

Scargill seeks foreign support

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By ANNE SINGTON in Paris

MR ARTHUR SCARGILL, president of the NUM, met international union representatives in Paris yesterday to persuade them to prevent imports into Britain of foreign coal and other energy raw materials. He said that a substantial measure of success was already being achieved.

M. Augustin Dufresne, general secretary of the miners' branch of France's Communist-dominated Confederation Generale du Travail (CGT), said a good part of the two-day meeting, which ends today, was being devoted to discussions of the strike in Britain and to "making moves to obtain the support of unions throughout the world to ensure victory."

Mr Scargill said: "We have already stopped imports from Australia and had considerable success in halting the flow from Rotterdam. Our aim is to tighten the knot. We now need to stop the flow of coal from other nations carried by ships under flags of convenience."

When French union colleagues started to reply to questions put to them during a Press conference, Mr Scargill interrupted, saying: "I will handle the British Press." He said the 49 coal-exporting countries represented at the

meeting—called, under his chairmanship, to lay the foundations for merging the two existing Communist and non-Communist international federations—would "do everything in their power to stop coal exports to Britain".

In fact, about 20 people attended the meeting. Several national bodies had mandated representatives of international federations to represent their views. M. Alain Simon, general Secretary of the International Miners' Union, said, however, that Poland was among countries individually represented.

Mr Scargill made it clear that the aim was to dry up supplies of oil and other fuels, as well as coal. He claimed: "Britain's miners are winning this dispute," and added: "The talks this weekend will help to reduce the flow of both coal and oil."

The main concerns, he said, were Poland and Rotterdam. "We have made the strongest representations to the people here," he said. The NUM had set up a strike headquarters in Rotterdam, manned by its members.

"Peter Heathfield and myself are attending this very important meeting in order to gain support for British miners currently engaged in strike action. Our main aim this weekend is to try to persuade mining unions to stop all exports of coal, in particular from Poland," Mr Scargill said.