

NETHERLEY WOMEN PICKET FOOD FACTORY

EVERY DAY for six weeks women have settled down outside a new factory in Netherley at seven in the morning.

They've brought their flasks and camping stoves, pitched their makeshift tents and refused to be moved by threats or promises.

The women are on picket duty outside the Croft Seafoods factory. And they are determined to stay there until the owners give in.

All they are asking for is 35p an hour and a guaranteed 30-hour working week — that's the grand sum of £10.50 a week each.

But Mr Terence Croft, the director and his young co-director, Miss Jenny Faragher, are refusing to pay even this. They set up their £40,000 factory with the help of nearly £20,000 from the taxpayer on waste land known as Netherley Industrial Trading Estate.

They came from the Isle of Man to expand their shellfish business and to use the vast supply of cheap female labour from the estate just a few yards away.

They took on 300 women and paid them £14 a week for two weeks. This cost Mr Croft next to nothing, as the Government pay £12 a week for women during the training period.

But when the training stopped, the regular wages stopped. Instead the women were treated as casual labour and paid 6p per lb for shelling small, smelly queenies (an oyster-like shellfish).

The queenies are then exported as a delicacy to America and sold at 90p per lb.

The women were laid off for up to a week at a time — with no pay. They started a union, which was eventually recognised after a struggle by the management. But by then the workforce was down to 70 women and six men.

When the directors refused to give them a guaranteed working week the women went on strike.

The latest farcical offer from the management was for just 15 of the women (including six who worked during the strike until they were laid off) to be re-employed — again on a casual basis.

They have had support from the dockers, workers at Pilkingtons, a food factory in Huyton and even men from the No. 66 bus route. But more donations are needed. Send them to Mrs Winnie Holding, 1 Crabtree Close Netherley.



PICKETING IN THE RAIN with umbrellas and makeshift tents outside the Croft Seafoods factory.

When your doctor is also a businessman...

NUMBER EIGHT Shaw Street is one of a dingy row of Victorian terraced houses in Everton.

But it's the headquarters of a business that's just been sold for £300,000. The business is Liverpool Locums which, along with Birmingham Locums, was sold by its founder, Dr John Maxwell, to Allied Investments.

Allied Investments own three private nursing homes and with their acquisition of the two locum services they are moving rapidly ahead in their efforts to undermine the National Health Service.

Allied's directors are already well pleased with Maxwell's local connections, and he has agreed to stay on with Liverpool Locums for the next three years.

Maxwell just happens to sit on the local medical committee, which represents the city's doctors.

And, surprisingly, he also has a seat reserved for him on the Liverpool Executive Council — which is supposed to represent the National Health Service consumers.

Maxwell's membership of the executive council is full of contradictions. Apart from his devoted interest in the private side of medicine — profiting

EVERY NIGHT a handful of doctors arrive at the Liverpool Locums office in Shaw Street and pick up a two-way radio telephone and a bag containing medical supplies. Then for up to twelve hours they drive around the city looking after the patients of GPs who have taken the weekend or evening off.

At certain times of the night no more than five doctors are responsible for coping with the emergency needs of over ¼ million people. About 85% of Liverpool's 300 doctors use this stand-in service.

For the doctors it is a cheap way of having plenty of time off — and allows some doctors to concentrate on private medicine. And for the people who run them, locum services are highly profitable.

Stand-in facilities are certainly necessary, but private firms should not be allowed to cash in on something which ought to be provided under the National Health Service.

from the NHS by providing a relief service — he also appears to exempt himself from the executive council's main ruling on the use of locum services by Liverpool doctors.

The executive council support the Department of Health's decision that no doctor may make 'excessive' use of a locum service.

But Maxwell — who runs his general practice from the same address as Liverpool Locums — relies very heavily on his own locum service to look after his patients.

In the words of one of his own locum doctors who spoke to the Free Press: "Over the past two years

he has hardly been there. At worst he has had four doctors covering his surgeries, at best two. His night calls are nearly always done by whichever doctor is on mobile duty. His patients never know from one day to the next which doctor will be seeing them. They get no continuity of treatment."

Over the past few years Dr Maxwell has been a busy man indeed. He has been director of Liverpool and Birmingham Locums, Central Relief Services (London), Cheshire Locums, as well as a member of several medical committees on Merseyside.



MR KANSO YOSHIDA, cousin of Emperor Hirohito of Japan, has died in Liverpool aged 78.

Since he came to Liverpool in 1912, Mr Yoshida has been known as Paddy Murphy.



AMERICAN evangelist Billy Graham has called for the re-introduction of the death penalty, plus castration for rapists.

Dr Graham was speaking in South Africa, where he received the most enthusiastic welcome of his career.



DURING an amateur football match in Birmingham Mr John Hayes was sent off for butting another player. Next day the ref (who is also a police inspector) charged Mr Hayes with causing actual bodily harm. He was fined £100 and given a four month suspended prison sentence.



A MAN parked his car in West Derby, Liverpool and returned to find that the boot had been blown off by Army bomb disposal experts.

A spokesman said someone had been 'acting suspiciously' near the car. 'We found nothing dangerous inside,' he added.



THE CEMETERY HOTEL in Warrington has been renamed The Good Companions.



THE BRITISH Medical Association have been asked to hand over their London offices to the Divine Light Mission. The offices were built with a bequest by Dr Annie Besant who ordered in her will that if Our Lord ever returns to earth He must be given the building immediately. The mission say he has now returned in the person of the chubby Indian teenager known as Guru Maharaj Ji.



The day Tom lit a fag

CARWORKER Thomas Evans lit more than a cigarette when he had a quick smoke during his tea-break.

For he sparked off a two-week long dispute at the Triumph car factory in Speke Hall Road, Liverpool.

About 200 men came out in protest when he was sacked for "smoking in a restricted area" and hundreds more were laid off.

The strike clearly showed how the public, and even workers in the factory, rarely learn the full details behind a dispute.

Naturally the national press, relying on faceless company spokesmen for their information, took this opportunity to ridicule and misreport the strike.

And rumours swept the factory — unhindered by management — to explain away the sacking. One suggestion was that Evans was sitting on a 30-gallon drum of inflammable liquid at the time. Unfortunately nothing was done to counter these false rumours.

A paint sprayer from the B-shift paint shop, where Evans worked, said: "We would hardly come out in support of someone who we felt was

endangering our lives."

And he pointed out that Evans was found smoking in what is mostly a wet area, where workers wear overalls and wellington boots to keep themselves dry.

"The management told the senior stewards that the combustion fumes from the area were so severe that there was a danger of fire," he said. "If this is true, the management have never bothered to check up to see if these same fumes were damaging our health."

OTHER SUPPORT FOR STRIKE

The only other section to strike was the B-shift (Bond and Prime) who also work in the paint shop — which shows that the workers who were said to be at risk all supported Evans.

Conditions in the paint shop are probably worse than in any other section of the plant, although the management boast that it is the most modern in Europe.

The strikers felt strongly that the management were largely to blame for the strike by not providing decent

amenities nearby for workers to go during their short tea-break.

To get a cup of tea in the ten minutes allowed, Evans had to walk about 100 yards, avoiding moving tracks, then he had to force his way to the front of the queue for the tea urn. As time was getting short, Evans decided against going to the mezzanine floor (again some distance away) which is set aside as an area where workers smoke.

Instead he went back to his work place, and had his tea and a cigarette there.

For this misdeed, he was thrown out of a job. And even after the strike the management only promised to 'look favourably' on his application to come back if he waited three months before re-applying.

This essentially simple dispute could have been settled in a few hours — particularly if the men in the plant Hall Road plant, where the paint shop is, had taken united action.

However it soon turned into a complex struggle within the factory. One reason was the crucial timing of the dispute: It flared up just before the climax of the pay talks.

BROKEN AGREEMENTS

For instance, the A-shift have a working agreement that out of every four cars, three should be Toledos and the fourth a Stag. But the management asked them to do a straight 17 Stags an hour (they make more profit on these when exported to the rich American market).

The B-shift paint shop felt they were let down during the strike. They say some stewards failed to give a lead to other sections, failed to explain the facts behind the sacking and didn't speak out against the management's request to change the working agreements.