

# £20,000 RATE GRANT GIVES TIN MINE 2-WEEK REPRIEVE

By COLIN RANDALL

**R**ATEPAYERS will meet the cost of a further two-week reprieve for the Wheal Jane tin mine, near Truro, which is facing closure with the loss of 418 jobs.

Cornwall County Council's decision yesterday to spend the £20,000 required to keep vital water pumps working keeps alive a slim chance that the mine may yet be saved.

Dept of Industry officials now acknowledge that the owners, Consolidated Gold Fields, are unlikely to budge from their resolve to inject no more cash into a project they think has little if any prospect of viability.

Remaining hopes that Wheal Jane can survive appeared last night to rest on the possibility of other mining interests being persuaded to make an 11th hour intervention.

Pumping costs have been increased by the closure of the nearby Mount Wellington mine, making another 325 men redundant.

Consolidated Gold Fields had agreed to foot the bill until the end of this week, when Wheal Jane would begin to flood.

The county council, who planning committee had recommended paying for a one-week reprieve, also hopes to send a deputation to London for a final appeal to the Prime Minister against a background of regional unemployment rates nearly twice the national average.

Consolidated Gold Fields

have now confirmed their original closure decision and one understood to have told Mr Williams, Minister of State for Industry, that Government aid of about £1.750.000 — including an unconditional loan of £1 million — was needed for the mine to continue.

A further demand apparently called on the Government to underwrite losses for an extended period of up to six years, although the company was yesterday unable to confirm any details of its discussions with Whitehall.

The Department has consistently pointed out that taxpayers' money cannot be committed to an enterprise whose prospects are viewed in such gloomy terms.

## RESEARCH STRIKE

By Our Science Correspondent

Up to 1,300 science researchers employed by the Government, members of the Institution of Professional Civil Servants, are expected to take part in a half-day strike this afternoon to protest against manpower cuts.