

# Labour MP seeks pit strike ballot

Mr William Hamilton (Central Fife, Lab) was heckled by other Labour MPs in the Commons late on Wednesday night when he called for a national ballot to end the bitterness of the miners' strike. At one point he told Mr Allan Rogers (Rhondda, Lab) to shut up. Mr Rogers retorted that he did not know what he was talking about.

Miners had an undeniable right to protect their jobs, but no man had the right to threaten another man's job the better to protect his own, Mr Hamilton said.

I beg the Prime Minister (he said) to make a superhuman effort. I ask her to try just for once to be human, to be magnanimous, to act as Prime Minister of the whole of the United Kingdom and not just the posher part of it. I ask Mr Scargill, too, to reconsider his position as calmly as his excitable personality will allow.

The miners and their families were among the most patriotic and reasonable folk in the United Kingdom. To insult them as the enemy within, as the Prime Minister had done, said more about her than it did about them.

Mr Giles Shaw, Under Secretary of State for Energy, said there had to be a rational negotiated solution acceptable to the coal board and NUM.

A rational solution must in the end prevail over the rule of the mob, the intimidation, the violent picketing and the vilification in order that this industry could once again show that by producing coal at an economic price it could be the backbone of the nation's energy needs.

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