

BARNES LUMPS IT —AND LIKES IT

SPECULATIVE builder Derek Barnes started with a piece of land and planning permission for two bungalows. That was less than 15 years ago. Today he is worth at least £8m.

Clearly Barnes, who builds hundreds of houses on Merseyside, isn't hard up for a penny or two. In the last four years he has waived his right to £1,135,452 in dividends.

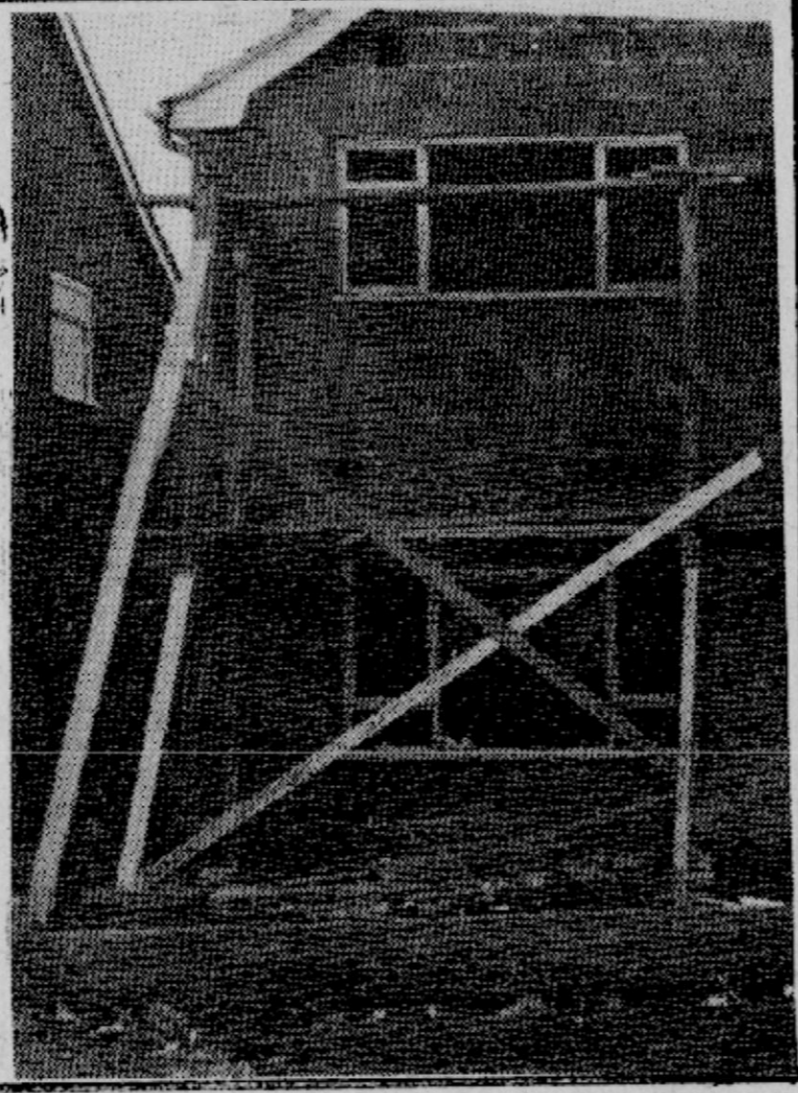
The profits of his company, Northern Developments, have rocketed from £147,453 in 1966 to £2.8 m last year.

He is worshipped by city financiers, who have seen his shares jump 400% in four years, admired by fellow employers... and hated by trade unionists.

In his relentless drive to cut costs and reap extra profits, he rarely recognises trade unions, and operates the notorious lump system. Lump labour is cheap labour. Employers avoid paying insurance and holiday stamps and a regular weekly wage by taking workers on a self-employed basis, where they receive a fixed sum for a certain job.

Employers such as Barnes are one of the reasons why UCATT are holding a selective strike in support of their claim for £30 for a 35 hour week. Construction workers know

While building workers are striking for a wage of £30 a week most construction firms are reaping vast profits. Here we show how one man is making a fortune by attacking trade unions — especially the Union of Construction Allied Trades and Technicians (UCATT).



Right: A house on the Aintree site

the lump will never disappear until there is a realistic basic wage in the industry.

The working conditions at Field Lane, Aintree, where Barnes is building 1,000 private houses, show some of the evils of the lump system.

There his company uses about 30 construction workers — an astonishingly low number considering the size of the site.

For workers on the lump speed is all important. The faster they work the more they earn — and safety gets neglected.

On the Aintree site Barnes doesn't provide steel scaffolding. Instead labourers knock together wooden structures for the bricklayers. Some of this shaky wooden scaffolding is over 20 feet high. What's more, builders almost certainly use the 'over-hand' technique where they lean over the inside section of a wall to lay bricks on the outside.

Both these practices are condemned by safety officers and are illegal on sites where men are employed in the normal way. However these regulations do not apply to

self-employed people — and as all lump workers are technically their own boss, Barnes can escape the law.

It is conditions such as these which explain why the building industry has one of the highest accident rates. From 1970 to 1971, 203 building workers were killed at work, and 39,823 accidents were reported.

Barnes even flouts the Conservatives' own Industrial Relations Code of Practice which wants "the vital role of collective bargaining carried out in a reasonable and constructive manner between employers and strong representative trade unions." Union officials from UCCAT have been turned away by the site agent at Aintree.

These methods are beneficial to only one person... Barnes himself. He keeps his wage bill and his costs low by using a system of employment which strikes at trade unionism.

And his tactics are proving successful. At present he has 3,500 houses under construction, but he only directly employs 247 people. And he has made enough profit to build up a store of 25,000 empty building plots, worth over £12m.



In Helsinki a blind man was sent to prison for four months for driving while under the influence of drink.



In Ethiopia, a man chatting to a friend in the street happened to remark: "It's a rotten government." He was immediately arrested. "But I never said which government," the man protested as he was dragged off. "No good," replied the State Security man — "There's only one rotten government, and you know it."



'The way to instant saintliness' (by means of an electric halo) has been revealed by an army chaplain at Aldershot, the Rev John Fail. The device consists of a two-way mirror in front of his prayer desk. When he kneels on a switch concealed in the cushion, the mirror lights up and a halo shines through and surrounds his reflection.

Overheard

In case you're wondering what they talked about at the 31st World Congress of the International Planning and Housing Federation at the Philharmonic Hall the other week, here's one bit we overheard. The Lord Mayor of Liverpool is talking to Mr V.R. Nielsen, President of the Federation:

His Worship: 'I hear you are Danish.'

President: 'Yes, I am from Copenhagen.'

His Worship: 'I love your bacon. I eat it every morning.'

Hurrah!

HOTTEST transatlantic news on Tiny Mac's £7,000 whistle-stop job-hunting Mission To America — quoted from the 'Progress Report' of the Industrial Development Unit of the Corporation: "Out of five American companies who have visited Liverpool, two [yes, two!] which are small [not large?] engineering companies are likely [or perhaps not?] to settle on the periphery [where's that?] of Merseyside." * Our italics.

Press distorts Kirkby feud report again

RESIDENTS of Burnard Crescent, Kirkby, who for more than a year have been battling to clear their names before the Press Council, have heard the verdict. But whether the public have been able to get the facts straight on the matter is another question.

The struggle followed articles in the Kirkby Reporter, Daily Mail and News of the World about an alleged feud between families in the street.

The Press Council has now upheld complaints against the News of the World and Daily Mail, but has exonerated the Kirkby Reporter.

Mrs Pat Smeda decided last September to buy a terraced house in Toxteth from Standfield Properties (alias Realmdeal). Now the Smeda family are regretting the day they ever moved in.

For they are trapped in a small, damp, unmodernised house, worth about £900 (according to corporation officials) for which they promised to pay £1,800.

And what's worse, they are unable to obtain a loan for their 25% share of an improvement grant because of the exorbitant price of the house.

The corporation would normally provide the Smedas with a loan,

especially as their house is in a general improvement area. But they only allow an owner-occupier to borrow money amounting to the difference in value between the un-modernised and the modernised house.

The corporation valuers say the Smedas' house in Cairns Street will be worth only £1,300 when fully improved. (One housing expert says he has never known a terraced house in the area sell for more than £1,500).

Shattered

As the value of the house, when improved, will be at least £300 less than the massive £1,800 charged for the unimproved house by Standfields, the corporation are unable to lend the Smedas money for their share of the grant.

So the Smedas' dream of having their own modernised home has been shattered because Standfield/Realmdeal sold them a house for about twice its worth.

Within two weeks of seeing the tempting advert in the Echo, offering the two-bedroomed house at £100 deposit and monthly repayments of £18.50, the Smedas moved in.

They left a four-bedroomed corporation flat in Speke, because they were so eager for their own home.

No cash price was quoted in the advert, Standfields suggested a solicitor to handle the deal, and, says Mrs Smeda, she was assured by a Standfield employee there would be no complications over obtaining an improvement grant.

Fortunately Mrs Smeda has not yet signed the contract to pay the £1,800 (which is spread over 15 years at an interest rate of over 8%). Recently she went to the Housing Aid Centre, Granby Street, and they found her a new solicitor, warned her not to sign the agreement and to stop paying Standfields £18.50 a month, as they considered the price excessive.

But because the Smedas were given vacant possession the family have nowhere to go. They are trapped.

Mrs Smeda said: "I don't know what to do. We have already paid the deposit, and spent over £100 on repairs. We can't afford the deposit on another house.

"There is little chance of the corporation rehousing us at the moment. I suppose we will just have to be evicted from here."

Money-spinning

Mrs Smeda also claims that Realmdeal have failed to do several repairs, such as improving water pressure and the electrical wiring, which they agreed to do.

● Note: The history of the Smedas' house, 19 Cairns Street: shows the money-spinning activities of Standfield, who bought the house as one of a massive block for £750,000. The cost of each house was about £300. They then persuaded the sitting tenant to move out by giving him £300. If they had sold it for £1,800 they would have made a profit of £1,200, not counting any repairs.

Stanfield sell home at twice its value

The petition is the latest move by angry residents of the South end of the city—particularly those in the Dingle area—against a plan which could mean millions of tons of raw sewage being dumped on their doorsteps.

WEEKLY NEWS.

If you thought conversions happened in rugby, not soccer, you'll have to think again. There are five evangelical football teams in the south of England who play 'to convert their opponents'. And if you want to play for them there may be a transfer hitch. Players first have to sign a declaration, "I confess that I have accepted Jesus Christ as my Saviour and will play for His glory on the pitch." Sceptical opponents are wondering if He will come again to collect any trophies the teams win.



Several of the star acrobats perished when a gale force wind blew during a performance of Professor Tomalin's Flea Circus at the Midland Steam Fair.

ULSTER Secretary Mr William Whitelaw's 24-year-old daughter Mary, last night announced her engagement to Mr David Coltman, aged 9, BEA's cargo sales manager in London.

Liverpool Daily Post,

The Chancellor of the Exchequer won a ready reckoner in a tombola at a Conservative fete in Cheshire.



As a £60,000 yacht was tying up at Poole harbour, Dorset, an empty car ran off the quay and crashed onto the deck. Commented the owner of the damaged yacht: "I had just cancelled a trip to France after a gale warning."