

## Day of reckoning for returned pitmen accused of strike offences

By Peter Davenport

Colliery managers throughout the Yorkshire coalfield yesterday began interviewing scores of returned miners about offences that could lead to their dismissal.

Since the marches back to work of the past two days, at least a dozen men have been dismissed and another 190 cases are under consideration. Some men have been suspended pending a detailed investigation of alleged offences.

A spokesman for the National Coal Board in Yorkshire said yesterday: "This is the day of reckoning for these men. Those who have committed serious offences will not be reinstated. There is no question of a general amnesty."

The cases under consideration come on top of 200 dismissals made during the strike. At the Manders Main colliery, near Mexborough, South Yorkshire, a working miner aged in his twenties was attacked and punched by three men in the pithead baths after the end of the organized march back to work on Tuesday, the board said yesterday. Two of the attackers were strikers returning for the first time. They have been dismissed. The third man had already been dismissed earlier in the dispute.

Another striking miner at the colliery has also been dismissed for assaulting a police officer as the march back to work broke up.

The dismissals caused anger among the men but the pit was working normally yesterday. Mr Alan Gosling, the local branch secretary of the National Union of Mineworkers, said: "It is very disturbing. The lads were accepted that the cases were taken through the procedures."

Four men who returned to work at Manton colliery have also been dismissed, two for making threats earlier in the strike, to kill Mr Robert Taylor, a working miner who instigated a legal action against the union to get the dispute declared unofficial. The other two were

dismissed for besetting the home of a working miner. At Kiveton Park, near Sheffield, three men have been dismissed after being convicted in a court of a similar offence.

All but two of Yorkshire's 53 pits had their men back yesterday. The board reported 47,000 of its 50,000 miners were clocking on. Miners at the remaining pits where men are holding out for an amnesty for dismissed miners, Markham Main and Barnburgh, hold meetings today.

At the Wetherdale colliery near Castleford, the manager took the unusual step of sending home on full pay 30 men who had worked during the dispute as the 700 strikers returned. It was, the board said, to provide a "cooling-off period" and the manager had now been assured by the local union branch that there would be no violence against those who had broken the strike.

● A strike by 180 deputies and overmen at Kellingley colliery, near Selby, North Yorkshire, continued yesterday and threatens to spread. The men, members of Nacods, say pit management allowed four NUM miners to do work underground normally done by deputies. (The Press Association reports.)

Details of the dispute, which has halted production, and the attitude of management towards their complaint are with Nacods officials.

It is illegal for miners to be working underground without the presence of deputies.

● Pit deputies at Tilmanstone colliery in Kent, again refused to cross NUM picket lines yesterday. The position will be reviewed on a weekly basis.

● A member of the Northumbria miners' area executive has been dismissed after an early morning incident at his pit yesterday.

Mr John Smith, also NUM branch secretary at Ashington colliery, was involved in a disturbance to which the police were called.

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Mr Michael McGahey faces miners' fury after the conference. (Photograph: Tom Kidd).

### SCOTTISH DELEGATE MEETING

## Angry colliers jostle McGahey

By Ronald Faux

Mr Michael McGahey, president of the Scottish miners was jostled by an angry crowd in Edinburgh yesterday as he left a delegates meeting that decided by 10 votes to five to end the strike in Scotland.

The decision reversed an earlier resolution to continue the strike until an amnesty had been won for the 180 Scottish miners dismissed during the

dispute. Missiles were thrown at Mr McGahey and delegates as they left the meeting and there were shouts of "sell out" and "we're not going back".

However the strike had effectively crumbled in Scotland when a fire broke out during the strike and the future of the Seafield complex, to which Frances is linked, remains in doubt.

Mr John Mitchell, the pit delegate, said the decision to

continue the strike in Scotland had split the union's membership. They had decided to go back, he said, with dignity and heads held high.

However, the return to work will cause deep divisions in the Scottish mining community, particularly in Fiffe. Five pits, Solgirth, Polkemmet, Comrie, Polaise and Bogside, remain strongly opposed to the return.

### THE COAL CHIEF

## Solitary life for the canny patriot

By Edward Townsend  
Industrial Correspondent

While most of the verbal and physical assaults meted out to Mr Ian MacGregor have had as much impact as a drop of dew on white hot steel, there is one accusation that has caused the usually inextinguishable features of the National Coal Board chairman to sparkle with anger.

He is more than able to cope with being described as Mrs Thatcher's "geriatric American hit man" and even shrugged off suggestions from his adversary that he was off-beam mentally.

Mr MacGregor is a millionaire; he has no need to acquire money. If he did, he would have stayed in the U.S.

Colleagues at the New York investment bank of Lazard Freres, in which Mr MacGregor retains a limited partnership (and small share in the profits) almost dismissed out of hand the announcement two years ago that he was to take on the NCB chairmanship for £59,325 a year and a "transfer fee" payable to the bank of £1.5 million. The latter, it was stressed, was what the coal board lost every day and the value to the bank of three

Clearly he loves power and the chance to take on the seemingly impossible task (such as defeating Mr Arthur Scargill) which others would not contemplate. But he also demonstrates to colleagues a patriotism and is possessed of a vision to restore some of Britain's former greatness.

Despite his age - he is 73 in September - Mr MacGregor shows no sign of wanting to resign the NCB job. He is the kind of man who will never retire. While he may leave Britain next year when the coal board contract ends, he will

During the strike Mr MacGregor has shown little need to relax. His hobbies are few - fishing and golf, and he quickly gets bored with them - and he is no great family man. With his famous ability to avoid jet-lag, it is no problem for him to visit his wife, Sybil, in Florida regularly, but he has also spent some contemplative time during the strike or his

## Man who knows both sides of the picket line

From A Staff Reporter  
Rotherham

When the police come to hold a post mortem examination on the coal strike, the lessons learned and the mistakes made, one senior officer more perhaps than any other will command an attentive audience.

Chief Superintendent John Nesbitt, a former miner, former military policeman and now commander of the Rotherham division of the South Yorkshire Police with four pits in his domain, has been the man responsible for dealing with some of the worst violence and civil unrest of the dispute.

He was the ground commander at the confrontation at the Ograve coking plant in June, marshalling 4,000 police against the massed ranks of NUM pickets and the officer who carried out the arrest of Mr Arthur Scargill. He became a familiar figure on the picket lines and in the mining villages when violence spilled over into the streets. Mr Nesbitt is a man who believes in leading from the front, a "high profile" policeman.

For his troubles his work has been doubted in court over his account of Mr Scargill's arrest, he has had his nose broken in a skirmish in the mining village of Malby and has seen his

Facilitate a settlement.

The Bishop of Sheffield, the Right Rev David Luna, explained that bishops in mining areas could not avoid contact with the strike even if they wanted to. In his own case, for instance, he had visited many of the deaneries in his diocese, and such visits traditionally involve meeting local industry.

In normal times that would have meant visiting coal pits, so instead he visited picket lines, community centres and police stations.

"At first it was as if there had been a natural disaster of some kind", he said, "and the response was as if there had been a natural disaster: a non-political involvement, a desire for peace and increasingly a desire to meet physical needs."

Because he was a bishop striking miners tended to identify him with the view of the Bishop of Durham, which he did not altogether share. "In the short run it made life a little difficult. In the long run it probably does not matter,

## Bishops go into the political arena

By Clifford Longley  
Religious Affairs  
Correspondent

The miners' strike brought the bishops of the Church of England into the political arena in a way unparalleled for a generation; and into conflict with the Government in a way that has never happened before.

There were three peaks to this involvement: the sermon by the Bishop of Durham, the Right Rev David Jenkins, at his enthronement on September 28 last year; the interview in *The Times* given by the Archbishop of Canterbury, Dr Robert Runcie, on October 8; and the meeting between the National Union of Mineworkers leaders and senior churchmen at the home of the Archbishop of York, Dr John Habgood, on November 11.

Concern in all the churches at the effect the strike was having in mining communities was growing throughout the summer, and some churchmen had already made oblique references to it.

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Chief Supt Nesbitt: high profile policeman

home life disrupted, working 16-hour days, five days a week, sleeping in a temporary bedroom near his office for months on end.

Contrary to views expressed by many in the coalfields, Mr Nesbitt firmly believes that much of the bitterness that has built up - miner against miner and strikers against police - will

**Miners' strike aftermath: Dismissal hearings: Church and state: MacGregor profile.**

By Peter Davenport.

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