



*European Communities
Commission
Press Release*

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COAL MINERS' HOMES MODERNISED

Commission Contributing Forty Per Cent of Cost

The Commission is helping the National Coal Board to modernise to 20th Century standards 6000 British miners' houses. It was announced today (Friday, June 28) that the Commission is lending the Board £1,666,680 at one per cent interest over 25 years to help bring the houses up to date.

The money will pay 40 per cent of the total cost; the rest of the money has been arranged by the Board through local authorities and other sources.

The most conspicuous effort is being made in North Nottinghamshire at Creswell model village, where 280 houses in blocks of four to eight dwellings gather in an oval around the village green.

It was called a model village when the first sod was turned around 1894. A report at the turn of the century on the Creswell village said: "The sanitary arrangements of the village work very satisfactorily. In the yards to the rear of the cottages are enclosed ashpits and outbuildings, which are cleaned out weekly. The cleansing of the village is done during the night time, the staff employed for this purpose going on duty at 10.30 pm and finishing at 5 am. The refuse is conveyed away by means of the tramline. An obnoxious smell, however, frequently arises from the field where the sewage is treated."

By 1970, in spite of some improvements, it was decided that the accommodation had fallen behind modern standards. The result is the provision of modern kitchens and bathrooms, including extensions where there was no room for an indoor bathroom, hot water systems and solid fuel central heating.

In some cases bedrooms have been converted to bathrooms; in other cases prefabricated units have been added. Windows are renewed, doors and frames replaced, ceilings redrawn and plastered and quarry floor tiles replaced with PVC. Houses have been rewired.

The village green is also being landscaped, and given a children's playground.

The work at Creswell is typical of the overall project. The contribution from the Commission's funds under the budget of the European Coal and Steel Community has enabled the NCB to halve the rent increases it would otherwise have charged to cover the costs.

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The money stems from a decision of the European Communities to give financial assistance to low-cost housing in the iron and steel industries. It has not yet been possible to bring forward proposals for housing workers in the British steel industry, where the employers have not so far regarded housing as their responsibility. The £1,666,680 allocated to Britain under the scheme voted at the end of 1973, has therefore all gone to housing in the coal industry.

Firm proposals were submitted by the NCB to the Commission for the modernisation of 6000 out of the Board's total of 100,000 houses.

The following shows the distribution of the houses in the scheme:

Barnsley, 250; Doncaster, 711; Kent, 200; North Derbyshire, 793; North-East England, 892; North Nottinghamshire, including Creswell, 1849; North Yorkshire, 364; the Scottish area, 109; South Midlands, 11; South Nottinghamshire, 53; South Yorkshire, 100; Wales, 144; the Western Coal Board area, 475.

In the past week the Commission has approved a series of financial aids for low-cost housing for workers in the coal and steel industries in Denmark, France, Ireland and Luxembourg. The rates of interest, while low by today's standards, vary considerably. Only in the case of Ireland has the Commission also been able to offer the rate of one per cent available to the NCB.

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