

B. M. C. STRIKE.

After weeks of gathering crisis in Britain's car industry, the Great Strike is on - but on the first day, thousands are still walking past the pickets at the factories of the British Motor Corporation, the giant Morris and Austin combine whose sacking of 6,000 workers led to the strike. In spite of this half-and-half beginning, the unions claim that the key sections are out, and that a few days will bring the B.M.C. factories to a standstill. To convince the wavurers, union leaders address open-air meetings.

One word sums up the crisis - the progressive step - Automation. These pictures filmed in one of Britain's biggest factories before the dispute came to a head, give us a preview of the future. Cylinder blocks being produced by machines, which need fewer and fewer men to work them. The great problem of today is - what to do about the men who are no longer needed? And although the crisis has been approaching for many months, the problem remains unsolved.

Non-strikers leaving the huge Austin factory at Longbridge get a slow hand-clap from the pickets, and here and there, feeling runs high. The unions, claiming reinstatement or compensation, for the sacked 6,000, blame the Corporation for not talking it over beforehand. The employers defend their right to "hire or fire" and say any redundancy agreement must be made at national level. Meanwhile, our foreign competitors rub their hands. Someone must start negotiating - and soon!