

RENTS LATEST MOVES

TOWER HILL, KIRKBY

TOTAL rent strike among the 2,100 tenants in Tower Hill, Kirkby. The action group say 1,800 are not paying, while the council claim the figure is 1,191.

One reason for the conflicting figures, claims Tony Boyle of the action group, is that the council are including in their figures for those paying rent, people who are paying rent for lock-up garages only.

The council offices and rent collectors are picketed and meetings held on Tuesday nights in the Tower Hill Community Centre.

None of Kirkby's Labour councillors have publicly supported the strike, even though 17 of them had previously signed a petition pledging to oppose the Act in every way possible.

So far nobody has been evicted. A council threat to enforce 1971 court orders for arrears against several tenants seems to have been dropped.

A demonstration by several hundred tenants and factory workers blocked off all entrances to the estate to protest against eviction threats to seven residents.

Certainly one of the most militant areas in the country.



Tricks behind rebates

THE REBATES may seem fairly generous. They are not. There are a number of catches. The Government have said the Act will eventually save £300 million a year. So they aren't throwing money around. Remember:

1. Rebates will divide tenants and introduce the hated means test on a massive scale.
 2. When a person on a low wage gets a rise he will pay 17p in the £ more in rent until the 'fair' rent is reached. You may benefit now, but not for long.
 3. Rebates are based on the GROSS wage of husband and wife (with £2.50 deducted from the wife's income) before tax and insurance contributions and after family allowances are added.
 4. The rebate figures are a big con. Remember rents will double or even treble. So even though you may gain a rebate you will still probably pay more rent.
 5. Rents shown in the table below don't include rates, which are as much as £2 a week.
 6. Deductions are made. If you have other non-dependants in the house you lose, for example, £1.50 of your rebate for a son or lodger and even £1 for a pensioner.
 7. If someone in the house has a higher income than the tenant he may be treated as the tenant. For example George Best's landlady could find George is called the tenant.
- SO WATCH OUT—There's a trick or two about!

ALL BOOTLE RENT ACTION COMMITTEE

ACTION committee claim that 75% of the tenants (not counting those on social security) are with-holding the increases. Pickets are urging tenants at the rent office not to pay; regular street meetings and leaflets keep people informed.

A collection in the shopping centre raised £9.50 in two hours to help finance the campaign.

The housing manager has sent letters and visitors to tenants asking them to pay up.

Weekly meetings are held on Thursdays in St Oswald's Council Hall in Netherlerton.

'OVER THE BRIDGE'

TENANTS in this area between Great Howard Street and Vauxhall Road are on total rent strike.

Apart from pensioners who have not joined the strike, they claim to have almost complete support from the 570 residents.

Sixty eviction notices have been served, probably due to previous rent arrears, but the council will have to apply for a court order before they can evict.

Daily pickets continue outside the rent office, and anti-eviction

squads are on call in case of trouble.

The tenants' association plan to nominate a new council candidate to oppose Councillor Hyams.

Meetings are held every Monday at St Alban's School, Athol Street.

NETHERLEY

Regular pickets at the Rent Office. Action group claim 50% support in with-holding the increase.

Monthly meetings are held in the Labour Club. Next one: December 4. Alderman Sefton has been invited.

OLD SWAN

A PETITION to be delivered to Ald Sefton has been signed by 521 tenants so far, who are with-holding the increase.

- They make two demands:
1. No evictions for duration of rents campaign.
 2. All arrears on the increase from October 9 to be cancelled.

ALLERTON TENANTS' ORGANISATION

RECENTLY formed group. They have discovered more people not paying

than they originally thought.

Planning a leaflet on the rebate scheme — many people still think it is a good thing.

Contact: Freddie Gleeson, 42 Springwood Ave, L'pool 19. 427 5552.

COACHES will be leaving Pier Head at 10 a.m. on Sunday. December 3 for tenants going to demonstrate at Clay Cross. Labour councillors in Clay Cross are likely to be fined up to £1,000 and stripped of their offices — because this is one of the few councils still refusing to implement the Act.

Anyone wanting to go contact Sam Watts (924 4608). Cost £1

COUNCIL TENANTS are still less secure than private tenants, even though the Housing Finance Act has repealed the 1838 Small Tenements Act used by many councils — Bootle in particular — to make arbitrary evictions.

The only difference is that now the housing authority has to apply to the County Court instead of to a Magistrates' Court for an order giving possession. No reason for the eviction had to be given before, and none need be given now.

RENT REBATES

Man, Wife and Two Children

MAXIMUM NET RENT	RENT REBATE OR ALLOWANCES							
	£2	£3	£4	£5	£6	£7	£8	£9
Gross Income* £								
20	1.06	1.86	2.46	3.06	3.66	4.26	4.86	5.46
25	nil	0.99	1.59	2.19	2.79	3.39	3.99	4.59
28	nil	0.48	1.08	1.68	2.28	2.88	3.48	4.08
30	nil	nil	0.74	1.34	1.94	2.54	3.14	3.74
35	nil	nil	nil	0.49	1.09	1.69	2.29	2.89
40	nil	nil	nil	nil	0.24	0.84	1.44	2.04

*This includes family allowance for one child—thus a gross income of £20 would mean earnings of £19.10 plus 90p family allowance.

No work - Come back tomorrow

Two months ago Mr Terence Croft opened a new factory in Netherley with the help of his young co-director, Miss Jenny Faragher — and fat development grants.

For many women and young girls it meant a chance of work after a long period of unemployment. But then things started to go wrong.....



WITHIN DAYS of opening, Croft Seafoods had taken on 160 staff (60 for the night shift) and had built up a waiting list of about 300 women eager to step in if any dropped out.

For the first two weeks the women were paid £14 a week to open and shell queenies (a small oyster-like shellfish) which Crofts export as a delicacy to America.

The work was tedious, the smell nauseating and the wages low. But at least it enabled women — many of whose husbands are out of work — to help support their families.

But after this brief period the women were shaken to learn that in future they weren't to be paid a basic wage.

Instead they were to be treated like casual labourers and were to be paid 10p per lb for shelling small queenies and 6p for larger

ones.

Then the women found they were being laid off for up to a whole week at a time. Sometimes they were greeted by notices when they arrived at the factory which said: 'No work today. Come back tomorrow.' No work meant no money, and a number of the women faced serious problems when claiming social security, as they were considered to be employed.

Union

The night shift has been laid off for three weeks (as we go to press) which could hardly have come at a worse time for the women. Most of them were hoping to save up for Christmas.

With scarcely a moment's notice the women on the day shift are told to go home when the supplies of queenies haven't arrived from the docks.

Whenever women complain, they say, they are merely reminded that 300 others are eager to have their job.

Conditions such as these, which would have been out of date thirty years ago, explain why the women are struggling to start a union. An official from the General and Municipal Workers' Union is trying to have talks with Miss Faragher, and up to 80 women have held meetings at Netherley School in the evenings to get organised.

Liverpool presented an ideal place for Mr Croft and Miss Faragher to

expand their Isle of Man factory. All the seafood is caught within an hour's sailing of Liverpool, and once shelled and sorted, the queenies can be exported from the docks to America and Spain.

The 10,000 sq.ft. factory cost £40,000 to build, but between 40 and 50% of this will be paid from Government development grants.

As Liverpool is a development area, Crofts can claim £1.50 a week for each person employed, and received £12 a week for each woman (£15 for each man) while the workers learned the work.

Sacked

And above all, Netherley, where there is only one other firm on the industrial estate, offered a vast supply of cheap female labour. In America the queenies are sold for about 90p a pound, which means they make quite a handsome profit.

Mrs Georgina Forest, one of the women workers said: 'The queenies stink. You can't get the smell out of your clothes.'

'Even if there was always plenty of work you would have to race to

earn more than £12 a week.'

The danger of not being in a union was made clear when Mr Peter Boardman, one of the few male workers, was sacked. He claims he had been working up to 80 hours a week to get a decent wage, as his basic pay was £22 for 40 hours.

Mr Boardman, who is described as a good worker by the women, says he went home one Friday at 9 p.m. because he felt ill and had been working since 7.30 a.m.

Still feeling unwell, he stayed away from work on Saturday. He returned on Monday, but was given his cards.

He says Miss Faragher told him the management considered he had left his job because he had taken time off.

Before starting at Crofts, Mr Boardman had been unemployed for nine months. Now, he and his family face a miserable Christmas.

Crofts have put up a notice in the factory which warns that any person who is off work for two consecutive days will be presumed to have left their job.

The need to obtain sick pay is just one of the many reasons why the women want to start a union.

Women at work