

# Seizure of NUM funds starts today

By Paul Routledge  
and Tim Jones

The long-awaited trial of strength between striking miners and the Government's labour laws will begin in earnest today.

A firm of City accountants is to be appointed by the High Court charged with the task of sequestrating £50,000 of the assets of the South Wales miners' union to pay fines imposed for contempt of injunctions issued under the Employment Acts.

The sequestration process should be set in motion by lunchtime, after the refusal of Welsh miners' leaders to obey the instructions of Mr Justice Park, and the likely seizure of funds has already prompted threats of resistance from the National Union of Mineworkers.

Mr Arthur Scargill, the union's president, warned yesterday that moves to sequester union cash would be resisted and he predicted a conflict with the High Court "possibly this week."

Price, Waterhouse, the City accountants who acted as commissioners in similar sequestration involving the

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# Move to seize NUM funds

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National Graphical Association last November, have been informally approached by the court to act again.

South Wales miners' leaders yesterday reaffirmed that they had no intention of paying the fines and insisted that they are prepared to "run any risk" to ensure victory in their strike over pit closures.

Yesterday, the owners of the two haulage companies who took the union to court for breach of an injunction not to interfere or disrupt their business refused to discuss the situation.

Mr Richard Read, owner of one of the Gloucestershire companies, said: "We want to keep a low profile and let the law run its course. As you appreciate, we have certain security problems and have decided to say nothing more at the moment."

Several thousand pitmen are expected to picket their union office in Pontypridd today to prevent the court-appointed sequestrators from gaining access to NUM files, and the area executive will sit in session "symbolically defying any outside attempt to interfere with their deliberations."

But the commissioners are most unlikely to try to force an entry, preferring to work through the union's own accountants Pannell, Kerr, Forster of Cardiff and the banks as they did successfully in the NGA case.

Speaking on LBC a local radio station in London, Mr Scargill vowed that the miners' union would continue its operations "regardless of any property being seized, even if it meant operating from a telephone box." He added: "As far as I am concerned, any attack upon the finances of our union has to be deplored and to be resisted."

"If we don't accept anti-trade union laws, and with that we are in line with TUC policy, then I suggest we have no alternative but to fight against it. I think we are going to face a conflict as a result of the decision over South Wales, and this will come to a head possibly this week."

TUC leaders are still dithering over what steps to take, and Mr Scargill said tartly: "Either the TUC come to the aid of the NUM and say 'Yes, we are now prepared to put up' - or quite frankly they will have to shut up. There can be no argument about it at this stage."

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