



All eyes on Mr Arthur Scargill as he takes a break from the trial.

Scargill claims arrest a plot

From Peter Davenport
Rotherham

Mr Arthur Scargill, president of the National Union of Mineworkers, claimed in court yesterday that there had been a deliberate plot to arrest him during mass picketing at the Orgreave coking plant in the early months of the miners' strike.

He also disagreed with the evidence of a senior police officer about events leading to his arrest, on the day after violent confrontations at the works had left 40 policemen and 29 pickets injured. The officer was "certainly not telling the truth", he said.

Mr Scargill was appearing before a stipendiary magistrate at Rotherham, south Yorkshire. He was charged with obstructing the highway near the Orgreave plant on May 30 this year, and with obstructing Chief Supt John Nesbitt in the execution of his duty. He pleaded not guilty to both charges.

The case was adjourned after the court had been told that an unnamed witness had contacted the defence yesterday morning and wished to give evidence on behalf of Mr Scargill, but could not be in court until today.

The prosecution alleged that Mr Scargill was arrested after ignoring police instructions to move on, while walking at the head of a column of between 70 and 100 striking miners and

supporters heading for the works entrance.

Mr Scargill's allegation about the previous plot to arrest him came during cross-examination by Mr Roger Keen, for the prosecution. He said that he had been on the picket line on four days before his arrest and had complied with police instructions about where he should stand.

A 35-second video film from a BBC news report of Mr Scargill's arrest was played over three television sets, on at least five occasions. It showed Mr Scargill, carrying a loud hailer and wearing a blue baseball-style cap, at the head of a column of men walking on the pavement towards the coking plant.

Then Chief Supt Nesbitt was



Chief Supt. John Nesbitt: evidence on arrest

seen approaching Mr Scargill and asking him to keep moving. The NUM president was heard to reply: "No way." Within 20 seconds Chief Supt Nesbitt had ordered his arrest.

Chief Supt Nesbitt said that he first approached Mr Scargill at 7.30am and said: "Gentlemen, please don't obstruct the footpath. Keep moving. My officers will escort you to a grassed area below the works entrance".

He heard Mr Scargill then say: "Lads, we are staying on the footpath. He can't tell us where to go". Mr Scargill said that the conversation had never taken place.

The case continues today.

● Mr Malcolm Pitt, the Kent NUM president, was fined £100 and ordered to pay £25 costs for obstructing a police officer on a picket line at Tilmanstone Colliery, near Deal, on September 3.

● Belgian transport workers are to boycott all coal shipments to Britain through Ghent which has recently handled a large increase of British-bound coal.

● Coal board experts are confident they have brought under control an underground fire threatening a £1million development at Rossington colliery.

● Coal production stopped at Manton Colliery near Worksop, yesterday - just 24 hours after it became the first pit in the Yorkshire area to produce coal.