

Union plans to boost pit strike

By Paul Routledge
Labour Editor

Miners' leaders are seeking to "revitalize" the coal strike, now well into its eighth month, against mounting pressures on pitmen to go back to work.

Delegates to a special conference of the National Union of Mineworkers in Sheffield today are expected to give overwhelming backing to their leaders and to continuing the strike.

But the National Coal Board is working hard to encourage miners to resume their employment after the collapse last week of the latest and "final" round of peace negotiations.

Letters went out from colliery managers yesterday to 17,000 men in the coalboard's Western area urging them to go back today so that they could earn up to £1,400 in the weeks before Christmas, including normal weekly pay, holiday bonuses and other payments.

Some NUM officials privately concede that the cash will persuade some miners to go back, but they insist it will continue to be "a trickle back, not a flood". Morale among strikers is admitted to be low, but the activists are considered to be "pretty sound".

Mr Michael Eaton, director of the NCB's North Yorkshire area and the new "front man" for the industry, said in a radio interview yesterday that there was "a great deal of despair among a lot of miners".

He continued: "I hope they will make their views known to their delegates before the conference. They may wish that a ballot be taken; they may wish to express their views that they want to return to work."

He accepted that the drift back to work was not quick enough to satisfy the board at present but he said: "I think it will gather momentum, I think if the men cannot make their views known through their delegates they will make them known very clearly through the drift back to work."

Mr Eaton reaffirmed that the coal board would not make any further concessions to the miners.

He added that 60 coal faces out of 600 were giving serious cause for concern, and 20 faces had been lost during the strike.

● The Soviet foreign trade ministry denied at the weekend that there was a ban on fuel deliveries but Soviet trade union officials insisted it had been partly implemented.

● Libyan students based in Ireland are to raise thousands of pounds each month for striking British miners with a levy of at least £10 on each of 200 Libyans studying in the republic. An NUM spokesman said: "We will not accept money from the Libyan government or regime. We will however accept assistance from trade unions throughout the world."

● Mr Mumtaz Abbasi, a greengrocer, the alleged go between in the NUM trip to Libya, said yesterday that he plans to sue *The Sunday Times* over an article at the weekend which said he had links with the NUM for the past year.

Attacks help Scargill, page 14
Leading article, letters, page 15

Union plans to boost pit strike.

By Paul Routledge Labour Editor.

The Times (London, England), Monday, Nov 05, 1984; pg. 2; Issue 61978. (491 words)

Category: News

© Times Newspapers Limited

Gale Document Number:CS34836325