

Thatcher 'no surrender' message on miners

By Edward Townsend
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The Prime Minister yesterday reaffirmed the Government's determination not to surrender to the National Union of Mineworkers in the pits dispute and declared once again that "the worst uneconomic pits must close" and the industry must be "efficiently managed".

Mrs Margaret Thatcher was speaking at the Press Centre in London after the presentation to her of this year's National Free Enterprise Award by the right-wing Aims of Industry organization, which recognized her "massive courage".

Tight security was in force after the Brighton bombing.

Mrs Thatcher said she was puzzled by the strike decision of the pit deputies' union Nacods, because solutions had been found to their grievances.

Her remarks were clearly aimed at strengthening the resolve of the National Coal Board after the collapse of last weekend's talks.

She said that some of the most uneconomic pits mined coal four times as costly as that from the better mines. Last year the taxpayer paid £1.3 billion to the industry. "I sometimes wonder: if everyone wants to be kept, who is going to do the keeping?"

The Prime Minister shared the platform with two other award winners, Mr Walter Goldsmith, former director general of the Institute of Directors, and Mr Eddy Shah, chairman of the Messenger newspaper group, who had a fierce battle with the National Graphical Association last year over union recognition.

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The Times (London, England), Thursday, Oct 18, 1984; pg. 1; Issue 61965. (227 words)

Category: News

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Gale Document Number:CS17928018