

Scargill is a 'tyrant' over ballot

By Philip Webster
Political Reporter

Mr Arthur Scargill, NUM president, was yesterday branded a tyrant and despot in one of the severest personal attacks on him by a Government minister during the miners' dispute.

Mr John Gummer, Paymaster General and Conservative Party chairman, appeared to be signalling a renewed ministerial campaign for a national ballot on the strike when he accused Mr Scargill of cheating the miners and trading on their loyalty.

"He (Mr Scargill) talked of loyalty of the miners when he meant subservience to him", Mr Gummer said in Bristol.

Mr Gummer said that traditionally miners' leaders had been subject to the democratic vote. "But Arthur Scargill changed the rules and cheated the miners of their vote and seized power." There were now loyalist workers who had kept to the rules and continued to work while others had followed Mr Scargill rather than their own union rules.

The fact that Mr Scargill had refused a ballot suggested he knew the miners were thinking differently from the way he was acting. "That is the action and attitude of a despot. So he is tyrant Arthur".

Mr Peter Rost, Conservative MP for Erewash, yesterday called for the arrest and internment until the dispute is over of large numbers of picketing miners.