

# NUM faces more legal action

By Paul Routledge, Labour Editor

The National Union of Mineworkers faces fresh legal action over its plan to introduce "courts" to try rebel members who have encouraged defiance of the 18-week pit strike.

Lawyers for the "Nottinghamshire 17", men who have worked normally throughout the stoppage, will next week ask the Vice-Chancellor, Sir Robert Megarry, to declare null and void disciplinary rule changes adopted at the union's delegate conference in Sheffield three days ago.

The application, being made to the High Court on Tuesday, seeks to prevent the miners' union from going ahead with elections to choose a six-man national disciplinary committee with powers to suspend, expel or ban from office any union member found guilty of conduct "detrimental to the union".

Mr David Negus, solicitor for the working miners, said last night: "My clients are union members, and have no interest in blowing the union apart, or doing anything to harm the union. They only want the democratic process to be upheld. There is no question of them asking for any form of punishment".

The latest court move comes as the drift back to work in the coalfields divided over the strike showed a further marginal increase.

The National Coal Board estimated that 1,100 more men were back at work in north Derbyshire and north Staffordshire yesterday, by comparison with the same day last week. The number of pits working normally was unchanged at 38, though eight strike-free pits are on holiday.

It was the turn of the North-west yesterday to feel the impact of sympathy stoppages staged by other unions as part of the regional TUC's "day of action" in support of the miners.

Train services from London to Manchester were severely disrupted when guards who belong to the National Union of Railwaymen stopped work. The Mersey ferries were stopped from sailing

● Mr Arthur Scargill, the miners' president, said in Manchester last night that the increase in mortgage rate and the bank rate rises were a consequence of the miners' strike. But he criticized Mrs Margaret Thatcher and her government as "the culprit". He assailed trade unions for not calling a general strike in support of the pitmen "when two of my miners died fighting for their right to work".

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