

Kinnock opposes amnesty

Mr Neil Kinnock, the Labour leader, said yesterday there could be no amnesty for miners convicted of vicious crimes during the dispute.

All miners who had been dismissed should be reinstated unless they had been convicted of serious crimes of violence or serious acts of vandalism, he said on Independent Television News.

Mr Kinnock was pelted with tomatoes by students as he left Haringey College of Further Education in North London. They accused him of betraying the miners.

He grabbed one of them by the lapels and told him: "If you were a bit bigger. . . ."

The Prime Minister and Cabinet colleagues who have monitored the coal dispute met yesterday for only twenty minutes and agreed that, with

Continued on back page, col 3

No amnesty for pit violence — Kinnock

Continued from page 1

militancy still in evidence and the strike not then ended, it was too early to make any assessment.

They did not believe there was much danger of the insistence on a general amnesty for dismissed miners, notably in Scotland and Kent, being maintained after other coalfields had returned to work today.

In the Commons, two senior Labour MPs, Mr Roy Mason and Mr John Morris, one from South Yorkshire, the other from South Wales, pressed Mr Peter Walker, Secretary of State for Energy, about amnesties for the 1,416 miners arrested on picket lines but acquitted.

Mr Walker said their future would be for the National Coal Board alone. Each miner would have "all the protection available" against wrongful action, but acquittal was not a guarantee of employment if management felt an offence had been committed against the company's interests.

But Mr Dave Nellist, the Militant Labour MP for Coventry South East, said there would be no peace until a general amnesty was given.

And Mr Dennis Skinner, Labour MP for Bolsover, said that without an amnesty for all, resistance would continue.

Mr Walker said it was vital for the industry to return swiftly to normal, recover from the damage of the past year and take advantage of opportunities at home and abroad.

He took credit for the fact that there had been no power cuts and there were still nearly 12 million tonnes of coal stocked at power stations.

He thanked the police recording that 1,391 policemen had been hurt in the dispute.

Mr Stan Orme, his Opposition shadow, lamented the lack of an agreed settlement.

Ministers were still unable to improve on their only acknowledged figure for the cost of the strike, of £1,500 million to the end of last year.

Mr Peter Rees, Chief Secretary to the Treasury, said Mr Nigel Lawson, Chancellor of the Exchequer, would give an up-to-date assessment in his Budget statement on March 19.

Kinnock opposes amnesty.

The Times (London, England), Tuesday, Mar 05, 1985; pg. 1; Issue 62078. (459 words)

Category: News

© Times Newspapers Limited

Gale Document Number:CS17535077