

Thatcher pledge to stamp out violence

By Anthony Bevins, Political Correspondent

The Prime Minister last night linked the IRA bombers with the miners' pickets and promised that the Government would steadfastly resist the threats of both.

Mrs Thatcher said in a speech at the Lord Mayor's banquet in Guildhall, London: "We are drawing to the end of a year in which our people have seen violence and intimidation in our midst: the cruelty of the terrorists; the violence of the picket line; the deliberate flouting of the law of the land."

But the nation had fought off such forces before, and "we shall weather the tempests of our time".

Mrs Thatcher said the terrorist exploited freedom to destroy freedom, despised

debate and was contemptuous of democratic institutions: "His weapons are the gun and the bomb."

"Whether he pursues his callous trade in Brighton or in Beirut, in Belfast or St James's Square, he must be brought to understand that his savagery will only strengthen our resolution."

The same resolute message was repeated for the "ruthless leadership" of the striking miners. Mrs Thatcher said: "This challenge will not succeed. The Government will hold firm. The coal board can go no further."

She said the dispute presented a fundamental challenge to the duty of the coal board to manage the industry, and to the

Government, both in upholding law and order and in limiting demands on the Exchequer.

But there were also challenges to miners whose rights as members of the National Union of Mineworkers were "being treated with disdain and whose suffering is being callously disregarded", and to all trade unionists everywhere, whose good name was being "tarnished" by strikers' actions.

Mrs Thatcher then turned to deal in more detail with the impact of the strike on law and order, and she gave a warning that the Government would, if necessary, stiffen the law to maintain order.

"Over the past week, nearly 4,000 miners have crossed

picket lines for the first time", she said. "Violence in the coalfields has reached a new pitch because the miners' leaders will resort to anything to stem the tide . . ."

"By the end of this year the Home Secretary will have completed his review of the whole question of public order, including the Act of 1936, which has stood largely unchanged since that time.

"If the police and the courts are lacking in the powers necessary to keep order in a free society and necessary to protect the weak against the strong, then we shall introduce measures which will give them what they need."

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The Times (London, England), Tuesday, Nov 13, 1984; pg. 1; Issue 61985. (435 words)

Category: News

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Gale Document Number:CS17403757