

# Police preparing clampdown on pit violence

● Police in Derbyshire are considering putting a limit on numbers picketing outside pits in the county because of a "dramatic change" in miners attitudes

● Violent incidents include an attempt by pickets to overturn a coach taking 20 NCB office staff, mostly women, to work

● Miners' leaders are expected to ask transport unions for sympathy action in support of the nine-week-old pit strike

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● Police halted busloads of pit pickets on way to Ravenscraig and charged 292 with obstruction

By Craig Seton

Derbyshire police are considering limiting the numbers of striking miners picketing pits and may adopt the policy of stopping flying pickets on the road to counter a "dramatic change" in the attitude of miners involved in the dispute.

Mr Alfred Parish, Chief Constable of Derbyshire, indicating a new hardline approach by his force, said that he was not prepared to allow "intimidation by numbers" or the act of violence and sabotage which had increased in the area in the last few days.

Yesterday, as the miners' strike neared the end of its ninth week, there was further evidence suggesting that at least some striking miners are now adopting increasingly desperate measures.

At Blidworth Colliery, Nottinghamshire, the National Coal Board reported that striking miners, mainly from outside the coalfield, had adopted the tactic of moving away from the pit entrance to picket the homes of miners leaving for work, subjecting them to verbal abuse.

Nineteen pickets were arrested

at Ollerton Colliery, near Mansfield, where pickets are now reported to patrol the streets in the early hours watching for house lights being switched on to identify working miners.

Mr Parrish's remarks followed two days in which a number of serious incidents led police to reconsider their tactics.

In one case, a coach taking 20 clerical staff - mainly women - to an NCB office at Duckmanton, Derbyshire, was stopped, apparently by pickets in their cars, and stones were thrown through the windows, slightly injuring several occupants. An attempt was then made to overturn the coach before its driver managed to escape with his bus. Mr Parish said that the women inside had been terrified.

Mr Parish said that pickets arrested in north Derbyshire so far were Derbyshire miners rather than outsiders. Until now, the force had not, as a matter of policy, tried to prevent miners legally picketing or tried to prevent free move-

ment. But when almost 5,000 pickets could turn up at a colliery, he was "not prepared to allow intimidation by numbers of that kind."

"What I am saying is that if there is clear intelligence or evidence of a growing number of pickets which we believe will lead to a breach of the peace at NCB pits and property, we will try and prevent it by turning people away."

He added that NCB premises in isolated areas had been attacked in the night and equipment damaged. Police were doing everything they could to prevent such acts but it was difficult.

Asked what Derbyshire police would do if miners on their way to picket a colliery were asked to turn back, and refused, he said: "Let us wait and see."

It is understood that the change in tactics Derbyshire police have in mind would be to stop miners making their way to a local pit if it is considered there are already enough present. Sympathy call, page 2

## 292 charged at Ravenscraig

From Our Correspondent, Glasgow

About 292 miners' pickets were charged with obstruction yesterday after eight buses carrying them to the Ravenscraig steel works at Motherwell were intercepted by Strathclyde police.

The miners, from Fyfe, were stopped on the A80 near Stepps. They disembarked, sat down and linked arms, blocking the road. Police appeals for them to move were ignored and six busloads were then arrested.

They were taken to police stations in Glasgow and charged. A report has been sent to the Procurator Fiscal.

More than 130 lorries in five convoys went into Ravenscraig

unchallenged yesterday. There was a picket of only 30 miners, some from the Durham coalfield, and they were outnumbered three to one by police.

Mr Rory Nicholson, Strathclyde's assistant chief constable, defended police tactics and rejected accusations that they were infringing civil liberties by stopping the buses.

Ravenscraig management last night offered to halt the lorry convoys if miners would guarantee at least two coal trains a day. Tugboat crews on the Clyde have voted to black oil and coal ships carrying supplies for Ravenscraig.

In Nottinghamshire, 35

arrests were made on picket lines as more than 3,500 pickets gathered at the still-working pits. More than 2,500 were at Bevercotes colliery, near Retford.

● The Prime Minister yesterday condemned the violence between pickets and police at the Ravenscraig steel works and the Hunterston terminal on the Clyde.

During sharp Commons exchanges on the strike Mrs Margaret Thatcher was accused by Mr Tony Benn, Labour MP for Chesterfield, of trying to starve the miners into accepting pit closures.

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By Craig Seton.

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