

## Coal strike erupts into violence

A three-day wildcat strike that has idled about 6,000 coal miners in western Pennsylvania erupted into violence Wednesday as state police scuffled with a group of about 300 picketers near Blairsville in Indiana County.

Three persons were charged with riot, disorderly conduct and criminal mischief and warrants also were issued for three other demonstrators, authorities said.

One man was treated for head injuries at Indiana Hospital after the confrontation at a North Cambria Fuel loading dock along U.S. 22, state police said. He was not seriously injured.

Three front end loaders, one bulldozer and a company helicopter were vandalized by picketers who had attended a United Mine Workers-sponsored rally in Cambria County, said state police Lt. Robert Grebas.

Fires were set on company property and rocks were hurled at passing vehicles, police reported.

When troopers attempted to lead the arrested persons away, the crowd surged forward and knocked several of the officers over an embankment, Grebas said.

State police reinforcements equipped with helmets and truncheons arrived shortly afterward and the demonstrators dispersed, Grebas said.

"What I was mainly worried about was pickets taking weapons from the police, but fortunately that didn't happen," he added.

The UMW rally in Ebensburg had been called by District 2 officials to urge strikers to return to work.

But District President Valerio Scarton also told 600 participants that they should do something about scab coal miners who are crossing picket lines and working at North Cambria Fuel Co.

UMW Local 1880 has been on strike against the company since mid-May because it has refused to sign the national coal agreement negotiated last spring.

North Cambria, with offices in Spangler, is pressing for a contract that would establish a pension program through an insurance company rather than the payment of royalties to the UMW's pension plan.

Some workers in the 90-man local apparently have been crossing picket lines, however. About 20 names were read aloud at the rally and denounced as scabs.

The dispute spread when Greenwich Collieries in Cambria County was closed down Monday by pickets, who eventually shut down mines elsewhere, including operations in Indiana and Armstrong counties.

## Decision on Lance still 'weeks away'

WASHINGTON (UPI) — A decision on whether to prosecute former budget director and presidential friend Bert Lance for financial irregularities is "some weeks off," a high Justice Department official said Wednesday.

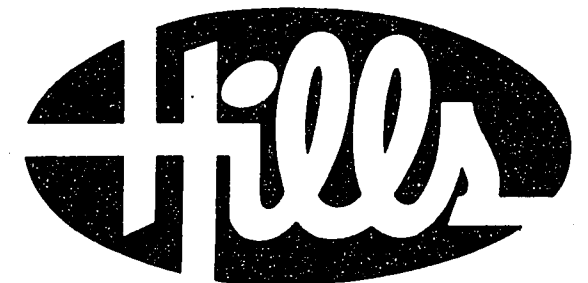
Updating department investigations, the official, who asked not to be identified, said investigators were making progress in cases involving Lance, fugitive financier Robert Vesco, American companies accused of overseas bribes and efforts by organized crime to plunder union pension funds.

The official said an announcement on the Lance investigation could come close to next month's election and if that happened, the department's position would be "to let nature take its course."

Attorney General Griffin Bell has disqualified himself from any decisions involving Lance and the National Bank of Georgia and Georgia's Calhoun First National Bank because of his own dealings but will still make the final decision on prosecuting Lance on other matters, officials said.

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