9th July to consider the Immingham position. As a result a national dock strike of registered and non-registered dock workers was called from midnight 9th July. The National leadership has stated that the strike is about the use of non-registered dockers contrary to the NDLB Scheme. The Union's Assistant General Secretary is on record this morning as saying the strike is not about the NUM dispute but because the Corporation (in its capacity as a member of the Port Employers Association) is in breach of the NDLB Scheme. He states that if the union acquiesced to the Corporation's action on this occasion it would be the 'thin end of the wedge' and this poses a real threat to Dockers. There has recently been considerable tension in the dock industry over the growing employers hostility to the scheme and hints by Government spokesmen that it might soon be cancelled.
18. The Corporation's position is that there is no such threat. The gates of the Port are open and the dockers have been told repeatedly that work is available including the usual stand-by arrangement associated with road movement and the use of specialist contractors' equipment. No docker has been put in the position of refusing an instruction from Management.

19. The withdrawal of labour by the Immingham Dockers is in contravention of the procedure contained in the 1979 agreement, which states that matters not settled in the locality should be referred to the disputes machinery of the National Joint Council for the Port Transport Industry. No strike or restriction should take place in the meantime.
20. Any dispute about the application of the NDLB provisions should be taken up with the local DLB, and subsequently with the National DLB
21. BSC believes that the frustration of the TGWU National Officials at their inability to influence the movement of raw materials into BSC Works causes them to seek every opportunity to bring other pressures to bear on the Corporation, and this dispute is being used to that end.



The National Dock Labour Board meet tomorrow to consider, in the light of a report from the local Grimsby/Immingham Board, whether the BSC breached the scheme and, if so, what action should be taken. The question hinges on the terms and interpretation of an agreement with BSC say dates from 1979 (see below). Whatever decision NDLB reaches, however, will not of itself lead to the strike being called off.

In the past couple of years there have been several occasions when non-registered men have landed fish at Grimsby - constituting breaches of the scheme. These episodes have, however, been resolved locally.