

## Dockers in Scotland black coal

Scottish dockers, members of the Transport and General Workers' Union, yesterday decided to black the handling of coal at all ports, including Hunterston on the Clyde coast, which supplies coal to the British Steel Corporation plant at Ravenscraig.

Mr James Gilligan, Scottish docks group secretary, said afterwards that he did not want the Iron and Steel Trades Confederation and the transport union "at each other's throats", and would ask for a meeting with the steelworkers as soon as possible.

Shop stewards from Ravenscraig had appealed to the Scottish TUC to support their demand for increased coal supplies to keep the plant in operation.

Ravenscraig is thought to have enough coal stocks for another 10 days' normal production. The steelworkers fear that their three-year campaign supported by the National Union of Mineworkers, to retain Ravenscraig could be lost if production is allowed to drop.

● Full production for several more weeks at the Port Talbot steel plant was assured yesterday when more than 300 picketing miners, six of whom were arrested, failed to prevent the unloading of 60,000 tons of foreign coal.

● Coal imports through Exmouth and Teignmouth docks in Devon have been halted by miners' pickets from south Wales.

## Notts ready to reject strike

By Paul Routledge and Craig Seton

Mr Henry Richardson, Nottinghamshire area general secretary of the National Union of Mineworkers, has conceded that today his delegates will almost certainly solidly reject his executive's call not to cross picket lines.

Meanwhile, the National Coal Board has detected a growing reluctance among Nottinghamshire train drivers to obey their union leaders' order to halt the movement of coal.

A bitter and disillusioned Mr Richardson said that if the executive's recommendation was rejected it would be "a real tragedy because we will be reunited not only now but for history by the whole trade union movement."

Mr Richardson said: "The executive took its decision because the situation had changed.

Other workers from other unions are now putting their jobs on the line by supporting miners in their fight and no trade unionist worth his salt would allow other workers to be sent home while fighting for miners' jobs. "But our men have got the idea into their heads that they want it done constitutionally through a national ballot vote and I accept that to a large extent. I think Arthur made a mistake. A national ballot is inevitable at the end of the day."

Some senior officials believe the vote against will be overwhelming.

As Mr Richardson spoke most miners in Nottinghamshire crossed the lines and reported for work.

Coal board sources reported that train drives have told local leaders of the miners' union that they will ignore "blacking"

instructions issued by their union, Aslef, and the National Union of Railwaymen, unless Nottinghamshire miners join in the "rolling strike" now nearly four weeks old.

The conference is likely to be deeply split, and some Nottinghamshire miners threatened yesterday to tear up their union cards if they are effectively told to strike.

The coal board reported that production at Nottinghamshire pits was practically normal. Moderate leaders of the union want to keep it that way in the week before the executive meets to determine whether there should be a national strike ballot.

Mr Trevor Bell, secretary of the union's white-collar section, said he could not see why the left was trying to ensure that the strike was total before the April 12 executive meeting.

## 'Riot police' condemned by staff union

By Barrie Clement, Labour Reporter

likely to make violence endemic on picket lines during this sort of dispute."

The report was prepared before the miners' strike and the unprecedented police operation that has attended it. When the document goes before delegates in June, the union executive will almost certainly be asked to demand an investigation into the use of police against "flying pickets".

The paper, *Government Activities Against Trade Unions*, went before last year's conference, but was referred back to the executive for "further

consideration and recommendations".

It is not clear however how much support it will receive from the police staff who are conservative and normally support their employers.

The report also urges that the TUC be asked to mount a wide-ranging investigation to establish the legality of the use of emergency powers by the Government. If necessary the union should promote legislation "to ensure parliamentary scrutiny over the involvement of the armed forces and police in industrial disputes"

**The miners' dispute.**

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