

# SCARGILL: The sooner it's settled the better

**THE National Coal Board acting on Government orders is apparently still refusing point blank to negotiate with the National Union of Mineworkers.**

On Friday night, the Board's intransigence and dishonesty took even the TUC by surprise.

First, the Board produced a straight-forward recipe for destroying pits and jobs as pre-conditions to negotiations.

*It was a recipe that neither the NUM nor the pit deputies' union NACODS could accept.*

The NUM, in response, formulated a set of proposals aimed at getting talks started, and TUC General Secretary Norman Willis took these to NCB Chairman, Ian MacGregor.

But, even while their discussion was still in progress, Coal Board spokesmen were preparing a statement claiming:

- **THERE** was no hope of negotiations.
- **THE** proposals rejec-

**NUM President**  
**ARTHUR SCARGILL**  
**speaks his mind**

ted by NACODS and the NUM came not from the Coal Board but from the TUC itself!

Having heard this Coal Board lie, Norman Willis went before the TV cameras and told the truth.

His role as "bridge builder" in endless attempts to settle this dispute had been sabotaged by the Coal Board's utter dishonesty.

*In the situation as it stood at midday yesterday, the Board's intransigence continues to prevent negotiations without pre-conditions and the National Union of Mineworkers calls formally for a public enquiry into the dispute.*

This dispute must be settled and the sooner the better. Our industry must resolve the issues which brought our members out on strike nearly one year ago against a closure programme which threatened to wipe out 20,000 jobs and close 20 pits reducing overall capacity.

On top of that, the Board threatened the immediate closure of five valuable collieries.

## Agreed

Our union's policy has always been to fight against the run down.

There are long standing procedures in our industry for dealing with the futures of individual pits, coking plants and workshops—and our union has participated in them.

*We have also accepted the new modification to those procedures agreed between NACODS and the Coal Board last autumn.*

The NUM is fighting for the future, not clinging to the past.

We want modernisation — development — efficient management, so that our industry can make the tremendous contribution of which it is capable.

We produce the world's cheapest deep-mined coal. Properly developed, it has a tremendous future. To run down our industry's capacity is destructive, criminal madness—in both economic and human terms.

The people who live in



BEFORE the strike: Arthur Scargill and Ian MacGregor

mining communities know that if the pit dies and jobs are destroyed, the community starts to die.

Our belief in "community" may be called old fashioned. We don't think it is. Too many British communities have been wiped out in recent decades, and life in this nation is poorer as a result.

Throughout this long and bitter dispute the Coal Board and Government have shown nothing but contempt for arguments of economic and social common sense.

## Starving

Instead of negotiating with the NUM, they've tried a tactic called "starving them back."

Mining families with members on strike have been denied social security benefits. The physical and financial hardship our people have endured over the past year is something we thought had gone with the great depression.

Alongside that, the Government has tried through the High Courts to stop our union from functioning by seizing and freezing our funds.

The national economy has been bled white to feed the Government's war of attrition against our union. The costs to the taxpayers of this dispute have been truly horrific—over £6 billion to date.

Last week, the Central Electricity Generating Board sent a shock through the nation when it admitted that because of the miners' strike—and the horrendous cost of burning oil instead of British Coal in power stations—it has lost over £2 billion of taxpayers' money!

And still, the NCB refuses to negotiate.

The NUM wants a secure and developing future for British coal—with jobs for miners today and for youngsters in the years ahead—with stability for our communities.

*If negotiations do not resume, now is the time for all the facts and issues to be put openly before the nation. Now is the time for a public enquiry.*

● News of the World  
Says: Page Eight