

BRIEF FOR SECRETARY OF STATE : ELECTRICITY SUPPLY : UUAC STRIKE

The attached paper has been written in co-operation with Commander MACM and the Chief Executive of NIES. In this brief we aim to summarise the salient issues likely to emerge in the next few days.

Staff Structure

This is crucial to an understanding of the problem. There are three broad groups:

- (a) Directors and "managerial staff" (some 60), most of whom are members of the managerial division of the Electricity Power Engineers' Association (EPEA), led by Mr John Lyons (NJB management staff).
- (b) The professional engineers and technicians: the "technical staff" (some hundreds strong) who are also members of the EPEA (NJB technical staff).
- (c) The tradesmen and unskilled workers: the "manual staff", who are members of several major unions (NJIC).

Their probable attitudes are indicated in the paper (paragraphs 6, 21 and 24). The crux for the implementation of the MACM is the attitude of staff in category (a), and there seems no doubt that the only constraint in their co-operation would be physical, whatever the formal position of their union.

Spectrum of Possibilities

It is possible at one extreme that the system will continue to produce a tolerable level of power, roughly commensurate with demand, but involving some inconvenience for industrial and other users. At the other extreme the situation would have become so intolerable, or the technical difficulties of operating the system so great, that the MACM plan appeared the only recourse. Between these two extremes, there is a series of possibilities, which may or may not proceed in a progression. These would depend on the developing attitudes of the workforce and, particularly in the earlier stages, of the manuals. At a later stage technical considerations would begin to predominate. At any time the

attitudes of the technical staff could determine the range of options open to the NIES.

Since the progression of events is not clear-cut, it is impossible to forecast at what point the introduction of MACM personnel would become necessary and could be most effectively achieved. Ministers will therefore wish to keep all possibilities open, whilst bearing in mind that the plan itself provides for the introduction of troops to be deferred until power supplies have fallen below tolerable levels and the workforce, other than managerial staff, has left. It would be alarming to suggest other courses either to the Army or the NIES at this stage.

#### The Role of Mr Lyons

Mr Lyons has already been told that the Army would be used only as a last resort, and that he will be kept in touch with the developing situation. He evidently has a good understanding of the problems and of the Government's position. His views seem to correspond closely with those expressed by his members in Northern Ireland (paragraph 6). It is important to maintain contact with him, and to be sure that the information he receives from Government is carefully controlled and is geared to produce the best response from his members at any particular time. The information available to Mr Lyons must be consistent with what Government is conveying to managerial staff in NIES.

#### Recommendation

Apart from these continuing concerns, it is important that we should convey the wishes of Government in paragraph 26(a) and (b), if endorsed by the Secretary of State, to the NIES before the strike begins.

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1 May 1977

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