

WOMEN'S LIB VICTORY

WOMEN'S LIBERATION members believe their campaign on family allowances has been successful.

The Government plans to replace family allowances with tax credits, and it was feared that these would go into a husband's wage packet, taking away the mother's only independent and reliable source of income.

But a Merseyside woman who gave evidence to the Parliamentary Select Committee in London was told that the credit will be universal - mothers will get it as well.

However, many women feel the tax credit payments will be too small.

RIGHT: Women's Lib member collecting signatures for the family allowance petition in Great Homer Street.



Everton rent strike ends in victory for tenants

TENANTS in a high-rise block of flats in Everton have forced the corporation to listen to their complaints.

The sixty families in Haigh Heights have just ended an eight week rent strike which - although it got no publicity - has proved highly successful.

The Housing Department have promised, after doing a survey, to carry out repairs and improve the environment around the flats known as The Ugly Sisters (Haigh, Crosbie and Canterbury Heights).

The work to be done includes replacing the glass in the entrances with armour-plated glass, removing the wooden door frames on the bin doors and replacing them with purpose-made metal doors, and blocking off the entrance to Haigh Heights so it cannot be used as a short cut.

The residents in Haigh Heights started their rent strike because the corporation had continually ignored their complaints that the area was being allowed to decay. Ever since January 1972 Haigh Heights have been without a caretaker, and during this period the flats were almost completely neglected.

Marie Clewarth, a member of the recently formed Salisbury Street Tenants' Association, which helped to organise the rent strike, says tenants are now campaigning to have families with children under 14 moved out of the high-rise flats.

At the last count there were 86 children under 14 living in Haigh Heights.

Also the tenants are pressing the corporation to employ tenants to work as lift attendants. They point out that one of the chief complaints is that the lifts are often out of order. And they say it would be far cheaper to employ local residents than to keep mending the lifts.

The cost of keeping Ted fed



THE COST of feeding the Prime Minister has reached alarming proportions. To celebrate the opening of Merseyside's new 'embassy' in London, the overweight Mr Heath was given lunch at the Savoy - and consumed food and drink worth £11.60.

There were 206 other guests, including councillors and businessmen - bringing the total bill to £2,400.

Merseyside ratepayers (who paid for the meal but weren't invited) might like to know what they missed:

FIRST COURSE: Mousse of haddock in white wine sauce with herbs and parsley.

MAIN COURSE: Breast of chicken in Madeira sauce with quenelle of lamb's sweetbread and mushrooms, croquette spuds with spinach, artichoke hearts stuffed with puree of peas, and chicory cooked in butter.

AFTERS: Nut flavoured ice bomb (sic) and peach filled with chestnut puree, followed by sweet biscuits.

DRINKS: Meursault (Louis Latour) 1969; Chateau Cantenac Brown (Margaux) 1967; Cognac - Bisquit Du-Bouche VSOP; Port - Dow 1960 (bottled 1962); Liqueurs ... and lots of coffee!

● £11.60 is more than many pensioners can afford to spend on food in a whole month.



"You've got RATS! But our rules against pets are quite clear..."

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Rent rebel councillor spends night in jail

LIVERPOOL Labour Councillor Chris Perry was sentenced to 60 days in prison - because of his delay in paying off a fine. He was released after a night in Walton Jail when a relative lent him the money.

The fine was over an incident at the 'Fair Rents' council meeting last August. There was heckling from the public gallery and dozens of police suddenly entered the council chamber.

Councillor Perry - a strong opponent of the rents Act - called one of the policemen a 'bastard' and allegedly spat at him. For this he was fined £40 with £40 costs.

He was ordered to pay off the £80 at £2 a week. Several sympathisers had offered to help, but were slow in providing the money they had promised. Eventually he fell behind with the payments.

THE COURT HEARING

He appeared at Liverpool Magistrates Court on May 29 for non payment of fines. He was then eight weeks in arrears and had £52 still to pay.

He offered a cheque for £10 and payment of the full amount within a fortnight. This was a reasonable offer, since the final instalment was not due until next October.

But a cheque wasn't good enough for the magistrate, Mr Sam Curtis. He wanted the full amount. In cash. Immediately. Failing that - 60 days in prison.

Mr Curtis, who has been a magis-

trate for 21 years, holds a fortnightly session known as The Sammy Curtis Show when he lashes debtors with biting sarcasm and spectacular punishments. Shortly before Chris Perry's case came up he sentenced a man to seven days in prison for owing £1 on a £5 fine.

Having failed to provide £52 in cash on the spot, Councillor Perry was whisked off to Walton Jail. At no time was he allowed to contact his wife.

GIVEN A HAIRCUT

At Walton, he was given a prison haircut, weighed, measured and stripped of all his possessions, including his wedding ring. Then into a cell with two other prisoners. After a meal of dried scrambled egg he went to bed.

Meanwhile his wife was wondering where he was. She telephoned the police and got the shock of her life. She set about borrowing the money to pay the fine and get him released.

Later Alderman Bill Sefton, leader of the council, heard the news and offered to provide the money himself if necessary.

Next morning, as a new convict, Chris Perry was marched off to be examined by the prison doctor. Then into the prison photographer's 'studio' to have three mug-shots taken.

One slight consolation was that because his sentence was more than thirty days, he was entitled to his wages in advance - 26p for the week.

Tower Hill tenants given a month to pay arrears

TOWER HILL tenants in Kirkby continue to be the strongest group still fighting rent increases.

The council sent out about 350 demands for arrears accumulated since the introduction of the 'Fair' Rent Act. The tenants sent them all back, marked: "On rent strike".

Twenty-two tenants then received orders to appear in court on May 24. As a complete boycott had been called, the court had to pass judgement in their absence. It was decided to give tenants 28 days to begin repayment of their arrears in weekly instalments.

It seems that these 22 tenants - who have no intention of paying - are being used as a test case before any more court orders are given out.

Meanwhile in Bootle, out of some

3,000 tenants who refused to pay the increase in the early stages of the campaign there are probably no more than 30 who are still doing so.

Warning letters and personal visits from rent officers to every tenant discredited the leaders of the campaign and distorted the figures of those resisting the increase. But they persuaded the majority to pay up.

The few who refused were sent notices to quit as long ago as March, yet so far no action has been taken against them.

Campaign organisers in Bootle hope the fact that some tenants have remained firm without reprisals from the council will encourage others and result in a stronger campaign when further increases take effect in October.

He then spent it in the prison shop: ½-oz Old Holborn, a packet of cigarette papers and two Senior Service... to last till the next pay day.

But shortly after that he was released - the fine had been paid.

Chris Perry told the Free Press he was alarmed at the way people could be locked away at the whim of a magistrate for fairly small debts - and have no chance to phone a solicitor or friend.

Fortunately his wife was expecting him home and made enquiries when he didn't turn up. But it would be very different for someone living alone. They could spend several days in prison before their call for help could reach a friend.

A studious handling of catering workers

JOAN BENT and her fellow workers at Liverpool University Students' Union have discovered that working for students isn't much different from having a rich businessman as their boss.

The catering staff in the Union are paid the handsome sum of 26½p an hour for a 20-hour week. The coffee bar staff get 31p an hour - for longer hours and worse working conditions.

They all get a 50p good time-keeping bonus, but lose all of it if they have to take time off - even a couple of hours.

Unlike those who work for the Education Department or the university itself, they get no retaining fee during the university vacations.

So someone like Mrs Bent can earn up to £5.30 a week plus 50p bonus, and out of that she has to pay £1 a week on buses to and from work.

The men's wages aren't much better. Until recently a cook got £17.80 for a 40-hour week and a second chef got £21.07.

Last year the catering workers went on strike. At that time the floor workers were getting only 20p an hour. Although they got no support from their union (GMWU) of which 80% are members, they won a rise of 6½p an hour.

This was still not enough and they threatened to call another strike last March. But after being told by the students' catering committee that pay negotiations were due to start, they called it off.

Then at the start of the summer term the union employed two new chefs, supposedly on the same level as the second chef, who was getting £21. But the new ones were on £23

ms situation. The justness of the staff's demands is equalled by the Union's inability to meet them. They are paid extremely poor wages but this is only part of the vicious circle on which students also find themselves and one which can only be broken when a satisfactory grants' increase is squeezed from the Government. Then, demand for Union food will increase and a realistic pay offer can be made.

What the students' newspaper said.

a week and had the fancy name of Banqueting Chefs because of an agreement to work weekends.

The catering workers believe it was because the union would not have been able to get any new staff by offering as little as £21.

A strike was called, supported by the two new chefs. It lasted nearly a week without union support. Because they had no strike pay, and many of the women with kids wouldn't have much chance of getting another job to fit in with school hours, they had to go back.

But now one of the cooks' wages have been increased and people who come back in the evenings for special functions are getting more. This still doesn't help the women with young families to look after.

It is argued that the students' union can't afford to pay more. But they did manage to pay £500 for a one-night performance by the 'Ladybirds', the topless Swedish pop group - and make a loss on it.

As Iain Picton, the students' president-elect says, "It's difficult to fit your ideals into the running of a capitalist enterprise."