

Scargill and Murray in clash on pay

By David Felton
Labour Correspondent

A public disagreement broke out at a conference yesterday between Mr Arthur Scargill, the miners' leader, and Mr Len Murray, general secretary of the TUC, after Mr Murray suggested that workers could accept lower pay increases in return for cuts in their hours.

Mr Scargill, president of the National Union of Mineworkers, told the conference in London, that he hoped he had misheard what Mr Murray was suggesting. "I seem to understand Len Murray to say the movement would have to face the problem of taking a lower amount of wages in exchange for a shorter working week.

"I reject that concept. I do not believe in the argument that we should restrain from pressing for wage increases for a cut in the working week," Mr Scargill said. He added that a national overtime ban could take two million people off the dole queue.

Mr Murray had said earlier that union negotiators ought to realize that there could be a "trade-off between incomes and jobs. Not cuts in pay for shorter hours because we rejected that. But workers choosing between pay increases alone or smaller pay increases with shorter hours. We have got to get the balance right."

● Bogside Colliery, Fife, is to close permanently because of flooding and gassing caused by lack of weekend safety cover