

STANDARD WORKERS STRIKE COMMITTEE

STATEMENT

Standard Workers have withdrawn their labour as a result of a calculated attack by the Management, designed to smash the 100% Trade Union Organisation in the Combine.

The Management have :-

Indefinitely suspended 9 members who were carrying out the decision of a gang of 200 workers The decision was not to handle certain work in dispute, and which was at that time under negotiation... .. By their action they violated an Agreement between Union and Management i.e. Para 5. Section "A" Procedure Agreement reads :-

" An employee or employees desiring to raise any question regarding wages or working conditions with which he or they are directly concerned shall discuss the matter with the section Shop Steward on the line, who shall endeavour to arrive at a settlement with the foreman of that section ".

For implementing this clause a Steward - Mr. Danny Morgan - was sacked. Following this dismissal there was a spontaneous stoppage.

Clause 'C' of the Procedure Agreement states :-

" Failing settlement under the foregoing procedure a Works Conference shall be arranged"

The Management failed to do this, and told the Shop Steward Executive Committee that negotiations would not take place until the Steward concerned (Mr. Danny Morgan) was off the ground.

The Chairman and Secretary of the Shop Stewards Committee - Mr. Bill Warman and Mr. Gordon Wright - together with the section stewards addressed a section of the workers already on strike, to give a report of events.

After this meeting the Secretary of the Shop Stewards Committee - Mr. Gordon Wright - was dismissed. He received his cards by registered post on Christmas Day. Four days later two section stewards were dismissed in a similar manner, the only pretext being that they had attended this meeting.

Trade Unions having membership at the Company and signatories to the Agreement are:-
T.&G.W.U., A.E.U., N.U.S.M., N.U.V.B., U.P.M.A., N.S.M.M., N.F.B.T.O.
E.T.U., B.S.M.W., A.S.W.

Signed:- L. ELLIOTT.

Secretary-Standard Strike Committee

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DETAILS OF EVENTS LEADING TO DISPUTE AT THE STANDARD MOTOR COMPANY LTD.

STATEMENT BY SHOP STEWARDS

Wednesday morning, a load of exhaust pipes was taken to Maudslay Road. D. Morgan, the Steward of Maudslay was approached by Hall the Steward of Fletchamstead, where the work had always been done. He felt that it was unreasonable to transfer this work.

Mr. Hanson, the Superintendent was approached by D. Morgan and Hall. He agreed with the point of view of the Stewards but said that the order had come from a higher authority. After discussion, he agreed to arrange a meeting with Mr. Durand, the Manager. This did not take place, and a further meeting with Mr. Hanson took place, this time with the Shop Steward and Chargehand of the job, who pointed out the technical difficulties.

Smallness of booths which would entail spraying 8ft. outside of booth. Interference with normal work at Maudslay, and shortage of labour. Two other Chargehands substantiated this. Mr. Hanson replied by saying that Fletchamstead were inundated with work and could not do the job.

On receiving this information, D. Morgan agreed to ask the department to co-operate, bearing in mind the question of payment, as the job would take ten days to do at Maudslay, whereas it only took one at Fletchamstead, plus the disorganisation that would be caused to other work.

At the normal weekly meeting of Fletchamstead workers, the men on the spraying section explained to the men that they could easily cope with this work, in fact they had asked for exhaust pipe work that morning.

Arising from that, the Fletchamstead workers 160, agreed to ask Maudslay not to do this work, to place the matter in dispute. D. Morgan held a meeting at Maudslay with J. Millward, a Steward from Fletchamstead, and the Maudslay Road men unanimously agreed to support the decision. Mr. Hanson was then informed that the job was in dispute.

The same day, Wednesday, the Stewards met the Works Manager of Spares and other representatives of the Management. A deadlock was reached.

At 8.30 on Thursday, the Stewards approached Mr. Durand and stated that they had investigated the job thoroughly and were convinced the job could be done at Fletchamstead more easily and quickly. The Stewards suggested that the job should be sent back, and they would endeavour to get it done speedily. Mr. Durand promised to look into the suggestion.

The next event occurred when the Personnel Executive, Mr. Hedley, got in contact with Mr. G. Wright, Convenor, by 'phone. Mr. Wright ascertained the position from the Stewards and reported back to Mr. Hedley that he thought it was a "storm in a teacup" and could easily be resolved by a quick meeting. Mr. Hedley agreed to this. The meeting took place on Thursday afternoon. Mr. Buckman, the General Works Manager, was in attendance, and opened the meeting. He said that he would not discuss the details of the case. The men had failed to carry out Management instructions; this must be rectified. The Steward had usurped Management authority by telling the men not to do this work.

The Convenor, Wright, replied that by custom and practice where a job was placed in dispute, status quo should be maintained whilst the matter went through procedure. On the question of a Steward telling men not to work he asked what Steward had done this. Mr. Buckman did not know. The Superintendent stated that the Management had not told them to do so, to which Wright replied—"That is obvious." The Steward, D. Morgan then stated that the decision was a collective one of the men and not his. The Management then withdrew the allegation pending further enquiries.

The Convenor asked to be allowed to put the trade union point of view on the matter in dispute. Mr. Buckman was not prepared to listen, stating that he knew the facts. It was pointed out that was only from one side. He still refused to agree and stated that he was instructing the Foreman to instruct the men to do this work. The Convenor said that by doing this in his opinion the Company would be precipitating a dispute. The men had never failed to carry out a reasonable instruction, but had the right when they considered an instruction to be unreasonable, to place the matter in dispute.

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No agreement could be reached. Later on that afternoon, the instruction was given. The men refused claiming the issue was in dispute. They were then given pass-outs with indefinite suspension written on them. Once again, custom and practice had not been observed, as there had been no consultation on disciplinary action. The first man to be suspended asked for the Shop Steward to be present, but this was refused. On hearing of the suspensions, the men at Maudslay Road ceased work. At this stage, D. Morgan collected pass-outs from the suspended men, approached Mr. Hanson and said that in view of the serious position in the shop he wished to discuss the suspensions. Mr. Hanson said that he was not prepared to discuss the suspensions and asked that the pass-outs be returned to the men. The Steward then returned the pass-outs to the suspended men, and informed the Steward (B. Hall) at Fletchamstead of the position at Maudslay Road, and was later informed that Fletchamstead had stopped work.

At 5 p.m. D. Morgan was sent for by Mr. Hanson, and with a representative of the gang went along to find Mr. Hedley present. Mr. Hanson said he understood that the Steward wished to discuss the suspensions. Morgan said that was so, but he could not do so as it was now out of working hours and he had other business to attend to, and furthermore, he requested that the other Stewards should be present. Mr. Hedley then asked what time the Stewards would be present in the morning, and on being told of the time by the Steward, this Meeting terminated.

Shortly after 8 a.m., D. Morgan was sent for and went along with three representatives of the gang to find the Section Management present, with Mr. Buckman, who said that he wanted to discuss Morgan's action in relation to the suspensions. The Steward said he could not do so without a representative of the Union present. Mr. Buckman said there was no question of this being allowed. He then asked Morgan to accept a discharge note for usurping Management's authority. Morgan returned to the Shop and informed the men, who then decided they would leave the grounds if the Steward did. This they did at 12 p.m. In the meanwhile G. Wright had been contacted and went to Maudslay Road with other Members of the E.C. A Meeting took place of the men who decided that if Morgan was put off the ground they would follow. The E.C. then met Mr. Buckman and told him of the decision, also stating in their view the Steward had acted right.

Mr. Buckman refused to accept this, and said there could be no negotiations until Morgan was off the ground. The Meeting then broke up. Wright and Warman (Chairman, Shop Stewards), then went to Fletchamstead where the men had stopped work, and a meeting was in progress. They addressed that meeting, then went back to Canley.

At 12 noon Wright was sent for. He took the A.E.U. Convenor with him. Mr. Buckman said "You are dismissed for holding and addressing a Meeting at Fletchamstead." Dismissal notice was given at 12.25 before works finished at 12.30. Cards, money, etc. were delivered Xmas Day.