

'Bloody marvellous' help over

THE DISPUTE at Sayers' bakery in Liverpool has lasted for over four months.

It's essentially a simple dispute involving the jobs of just twenty men sacked for refusing to work Saturday overtime.

But though two unions have made the strike official, there's still no sign of a settlement.

At the same time thousands of workers across the country have helped and been 'bloody marvellous' in the words of the sacked Sayers men.

The twenty sacked men (ten engineers, seven electricians and three sheet metal workers) received little sympathy from the majority of the 800 workers at the bakery in Lorenzo Drive, Norris Green.

Sixteen Sayers drivers did join the strike, but the directors then bought most of them off with lump sums or redundancy payments.

The rest of the drivers - on the

orders of local and national T&G officials - carried on working.

Dick Palmer, the divisional organiser, even sent the company a letter saying the drivers should work normally (normally, in this case, meant crossing the picket lines).

The directors gleefully gave a copy of this letter to each driver to wave at the pickets.

Not all the T&G men took this attitude. Harry Rimmer, the EEP TU steward, said: "On the whole the rank and file T&G members have been bloody marvellous".

In fact the T&G 6541 Road Transport branch (of which Sayers drivers are members) made it clear their policy was not to cross official picket lines. The branch donated £50 to the sacked men, and some members joined the pickets.

With little support inside the factory, it became vital to win support outside.

When the twenty men appealed for donations, they also asked people to black Sayer's products.

It is difficult to say if this affected sales in Sayer's shops. But it certainly affected their sales to important works canteens on Merseyside.

Workers at various factories threatened to black the canteens if Sayer's food was sold.

And so, with very little argument, Sayer's products were withdrawn from canteens at Tate & Lyle, Metal Box in Speke, Yorkshire Imperial Metals, Plesseys, Littlewoods pools and mail order depots, and at a number of smaller firms.

Next, the Sayers men contacted stewards at firms supplying fuel oil, flour, sugar and fat to the bakery.

Under pressure, many large firms stopped delivering. And Sayers, at great expense, had to order instead from firms as far away as East Anglia.

Most of Sayer's sugar came from

Tate & Lyle in Liverpool. Not any more. Bob Bannister, a Tate & Lyle drivers' steward, persuaded the men to stop deliveries.

A few weeks ago the British Sugar Corporation supplied a load from their depot in Lincoln, but now this seems to have stopped. Meanwhile, management and directors are smuggling in half-hundredweight bags of sugar in all kinds of vehicles, including their own cars.

Workers at Kraft Foods in Kirkby and Peerless Refining in Netherton prevented their firms sending shortening fats. Sayers responded by ordering from the Kraft factory in Manchester.

From the first day, drivers from Shaw's Fuel, in Huddersfield, refused to cross the picket lines.

"They have been tremendous. They have remained consistent and solid ever since," said Joe Connolly, the AUEW steward.

Sayers were forced to cut down on the use of fuel and change over to gas boilers.

Perhaps the most difficult, and yet most encouraging struggle was over the delivery of flour.

Drivers from Wilson King, in Toxteth (who supplied half of Sayer's flour) soon stopped their deliveries. But this didn't really hinder Sayers as they just increased their supplies from Nelstop Flour, in Stockport.

Eventually the Wilson King drivers saw their blacking was of little use, and encouraged by local T&G officials, started their deliveries again.

This continued until the fourteenth week of the strike, when the Sayers men approached dock stewards at Seaforth Grain Terminal. The dockers immediately offered to black all grain for Wilson King and Nelstop. The effect was dramatic. Both firms stopped supplying Sayers.

The stewards said they would

Police get off the hook in pub arrest case

THE PROSECUTION in the John Lannon case made an amazing deal to stop serious allegations against the police being heard in open court.

John Lannon was the Kirkby man arrested at the Woodpecker pub in Northwood last August.

The Free Press found over a dozen witnesses who saw him kicked and punched by three police officers.

Lannon ended up having an emergency operation on a punctured lung and hospital treatment for a broken rib, facial injuries, and severe bruising.

By the time the case reached Liverpool Crown Court last month, John Lannon faced ten charges: Attempted burglary, stealing dog food, damaging a car, three charges of assaulting police, damaging police clothing, and three charges of common assault on the police officers.

With a long criminal record, Lannon faced the possibility of a further stretch inside - whatever the police had done to him.

But the prosecution were more concerned with silencing the allegations against the police.

Just before the case started, they approached the defence with a deal. They would forget about five charges, including the assaults on police, in exchange for guilty pleas to the less serious common assaults, the attempted burglary charge and damaging the car.

The defence agreed. And Judge John Arthur went along with it. There was no need for a jury or any of those em! arassing witnesses.

After examining prosecution statements, probation and medical

reports, Judge Arthur sentenced John Lannon to 200 hours unpaid community work and ordered him to pay £18.90 towards the damage to the car.

However, that may not be the end of the story. John Lannon still hopes to get compensation from the police for his injuries.

But, rest assured, an internal police investigation should soon clear Constables Alistair Thomas Frew (3890), Norman Wilcock (3268) and David Roberts (4540) of any misconduct.

The earlier committal hearing before Kirkby magistrates had shown that all those witnesses to the attack on John Lannon must have been mistaken.

Several of them had seen Mrs Gladys Conway, wife of the licensee of the Woodpecker, joining in the assault with some sort of truncheon.

But, under oath, Mrs Conway told a different story of what happened at the back of the pub when the police arrived.

"I saw John Lannon struggling with a policeman. One policeman was lying on the floor. The policeman was trying to get hold of him - you know, get him up."

But it was all too much for the good lady: "I was very distressed... I collapsed and I was carried in by two policemen." After that she saw nothing.

Obviously such a gentle soul would not be capable of laying into John Lannon with a truncheon while the police held him down and kicked him - and then committing perjury to cover it up.

a Radio City director.

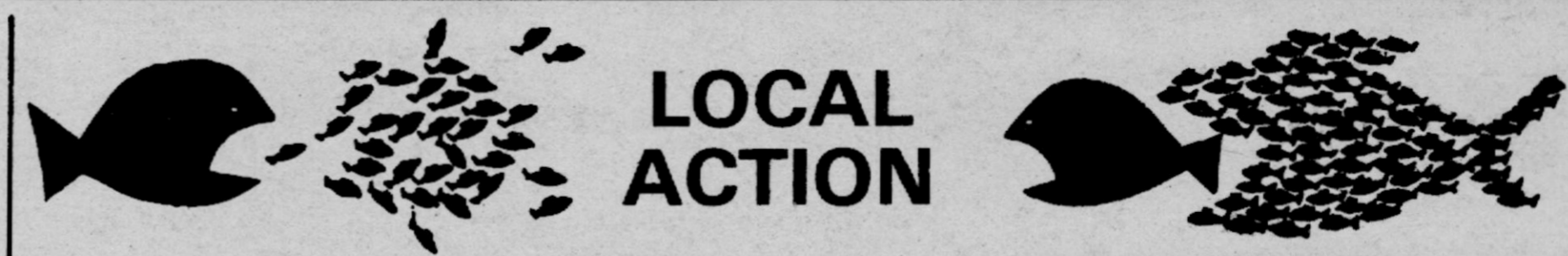
Who chose these two men? One Benson/Tranwood director, Mr S. Carpenter said his company did not select them, but only approved them.

He wasn't telling the whole truth. Mervyn Smith is an acquaintance of George Davis, group secretary of the Trahwood Group.

Mr Medlock is known by at least one Benson/Tranwood director. The firm have a company on the Wirral where Medlock worked. And they knew he was about to be pushed out of the co-op and was 'available'.

A number of meetings were then held between the directors of Benson/Tranwood and the directors of Bear Brand. Bensons spelt out the policy they thought Bear Brand should follow to be successful.

Firstly, Bear Brand would have to keep prices down. Secondly they would have to increase production to



LOCAL ACTION

Kids' demo over disco

RADIO FREEDOM is a popular disco outfit in Netherley, run by four local teenagers, John Kelly, Mike Hennessey, Steve Fowler and Noddy Gilmartin.

They provide a slick programme of music and comment and allow the kids to use their equipment.

So when they were stopped at short notice from Centre 27 after



Kids help on Radio Freedom

only one booking, and the centre provided its own show, it didn't go down well with some of the kids.

A couple of them picketed outside the dance, and about 20 kids surged in later with banners, chanting 'Radio Freedom'.

The warden of the centre, Patrick Delaney, husband of councillor Margaret Delaney, thought Radio Freedom attracted the wrong sort of crowd, and decided to buy some disco equipment for the centre on hire purchase.

Radio Freedom had agreed to do two bookings cheap - for £10 - and for £15 after that. They packed the place out on their first and only night, and were hoping for a regular booking. Now they will have difficulty paying the H.P. on their equipment.

Some of the more unusual records in the Radio Freedom collection include Al Johnson and old time records. They once provided an impromptu show for the old age pensioners at the centre, but that was stopped.

Perhaps that attracted the wrong sort of crowd as well.

ON THE MARCH

NOW it's the turn of social workers to take to the streets to campaign against the public spending cuts.

They are holding a demo in Liverpool on March 13 and are hoping for support from trade unionists, and tenants and community groups.

couldn't produce fast enough to meet our needs."

Benson/Tranwood say they helped by cutting their profit margin in the shops. That may be true. But there's little doubt they benefited by Bear Brand's new policy of keeping prices down.

What sort of men are behind Benson/Tranwood?

● Several top men used to work for Bear Brand, including chairman Harold Bainbridge. He was previously chairman of Bear Brand until it was found he had built up a private 9% stake in their customers, Benson, through a private company. He was then eased out.

● Chairman Bainbridge and managing director Brian Norman have taken over a number of their own companies. They managed both Benson and Tranwood before the companies merged.

● They have fiddled account figures so they seem to be profits when they are really losses, they have shifted around assets and revalued property when convenient.

And it's the same sort of people who are likely to benefit when the Government gives loans to private industry when workers have no control over how that money is spent.



The Houghton family

Family squat

BARRY HOUGHTON and his wife, Angela, were stuck in those terrible maisonettes in Belle Vale with four young children.

Barry has not worked in their year in Belle Vale because Angela could not cope alone with the children in a sixth floor maisonette.

Their 5-year-old daughter climbed on the balcony wall to show her friend she wouldn't be killed. The lifts don't work and the stairs are dark and dangerous for kids.

The couple were also worried about the awful damp. They knew that four babies had died of pneumonia and they weren't having their eight-month old boy becoming the fifth.

So Barry and Angela decided to do something about it, instead of just moaning to the corpy and getting nowhere. They bought the "Squatters Handbook" (10p) to check they did everything properly. Then moved into an empty house in nearby Donhead Mews.

Number 20 had been empty about six weeks. But the front door was easily opened because there was no letterbox. The electricity board turned everything on and they got the gas man to read the meter.

Two council men did call. But because Angela and Barry knew their rights there was no problem.

Apart from being careful with people at the door, life is back to normal. "We're better off down here," says Barry. "Now I can go out and know that the kids are safe."

Angela reckons there are lots of women in Belle Vale who would go squatting, but their husbands are holding back.

She thinks the council will go to court to get them out. But she's not worried. "We won't give up. We know that there's other houses empty."

We asked Angela what she would say to anybody who blamed them for jumping the housing queue. "They should try and do something about it as well," she replied.

Bear Brand

(Continued from page 1)

than monetary value. During the last six months this has proved to be very true.

Less than twelve months ago, the Government gave Bear Brand a £350,000 loan. Most of this disappeared within months on debts, and only £30,000-£40,000 was spent on badly-needed machinery.

Then, last October, there was a boardroom upheaval and the chairman, Mr P. Rougier, left.

He was replaced by two men, Mr Mervyn Smith, a 'professional managing director or company doctor', and Mr Ken Medlock, who had just been pushed out as the leading man at the Birkenhead Co-op. He is also

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