

Sayers

black any firm who tried to supply flour or goods to the bakery. Since then Sayers directors have used 'one-man cowboys' to transport flour from miles away. And they have ordered supplies from firms in London and Norfolk, well away from the influence of the dock stewards. The Sayers men have been able to continue their strike for so long because of substantial donations from workers on Merseyside. Before the AUEW started their levy, the Sayers men received about £1,200 - which was mainly used for the pickets' travelling and other expenses, and to pay for their leaflets.

MPTE AUEW section £145, Unigate Aintree depot £80, Teaching Hospital site £25, a 50p a head levy from Knowsley Maintenance Depot, Westvale, and numerous other smaller sums. Sayers have still managed to keep their shops well stocked, but sometimes they have had to pay other firms to produce for them. And some days certain lines such as sausage rolls disappear from the shelves. Certainly their costs have shot up. Naturally a dispute lasting over four months has taken its toll on the twenty sacked men, who have had to keep up a daily picket of the factory. Two men have dropped out, while lack of money has caused tensions at home amongst others. But whatever the eventual result, the outstanding feature has been the level of support from other workers on Merseyside.

Some of the larger donations were: Ince Power Station £200, Liverpool Port dock stewards' committee £100, Triumph No 2 Plant £80 and a £23 weekly levy by EPTU members there, Triumph No 1 Plant £100, Dunlop T&G £80, Otis Elevators £130,

No benefit for sacked men

BOILERMAKERS sacked from the 'Mary Elizabeth' ship are still without unemployment benefit even though one of the men has won what was regarded as a test-case at a National Insurance tribunal.

John Morris, from Southport Road, Bootle, successfully appealed against being classified as a striker (and so being disqualified from benefit).

He was among the 106 boiler-makers sacked by IPI (UK) Ltd last October when one man refused to carry out management instructions. The 'Mary Elizabeth' was being converted into a floating chemical factory at West Gladstone dock, Seaforth.

The tribunal obviously accepted that Mr Morris was not involved in the dispute and was so entitled to benefit.

However, National Insurance officials now say they intended to appeal against the decision. And it was only because of a "clerical error" that they did not.

They are using this as an excuse for still treating the other boiler-

makers as strikers.

And yet the Bootle employment exchange advised some of the men not to appeal because a test-case which would settle things was due to come up soon.

Some men are existing on £7.50 a week "exceptional needs" payments, while others can claim only for their families.

Mr Alexander Wadkin, aged 59, is one of those living on £7.50. He has to re-apply for payment every week.

The rent for his home in Burrell Street, Everton, is £2.25. He buys oranges and two ounces of tobacco on a Saturday. He eats mainly out of tins and never goes out. And, at his age, his chances of another job are very slim.

There is no end in sight to the 'Mary Elizabeth' dispute at the moment. IPI say the project is unique and unusual working arrangements should apply. The boiler-makers insist they must work as usual.

Doreen's ban on 'nasty' leaflets

DOREEN JONES would agree that abortion is a woman's right to choose. But as chairman of the Liverpool's Highways and Environment Committee, she also seems to think that it is her right to choose exactly where and how the public are informed about the issue.

"I know what the people of Merseyside want," she said.

The women's movement on Merseyside would beg to differ. For the last two years they have had a stall in the city centre on International Women's Day.

This year they had to do it unofficially. Mrs Jones, using her delegated powers, informed them that the committee would object to them using any of the pedestrian areas of the city for distributing literature about the Women's Movement on Merseyside.

She was replying to the women's application to use the bottom of Bold Street. Previously they had asked to use Church Street but were told it was being paved. They also enquired about Williamson Square and discovered another organisation

had booked it for that day.

Mrs Jones considers the use of public pedestrian areas for the distribution of information on abortion to be "cheap and nasty".

"It's a personal thing and not something to be sniggered and laughed at in the street," she said.

She claims to have received complaints from the public after last year's events which provided street theatre and information on the Equal Pay Act, and women's rights as well as abortion.

"And what about the shop-keepers?" she said. Had they complained? "No, not to me personally, but I'm sure they don't like it."

When asked if she would be willing to appear on local radio to discuss the issue with a member of the Women's Group, Mrs Jones said: "I won't have abortion made into a cheap and nasty thing like that."

Members of the Highways and Environment Committee only discovered that the Women's Group had been refused permission when they were handed copies of the letter by a representative of the group at a committee meeting.

As a result the Labour members said they would move, at the next meeting, that the delegated powers of the chairman be suspended. This can do little more than register their disapproval, as the Tories are almost certain to side with the Liberals when it comes to the vote.

City landlord named in £5m fraud inquiry

FORMER LIVERPOOL landlord James Standfield Wade was the middle man in a £5 million fraud.

Wade was a director of Standfield Properties, which owned over 3,300 homes in Liverpool.

Over a year ago this firm collapsed with its accounts in chaos and debts of over £10 million.

Now a Department of Trade inquiry has shown that one reason for this is that Wade was a party to a highly secret and fraudulent deal.

His company indirectly lent £5 million to two top men from London and County Securities, a banking group.

No security was given and there was never any chance that this money would be re-paid.

In fact the two men, Mr Gerald Caplan and Mr Trevor Pepperell (also a director of Standfield) only used this money in a desperate bid to cover up a series of fraudulent transactions.

Standfield tenants soon realised they were merely pawns in a money-making scheme as the company extracted every penny they could from their empire of terraced houses.

But the inquiry into London and County (Liberal leader Jeremy Thorpe was a director) shows that even Wade was a fairly minor player in a much larger game being played by the banking group.

In Liverpool this game started in 1969, when London and County bought the huge Realmdeal estate.

The directors had little interest in the properties and even less in the tenants. They only wanted to use the estate as a tax-saving scheme.

Still they had to have someone to run it, so they asked Mr Wade. In 1971 Wade formed Standfield Ltd and took over all the properties, with London and County providing nearly all the finance.

Property empire a tax dodge

His fellow director was Mr Pepperell, the man who controlled London and County behind the scenes.

During this property boom period Wade bought more properties and by August 1973 had an overdraft of £4 million with London and County.

By now, however, the end was near. London and County's massive structure was built on clay, with its profit figures being 'cooked' by the directors.

And the directors had found a simple way of keeping their share price high. They used London and County funds to buy London and County's own shares when the prices dropped, so pushing the share price back up again.

Naturally you can't do this sort of thing openly.

So London and County lent various individuals and companies a total of £3.5 million to buy 17% of London and County's own shares.

Then there was panic. The auditor found out about their fraudulent little scheme.

So Pepperell and Caplan started buying back these shares. This operation cost £5 million, as they paid up to double the real price.

But it didn't cost Pepperell a penny. He was simply given a £5 million overdraft by London and County.

Nothing had changed. London and

County had merely paid even more money for shares they indirectly owned already.

This meant that the directors had to disguise it. And this is where Standfield appears in the giant fraud.

Wade agreed to increase Standfield's loan from London and County by £5 million (they were now £9 million in debt). And then, by a very complex route, gave the money to Pepperell.

Pepperell got the money and paid off his £5 million overdraft just before London and County collapsed.

The point about this enormous fraud is that it didn't involve just a few crooked individuals. In Liverpool the future of thousands of homes was affected when Standfield went bust.

More importantly, banking groups like London and County helped to create the property boom by lending vast sums to property companies.

In the rush to buy, house prices jumped fantastically. The property companies benefited by this price rise, and so did the banks as their loans seemed secure.

The people who were hit were tenants.

All over the country there were companies like Standfield trying to cash in on the surge in house prices. Standfield tried to force out tenants, so they could sell the houses or divide them into numerous flats to increase their rents.

This created fear and hardship amongst tenants young and old. Fortunately many resisted Standfield's rough tactics.

"We want to empty all the tenants from the houses. You would be surprised how stubborn some of the older ones are. They have been there for years and refuse to move out," said Mrs Wade at the time.

Private hospital plan for dockland

A GROUP of opportunists are hoping to cash in on the failings of the National Health Service by opening a private hospital in Kirkdale, Liverpool.

The shabby offices at Nilpac House, Derby Road, are to be turned into a general hospital, with 80 beds, full operating theatres, X-ray facilities, and out-patient clinics. It will cater particularly for occupational health and hygiene cases.

The publicity material is gleeful about the proposed cuts in health spending in Liverpool.

"Suggestions of the closure of a number of state hospitals in the city give a new fillip to the proposals, which will be exclusively financed and operated independently."

Their publicity suggests a major company is promoting the scheme. They talk of their "Department of Occupational Health and Environmental Studies" as though it was a kind of university. They say the company is manned by specialist staff and mention the "Director of Surveys and Studies".

The truth is somewhat less impressive.

The company is in fact Unity Medical Services Ltd, a small private company with offices in Castle Moat House, Fenwick Street, Liverpool. The records at Companies House show no accounts have yet been filed.

There are two directors, Claude Birks, of Rocky Mountain House, Mill Lane, Aughton, and Dr Mary Louise McCulloch, of 84 Victoria Road, Formby.



The proposed private hospital

A few years ago this small firm was trying to make money from private medicine by giving pregnancy tests and advice, but now they seem to have decided there's more to be made from ill health at work.

The have persuaded G.R. Athelley, professor of Safety and Hygiene at Aston University to act as their consultant to give status to the

company. But most of the medical 'specialist staff' will be NHS doctors and consultants earning extra money on the side.

The National Health Service is totally inadequate in this field of occupational health, industrial hygiene and safety. And while this situation exists, more and more opportunists will see this as a profitable area to exploit.

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