

Thatcher makes Falklands link

Attack on 'enemy within'

By Julian Haviland, Political Editor

The Prime Minister last night drew a parallel between the Falklands war and the dispute in the mining industry. Speaking at a private meeting of the 1922 Committee of Conservative backbench MPs at Westminster, Mrs Thatcher said that at the time of the conflict they had had to fight the enemy without; but the enemy within, much more difficult to fight was just as dangerous to liberty.

Of the tactics of the miners' leaders, she said that the country was witnessing an attempt to circumvent democracy. The violence and intimidation were a scar across the country's face.

She gave the backbenchers the impression that she was keenly aware of the importance of reaching a settlement in the docks so that the Government could give its full attention to the miners' dispute. She said

that, but for the scenes of violence, the dispute in the mines had made little impact in its 19 weeks. By contrast the effect of the docks strike had been severe and immediate.

She surprised and pleased some Conservatives by saying that, once the disputes were resolved, the Government should seek a good working relationship with the trade unions. She did not enlarge on this, and her meaning was not plain.

On the miners, Mrs Thatcher was unbending. She said that the message she was receiving from all quarters was that militancy must not win.

She compared the industrial scene with that of discontent in 1978-79, the last year of the Government led by Mr James Callaghan, but said that the difference then was that

had given in and become the puppet of the unions.

She praised what she described as the act of daily courage by miners who were going to work, and suggested that the spectacle of miners going to court to secure their rights represented an astonishing advance brought about by five years of Conservative government.

Mrs Thatcher was warmly received but not all who heard her were impressed by her 30-minute speech. Some thought it brave, others described it as strident. All agreed that its tone was uncompromising.

Mrs Thatcher said she hoped MPs would not find themselves recalled from their summer recess, which starts on August 1, for the proclamation of a state of emergency; but she gave the impression that such a development would not surprise her.

Kinnock 'is Scargill's poodle'

By Our Political Editor

The Government increased the weight of its verbal assault on Mr Arthur Scargill yesterday, in the hope of isolating him, and on Mr Neil Kinnock for allegedly playing a humiliating and contemptible role as the miners' leader's poodle.

The same insult was thrown by two senior Cabinet ministers, Mr Leon Brittan and Mr Nigel Lawson, in a coordinated barrage opened by Mr Peter Walker, Secretary of State for Energy.

In the Commons, Mr Kinnock, challenged by the Prime Minister, came near to unsaying what he said when sharing a platform with Mr Scargill in Durham on Saturday, that there was "no alternative but to fight - all other roads are shut off".

He said the Labour Party understood the need for talks and for a settlement and asked Mrs Margaret Thatcher to "use her power to give conditions in which a settlement is possible".

The Labour Party's uneasiness given the divisions among miners and the doubts about Mr Scargill's generalship, was

revealed in the terms of a critical motion chosen by the Shadow Cabinet for debate on Tuesday week.

The motion avoids specific mention of the miners' dispute, but speaks of "the shambles of the Government's economic, employment, and industrial policies" generally.

Mr Kinnock will open the attack. Last night Labour was not so sure of its ground as to be resolved on a motion of censure, which by convention would require the Prime Minister to reply. But an eager Prime Minister had decided to speak in any event.

Labour's leaders were criticized for faint-heartedness at a meeting of their parliamentary party last night. But Mr Kinnock persuaded the meeting to allow him freedom of action.

Among Conservatives also divisions have become more apparent this week. Many are disturbed to find the Government at odds with the trade unions on three fronts.

Behind the scenes there is growing pressure for ministers

to negotiate with the Civil Service unions about possible terms for reinstating them at GCHQ.

At a meeting of Tory backbenchers last night with Mr Tom King, the Employment Secretary, several voices emphasized the urgency of a settlement in the docks.

The demeanour of ministers yesterday suggested that they were anxious not to drive the dockworkers into Mr Scargill's embrace. They no longer believe that solidarity with the National Union of Mine-workers is a prime cause of the dock strike, although its origin still puzzles them.

● Mr Kinnock said last night that Mrs Thatcher's speech was outrageous (The Press Association reports). Interviewed on the Central Television programme *Central Lobby* he said: "Any Prime Minister of Britain who confuses a Fascist dictator who invades British sovereign territory with British trade unions and with miners, I think is not fit to govern this country

Parliament, page 4

Thatcher makes Falklands link.

By Julian Haviland, Political Editor.

The Times (London, England), Friday, Jul 20, 1984; pg. 1; Issue 61888. (874 words)

Category: News

© Times Newspapers Limited

Gale Document Number:CS17272564