

THE REST OF THE NEWS

The British Army fired rubber bullets at prisoners in Belfast's Crumlin Road gaol last night during a riot in which seven prison officers were held hostage.

The disturbance ended after about an hour when the hostages were freed. By then the men — Republican prisoners awaiting trial — had talked to a high-ranking prison official to try and clear up their grievances.



Many hoteliers in Lancashire are ignoring the new Fire Precautions Act because they don't want to spend the money.

Hotels with beds for more than six people have to get a certificate to show they have satisfactory escape provisions.

Lancashire County Council had expected 8,000 applications for certificates, but has only received 1,800.



Half-year profits of the Rank Organisation, whose business ranges from office machines to entertainment, jumped by £5,700,000. The pre-tax profits came to a new peak of over £24 million.



China has ordered two Concorde supersonic airliners.



Close-up pictures of accident victims will be used in a £750,000 Government 'horror' campaign to shock people into wearing car safety belts.

London's burning

London Fire Brigade were called out early this morning to a blaze that engulfed London Weekend's television studios.

At two minutes past midnight, 20 fire engines rushed to fight the fire which took hold of the three-floor building. By 2.30 a.m. the fire was under control. The cause is being investigated.

It's a political Act, says Lord Devlin

Lord Devlin — a former judge — last night admitted that the Industrial Relations Act was a political Act.

Governments throughout the world have always pretended the law is impartial, but have used it to deal with their political enemies. Now even Devlin has been forced to admit the same is true of Britain.

He made his statements at the same time as Carr and Macmillan were mouthing their usual denials of the Conservative government using the law against the dockers.

Devlin, who was author-in-chief of the docks report in the mid-1960s, said: "The Act is an Act of policy of the government, not an Act of the courts.

"We have a new Act and a new court in a politically controversial area."

He went on to say that the contempt law which imprisoned the five London dockers should never have been included in the Act.

"When you put judges into a politically controversial area it does not do to assume that all the old procedures which have worked well in the courts as they exist are going to work equally well in the new court.

"I wish contempt of court had never been introduced at all. In the eyes of the people who refuse to conform they think it is a bad law. It is not

contempt in any ordinary, sensible meaning of the word"

The Tories included the contempt law as a big stick to back up the rest of the Act.

Devlin also said he didn't like to see courts acting administratively on behalf of the government, as they did when Carr gave his order for a ballot of the railway workers.

Under the Act the Secretary of State has the ultimate say in just what constitutes an unfair industrial practice.

The Industrial Relations Act has never been anything else but a political weapon with which to attack rank and file workers.

The dockers' opposition is the rock on which it will founder.

The price of a job

Golden handshakes of up to £4,000 a man are the Jones-Aldington committee's answer to the jobs crisis facing Britain's dockers.

What the main recommendation amounts to is pushing up the price at which jobs on the docks will be bought out and closed down.

The government are finding this a convenient, and not too expensive way of shutting down the jobs in the docks. The government will meet the full cost of the severance pay, so public money will be used to help the shipowners get rid of their stevedoring interests and drastically prune the dock labour force as fast as possible.

No sooner has the report appeared than Macmillan, the employment minister, has ensured a confrontation that looks like preventing discussion.

He said last night that this government assistance would only start when normal working was resumed in the ports.

And that, say the dockers, is conditional on the five dockers being released from prison.

The report says the golden handshake offer will last from July to December and will be

particularly directed at older and unfit dockers.

The rest of the report says: Men on the temporary unattached register will be allocated to regular employers by September 4. Only Hull and London have large unattached registers.

The report wants port employers to assist by absorbing surplus labour.

Another recommendation states that unions, port authorities

and other employers should try and make container and other port-type work available to registered dock workers. It goes on to say port authorities should consider how stuffing and stripping of groupage containers can be carried out under terms and conditions as good as those now governed by agreements with the unions.

No more men should be taken onto the main dockers' register before January, or later if necessary.

Solidarity

Continental dockers were quick to express their solidarity with Britain's dock workers. Antwerp dockers in Belgium have said they will black British ships diverted from British ports if requested. French dockers have also agreed to black diverted British ships.

Merseyside's dock shop stewards committee has demanded the sacking of Reg Prentice, Labour Party shadow employment secretary, from the Transport and General Workers' Union panel of MPs.

Prentice said the dockers were wrong to organise picketing and blacking, and wrong to defy the Industrial Relations Court.

TUC leaders last night called off today's planned meeting between government, employers and unions to discuss the economy. Postponed until dockers are released.

'It was only because the dockers and thousands of other British workers stood by us that we won our victory, and therefore we consider it our duty to stand by any member of the British working class who is suffering under the iniquitous Act.'

— Spokesman for the miners' conference in Barnsley.

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- Liverpool's pirate radio station.
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- The export of work at Ford's to Germany.
- The threat of unregistered ports to the dockers.
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