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JV
Gey
2 MARSHAM STREET
LONDON SW1P 3EB

My ref: H/PSO/11304/82

Your ref:

March 1982

Dear Willie, ^{Myre} Wm, 1/3

Thank you for your letter of 15 February enclosing a copy of one of 29 January to the Prime Minister from Mr Joe Gormley, President of the NUM, about the NCB's plans to develop the Vale of Belvoir coalfield.

/ I attach a draft reply for the Prime Minister to send to
/ Mr Gormley. He wrote on the same date to Michael Heseltine, and I attach copies of that letter and our reply. We have not felt it necessary to consult other Departments as officials at the Department of Energy are aware of the state of play. However, a copy of this reply goes to Julian West there.

Yours,

Helen Ghosh

MRS H F GHOSH
Private Secretary

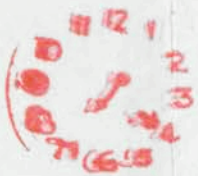
DRAFT REPLY FOR PM TO SEND TO MR GORMLEY

Thank you for your letter of 29 January about the Vale of Belvoir coalfield.

I fully understand your concern about the time it is taking to reach a decision on the National Coal Board's planning applications, and I am well aware of the importance to your members in Leicestershire and South Nottinghamshire of creating new jobs ~~at the present time~~.

17 However, the Belvoir case really is very complex, and it is important that all the implications of the inquiry inspector's recommendations are fully studied. I know that Michael Heseltine, who has statutory responsibility for the decision, has himself devoted much time to this issue and is continuing to do so. Indeed, I understand he wrote to you recently about it. ~~I do therefore assure you that~~ ^{I do assure you that} everything possible is being done to bring matters to a speedy conclusion.

1 MAR 1982



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