

Mr. Peter Wacher said today

There can be few more absurd claims than ^{has} ~~the claim~~ by Mr Scargill ^{that} support for the strike is solid.

One in three miners, the one in three that have had the right of a ballot, have remained working and totally opposed to the strike action.

Of the two-thirds that are prevented from going to work it is well known that the great majority would be at work if only they were given the opportunity.

If Mr Scargill really believed that support for the strike is solid, why are NUM funds being used to pay for mobs to prevent men from going to work?

If, next week, the NUM followed their own guidelines on picketing, the violence and intimidation would cease and thousands would return to work.

As to the delegate conference, the public have now seen the type of treatment that has been given to delegates who expressed their democratic views. These decent men have been spat at, their cars kicked in. All the methods of abhorrent violence, which the country has witnessed in recent weeks, have been used by the mob.

The reality is that the miners have a good pay offer. Not one miner is faced with compulsory redundancy. The coal mining industry has available to it the biggest investment programme in its history.

No wonder that the third who have balloted have decided to stay at work. No wonder that the two-thirds who are denied a ballot desperately want the opportunity to get back to work.

No wonder they and their families desperately wish to be free of

violence and intimidation.

Several months ago, when Mr Scargill first tried to manipulate the rules for balloting, Mr Kinnock plucked up courage to call for a national ballot. Since then there has been a deafening silence.

Surely the time has come for him to acknowledge that the miners, who have never been on strike before without a ballot, should have the right which he ^{originally} claimed for them.

It is in the interests of the mining communities, the industry and the country that ordinary decent miners are given the direct opportunity of expressing their own views, instead of having the views of a violent minority forced upon them.

10 August 1984