

# Walker says 'no gloating'

By Julian Haviland  
Political Editor

There were no signs of ministers congratulating themselves on a victory over the leaders of the mineworkers' union last night, much less over the union rank and file.

Mr Peter Walker, Secretary of State for Energy interviewed on BBC television, said: "I don't want any gloating. I don't want anyone saying there have been victories or defeats."

Earlier, he said that among his immediate priorities were "to unite the mining communities" and to unite the industry.

The Prime Minister returning to Downing Street from Chequers where she had heard of the decision to call off the strike said her feelings were of overwhelming relief. She spoke with regret of the privation some miners' families had suffered and added that these would have ended earlier had not intimidation kept the strike going.

"We had to make certain that violence and intimidation and impossible demands could not win," Mrs Thatcher said. "There would have been neither freedom nor order in Britain if we had given in to violence. There would have been no hope for any prosperous industry if people had gone on strike really

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for bigger and bigger subsidies from the taxpayer."

Unusually, there was general recognition in government circles yesterday that Mr Arthur Scargill was right in his claim that, although the strike was over, the dispute continued. Ministers want to see how many miners go back in the coming days and how quickly normal coal production is resumed, before they count anything as gained other than the formal ending of hostilities.

Mr Walker, who is expected to make a statement to the Commons today said it was a tragedy that the industry had lost markets and pits, that miners had lost wages, and that the union had been split in a dispute which would not have happened had there been a ballot.

Mr Stan Orme, Labour's energy spokesman, said the miners had had a set back but not a defeat, and the battle would continue. He regretted, as do ministers that the strike had ended without agreement, and for that Mr Orme blamed the National Coal Board.

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