

Police laying plans to prevent 'vendettas' after pit strike

● The police are making plans to protect miners from intimidation after the pit strike ends, the Home Secretary, Mr Leon Brittan, said yesterday.

● The drift back to work among striking miners showed signs of drying up when only 82 men crossed picket lines for the first time Page 2

● Mr Ian MacGregor, National Coal Board chairman, suggested in a speech the sale of uneconomic mines to NUM members for an economical payment.

● Mr Michael McGahey, NUM vice-president, told an Alloa rally: "We are fighting for a free trade union movement in Britain." Page 2

By John Winder

The police are already making detailed plans to deal with the aftermath of the miners' strike. Mr Leon Brittan the Home Secretary, said yesterday that they were giving careful consideration to protecting miners and their families after the strike was over.

"Threats against those who return are being and will be taken extremely seriously by the police", he said. "Those who make them will be firmly dealt with."

Mr Brittan told a Parliamentary Press Gallery lunch: "If the men of violence contemplate vendettas after the strike, they will fail as surely as their tactics have failed during it."

He said that after the strike the rule of law would be seen to have triumphed because the attempt to overthrow it would be seen to have been defeated. Violence in the strike had not just been merely a means. The victory of lawless violence was the true end in itself.

"After the end of this strike, no one will again be able

credibly to assert that, faced with violent mass pickets, the law will fail and the Government will fall. When that happens, it will be a triumph for law in a free society.

"Although that day has yet to arrive, the outlines are clearly visible."

Mr Brittan said Mr Arthur Scargill's response to violence in the dispute had underlined the moral responsibility of the leadership.

Speaking of last week's death of a South Wales taxi driver, Mr Brittan said that Mr Scargill had confined himself to dissociating the National Union of Mine-workers from violence away from the picket line, and in language more appropriate to a company's disclaimer in a guarantee against faulty goods than a response to the death of a human being.

"Does that mean that he asserts the right of his members to engage in whatever violence they choose, so long as it is on the picket line? Does he regard

his supporters on the picket line as licensed thugs?"

If Mr Scargill had been serious in dissociating himself from violence he would not have used wooden words, wrung out of him by public outrage, but would have issued an immediate instruction to all his followers, telling them that those who engaged in violence would be thrown out of the union.

The TUC should tell the union leadership bluntly that enough was enough. There would not be power cuts, nor a general strike.

During the Home Secretary's speech, Mr John Prescott, Labour's leading spokesman on employment in the Commons, walked out in protest.

He said afterwards. "I was not prepared to sit there and listen to a declaration of war on what these people call the 'enemy within'."

He challenged Mr Brittan to go to the picket lines or to a miners' public meeting instead of being "a lunchtime warrior".

MacGregor predicts sale of mines

By Paul Valley

The privatization of the British mining industry was predicted by Mr Ian MacGregor, chairman of the National Coal Board, yesterday.

In a lunchtime lecture to City workers at St Lawrence Jewry church, next to Guildhall in London, Mr MacGregor said the sale of mines to private enterprise would have his full approval and support.

He also said that he would regard the strike as over just as soon as a majority of miners were back at work.

Mr MacGregor, considering

the idea that the NCB should hand over uneconomic mines for an economical payment to those NUM members who maintained that they could be mined profitably, said: "I personally think that would be wonderful.

"Unfortunately, when the mining industry was nationalized the legislation was written to ensure that it couldn't be privatized easily without passing some brand new legislation. I doubt whether it would be appropriate to start that up in the middle of a dispute.

This could not be done at the moment, however, because of the attitude of Mr Scargill. "As an article of faith, the leaders of the NUM have rejected any such notion on the grounds that it is totally contrary to good socialist dogma".

Mr MacGregor said that a third of the miners were working now because they realised they were called out on strike on false pretences, for objectives which were totally different from the objectives of the people in the mining industry. **Photograph, page 2**

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By John Winder and By Paul Vallely.

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