

Scargill and NCB in TV debate

Miners set up national challenge on strike

By David Felton, Labour Correspondent

Miners trying to organize a widespread return to work today launched the National Working Miners' Committee, the first national challenge to the union leadership's handling of the 23-week strike.

Dissident miners in six areas of the National Union of Mineworkers say the organization has the support of hundreds of miners. The group is separate from the working lobby built up around a Nottinghamshire miner, Mr Chris Butcher, "Silver Birch".

The committee's launch, announced along with an appeal for funds in a half-page advertisement in the *Daily Express* today, could be the start of a major coordinated campaign by a "union within a union", although unlike Mr Butcher the committee is not calling for a mass return to work on a selected day.

Details became known as the propaganda battle between the National Coal Board and Mr Arthur Scargill, the miners' president, intensified. Mr Scargill said that management claims of a growing drift back to work were untrue and challenged the board to a live television debate.

That challenge was taken up by the board. A debate, which will last at least 20 minutes, will be staged on *Channel Four News* on Wednesday. Mr Scargill, who will be in Yorkshire, will be linked up with Mr Ned Smith, industrial relations director, in the board's London headquarters.

The working miners' committee claims support in the Yorkshire, south Wales, Nottinghamshire, Lancashire and Midlands and in Cosa, the white-collar section of the

NUM. Representatives of the union's power group are due to join.

The committee's aims are to coordinate all legal challenges against the union leadership, a large-scale publicity campaign to highlight what they say is the unconstitutional nature of the strike and to organize a lobby of the Trades Union Congress in Brighton next month.

That last objective, to "show that appeals from Arthur Scargill for help from the trade union movement are really only demands for Arthur Scargill not miners", according to a solicitor

Arson attack

2

representing the group, is likely to lead to a confrontation with the large demonstrations being planned at Brighton by striking NUM members.

The committee is seeking funds to finance its publicity campaign, which will consist mainly of advertising in newspapers in mining areas to encourage miners to organize. The cost of today's advertisement has been met from funds raised to pay for Nottinghamshire miners' legal challenge against the union's decision to introduce new disciplinary machinery against strike breakers.

The majority of the new organization are local union officials with many years of NUM membership. Their solicitor said last night that they did not want to split the union, but to ensure that democratic procedures were followed.

Unofficially, they are disparaging about the "Silver Birch" operation, which they believe is misconceived and unlikely to

Continued on back page, col 5



A policeman being helped away after he was injured during picketing at Gascoigne Wood colliery yesterday.

DeLorean faces more inquiries into missing

From Trevor Fishlock, New York

John DeLorean's troubles are by no means over: he is out of one court, but he is likely to see the inside of another.

After the five months' ordeal in Courtroom 22 of the Los Angeles federal courthouse, he faces many more inquiries

watching the bankruptcy proceedings in Detroit as part of an investigation into allegations that Mr DeLorean concealed documents and diverted funds from his car company. He is expected to be subpoenaed to

Miners set up national challenge on strike

Continued from page 1

have any immediate effect. However, they are grateful that Mr Butcher's manoeuvrings have deflected publicity from their operation.

The committee says it wants to create a climate in which there is an organized return to work. Its members are conscious that mining communities will have to try to revert to normal life after the strike. They went to avoid heightening tensions.

Referring to violence at the Gascoigne Wood drift mine at Selby, where 5,000 pickets massed to prevent rebel Mr Brian Green from going to work for the fifth day, Mr Scargill

said yesterday that had been caused by the police's refusal to allow pickets to try to persuade Mr Green from going to work.

● Nine striking Yorkshire miners were given leave in the High Court in London yesterday to challenge the legality of bail conditions imposed by magistrates in Nottinghamshire which prevents them from picketing, except at their own pits.

● One hundred striking Yorkshire miners have been offered a free two-week holiday in the Soviet Union with their wives and up to two children. The offer was made by Soviet mining unions.

Scargill and NCB in TV debate.

By David Felton, Labour Correspondent.

The Times (London, England), Saturday, Aug 18, 1984; pg. 1; Issue 61913. (696 words)

Category: News

© Times Newspapers Limited

Gale Document Number:CS17141522