

# Miners may resort to flying pickets

By David Felton Labour Correspondent

The threatened strike by 70,000 miners in Yorkshire and Scotland next week could lead to the reemergence of "flying pickets" if today's meeting of the National Union of Mine-workers executive decides against turning the dispute into a national confrontation with the Coal Board.

Members of the NUM executive gather in Sheffield to hear Yorkshire and Scottish leaders urge that the strikes called in their areas against threatened pit closures should be spread to others.

That move is unlikely to get the support of the full executive and it is expected that the leadership will wait to see if there is a "domino effect" next week with other areas joining the strikes spontaneously. But right-wingers will press at today's meeting for a national ballot if there is a move to involve a majority of Britain's miners.

Some moderates are also expected to voice fears about the possibility of pickets from the two striking coalfields being sent to other areas to win backing for stepping up the action. Mr Ray Chadburn, general secretary of the Nottinghamshire miners, last night said

that he expected Yorkshire pickets to be outside pits in his area on Monday morning.

"Yorkshire miners will inevitably picket in an effort to drum up support, and we will request our members not to cross picket lines, but at the end of the day it will be for the individual to decide", Mr Chadburn said.

That statement conceals the fear that some miners in moderate areas will want to work normally and will be reluctant to observe the picket lines, which could lead to disputes between the areas of the NUM.

The left on the executive will be arguing today that the Yorkshire and Scottish action should be supported and encouraged in view of the latest announcement from Mr Ian MacGregor, the Coal Board chairman, that about 20,000 jobs will disappear from the industry over the next 12 months.

Mr Arthur Scargill, the NUM president, disputes the board's figures for planned production cuts and has claimed that Mr MacGregor is aiming for an industry slimmed down to 100 pits, employing 100,000 men instead of the present 171 collieries employing 184,000.

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*The Times* (London, England), Thursday, Mar 08, 1984; pg. 1; Issue 61776. (369 words)

**Category:** News

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**Gale Document Number:**CS18583144