

Whaling	
Strikes	
No.	90.

C.S.

S. M. South Georgia

SUBJECT.

1919

30 January

Previous Paper.

Strike of employees of South Georgia
Whaling Company -
(December 1918)

MINUTES.

Copy sent to Sec of State in dispatch
no. 24 of 19th Feb 1919.

[Signature]
19.2.19

File

Subsequent Paper.

92/19

S. G. 19/19.

90/19.



Magistrate's Office,

South Georgia.

3rd January, 1919.

Sir,

I have the honour to report that on the 17th December, 1918, the men employed on the South Georgia Company's Station at Leith Harbour struck work for terms similar to those demanded by the strikers at Stromness Harbour, a report on which has been forwarded to you. In this case no intervention was asked for by the Manager, the matter being settled ~~between~~ himself and the strikers. The outcome was practically a repetition of what occurred at Stromness Harbour with the exception that the strikers gave way on one or two of the minor points.

I have attached a translated copy of the correspondence carried on between the Manager and the Strikers.

I have the honour to be,

Sir,

Your obedient Servant,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "W. Barlas".

Stipendiary Magistrate.

The Honourable

The Colonial Secretary,

S T A N L E Y .

C.S.O.
90/19

From the workmens committee to the manager Mr. Hansen.

(Translation from Norwegian.)

15/12 - 1918.

All the workmen hereby apply for a rise of wages and the agreements altered. - We demand the original agreements handed over and a new one made out for every man, - the paragraph about higher wages obtained by strike to be put out of force, - the agreement to terminate after 7 months or on the 20th of June 1919 - and the same period for all hands.

We demand a guarantee of 80000 barrels and a minimum wage for labourers of 80 kroner a month and 2 øre a barrel.

The steepest prices must necessarily be cut down, so the company will not have more than 10% profit. - And we want pass-books for every man.

We also want the men, who are in custody at King Edward Cove, released.

We expect your answer to the committee not later than 6 o'clock on Monday night 16/12 -18. - Strike will break out on Tuesday 17/12 -18 at 6 a.m., if this petition is not sanctioned.

Signed by the workmens committee,

Leith Harbour.

Julius Jacobsen, Manuel Fernandes, David Serebrenik, Georg Henr. Arens, John Leepin, Waldemar Poulsen, Antonio Grillo, Miguel Grosheff, Frans Nordberg.

From 50 tradesmen and labourers to the manager.
(Translation from Norwegian)

At a meeting on the 16th inst., we the undersigned (tradesmen and labourers) decided - that, in case of strike - we will have nothing whatever to do with it.

(Signed by 50 tradesmen and labourers)

Georg Antell, R.Gjessing, Carl Jensen, J.N.Iversen, Martin Nilsen, Anton Olsen, H.Guljord, J.Stenvall, Robert Mathisen, J.A.Magnussen, Anders Jørgensen, Mathias Hansen, G.F.Hansen, J.L.Nilsen, Richard Mikkelsen, Daniel Carlson, Jak Luik, Alfred Eliassen, Adolf M.Lie, Per H.Krona, John Tryg, Einar Strand, Johan Rastad, Johan Jansen, Johan Amundsen, Joh.A.Allum, Magnus Liljedahl, Anton Johannessen, Sigurd Hotvedt, Jacobus Veldhoen, Severin Olaussen, Anton Nilsen, Arne Andreassen, Bernhard Berntsen, Ole Christiansen, Charles Islin, Ludvig Allum, Vaseliy Lisenko, Gustav Andresen, Adolf Ramn, Reidar Berg, Hjalmar Olsen, Sverre Olafsen, Anders Johansen Sand, Carl Thorssen, Einar F.Hansen, Olaf O.Forsberg, Gustaf Pettersson, Lars C.Larsen, Lorents P.Larsen.

From the manager Mr. Hansen
to the workmen.
(Translation from Norwegian)

Leith Harbour, S. G. Monday 16th Decbr. 1918.

In answer to a letter of yesterday, pretending to come from the whole body of workmen, we beg to remark:

We can make no alterations of the agreement in the tendency asked for. There is no reasonable cause for this. We are quite confident that nobody has been tricked to sign the company's agreement. And the agreements contain no statements, that are not plain to everybody. Not one of the statements will be disaffirmed by a court of justice.

Respecting the demands for higher wages, the writer ~~does~~ doubts his authority to meet these demands. The wages here are not lower than on other stations on this island, the contrary is rather the case. I think I have reached the limit in granting a minimum earning of 150 kroner per month for labourers at 50 kroner and $1\frac{1}{2}$ øre.

What regards the slopchestprices, we can do nothing with them, prices being fixed by the office in Leith.

You complain of the prices, though we hear from relyable sources, that they are very much lower than at home. - We have often thought of introducing pass-books, seeing that it would be both useful and convenient. Still we have been reluctant to introduce the system, knowing that a rather considerable increase of officework would be the consequence. We have tryed to remedy this by keeping

From the manager M. Hansen
to the workmen.

.2.

16th Decbr. 1918.

the office open for inquiries. And - we have always had the impression that nobody ever had any suspicion whatever, that his slopchest account was not just as correct for this reason. This confidence is as a matter of course completely established. The reform cannot be introduced at present for the simple reason, that we have not got the necessary suitable books.

It is beyond our power to release the men in prison at King Edward Cove before their time is up. This is in the hands of the British Authorities, and we can do nothing.

We cannot conclude this w/out most urgently advising all workmen to do their duty and separately fullfill their agreements. This is to the mutual interest of the company and the workmen. It is a loss to all if only one man fails. - We have got outfit and stores of all kinds sent out - we are not in want of anything and we are numerous enough to utilize the chances. We therefore place it to the workmen most earnestly to add your goodwill.

Most respectfully

(Signed) L. H. Hansen.

From the workmen
to the manager.
(Translation from Norwegian)

16/12 - 1918.

We hereby give our answer,

S T R I K E,

excepted are ~~those~~ the men working the electric
light and those preparing the food.

Strike commences

Tuesday morning 17/12 -1918 at 6 o'clock.

Most respectfully

(Signed)

Julius Jacobsen, Valdemar Poulsen, Frans Nördberg
Miguel Grosheff, Georg Henrik Arens, David Serebrenik
Manuel Fernandes, Antonio Grillo, John Leepin.

Leith Harbour.

From "The Workmens Committee"
to the manager, Mr. Hansen.
(Translation from Norwegian)

19/12-1918.

The manager Mr. Hansen,

The committee has called together all the workmen to discuss the managers verbal answer to the committee. It was unanimously decided to insist on a rise of wages of 30 kroner per month and bonus ^{of} $\frac{1}{2}$ øre per barrel oil and a ^u guarantee of 80000 barrels of oil for all strikers. The men who do not join the strike may apply to the manager. It is also unanimously decided to go on with the work until the 20th of June and that we then will be sent to Buenos Aires, Montevideo or Rio Janeiro.

We leave to the manager Mr. Hansen to deal after his own judgement with the labourers in custody at King Edward Cove and ~~the~~ the men, that will not work at any wage. It is also unanimously agreed upon, that we are to have a new agreement, but we give the manager permission to put on this agreement, the paragraph about the working ~~hours~~ hours also stating, that if a man neglects his work without reason, he may be fined $\frac{1}{2}$ months wages and later one months wages and so on till he loses all what is due to him.

Regarding the slopchest, we still hold to our first demand, that the company shall lower the prices, so the profit does not exceed 10 procent.

We will not resume work before we have received the new agreements and the old ones are returned to every man.

Most respectfully

The workmens Committee.

Julius Jacobsen, Valdemar Paulsen, Georg Henrik Arens, John Leepin,
David Serebrenik, Miguel Grosheff, Frans Nordberg, Antonio Grillo,
Manuel Fernandes.)

From the manager to the workmen.
(Translation from Norwegian)

Leith Harbour, South Georgia, 20th Decbr. 1918.

After our letter of the 16th inst. and your answer to it of the same date - that you would strike work on Tuesday morning - the work has now been at a standstill for 4 days.

Today we sent for the committee to learn how the affairs stand and requested you once more to discuss the situation with your comrades. - The result is your letter of today (by mistake dated 19th).

As it appears evident to us, that there are so many backing these demands, that the station could not be worked without their help, we are forced to give in partly.

The wages for labourers will be raised 30 kroner per month and the bonus from $1\frac{1}{2}$ øre to 2 øre per barrel.

The agreement to terminate on the 20th of June 1919 and the ~~men~~ men, who want to leave then, will be landed in South America. As a matter of course, this date cannot be taken to the letter, but allowance must be given for a margin of at least a fourth night before or after.

We note that you allow the keeping up of the old agreements statement about the working hours and the punishment for staying away from work without reason. We also take it for granted that overtime has to be worked at the usual rate of pay.

All workmen will get their original agreements handed over and we find it sufficient to replace these with a plain note stating the new wages and bonus.

With regard to the slopchest we do not quite understand, what

your demands are. If there with the 10% profit is ment real net. profit, then we know for certain, that the present prices are too low. It must be brought to mind, that goods at present are almost unobtainable. But, we have given orders, that goods have to be bought at any price, as clothing in this climate is a most essential thing. The heavy freights and insurance should be taken into consideration to say nothing of the continued pilfering of goods.

But if the idea is that 10% only is to be added to the cost-prices, then it must be understood, that this would not by far cover expences, as loading, discharging, insurance etc. really are direct expences on the goods. These estimates are made by the office in Leith and cannot be rendered account of by us.

We expect to hear of a final arrangement tonight and that work will be resumed at usual hours tomorrow morning.

The office will make the new agreements ready tomorrow, and when they are handed out at night, we think this ought to satisfy.

Most respectfully

(Signed) L.H.Hansen.

From the workmens committee
to the manager.
(Translation from Norwegian)

(10/12)
20/12 - 1918.

In answer to your letter of the 20/12-1918:

We will ~~stop~~ resume work tomorrow morning 21/12-1918 at 6 o'clock.
if we get our new agreements tomorrow night.

We beg to remark, that the workmen, who formerly had 2 øre per barrel now are to have $2\frac{1}{2}$ øre per barrel and that the slopchest-prices may remain as they are.

We will strike work again if we do not get the new agreements tomorrow night.

Most respectfully

(Signed) The Workmens Committee.

From the Committee to the
manager Mr. Hansen.

(Translation from Norwegian)

To the manager M^r. Hansen,

The agreement is read to all work-men and approved of with the presupposition that the following will be added: Free passage to South America not later than 14 days after the termination of the agreement, - that it will be signed by the manager Mr. Hansen in his own writing and that the agreement will be delivered to every man before work is resumed.

The 21st of December 1918.

Most respectfully

The Committee.

From the crews of the whaling steamers to the manager, Mr. Hansen.
(Translation from Norwegian)

(Not dated)

The manager Mr. Hansen,

We, the crews of the whaling steamers, are of the opinion, that our wages are too low compared with the wages for the workmen ashore. We hereby send you our demands.

On the big whaling steamers 150 kroner a month and 8 kroner a head for all whales, a new agreement without the paragraph saying that wages, obtained by force of strike, will not be paid, that the slopchestprices ϕ will be lowered to 10%, and no work for the watch below while bunkering and no trimming in the bunkers and the agreement to terminate on the 20th of June 1919.

On the small whaling steamers, where the catch evidently is smaller than on the big ones, we ask for wages as ashore, 80kr. per month and 2 ϕ re per barrel and a guarantee of 80000 barrels

We demand an answer on saturday at 12 o'clock midday.

(Signed by 47 men of the crews.)

To 38 sailors on the Whaling
steamers from the manager.
(Translation from Norwegian)

Leith Harbour, S.G., Saturday 21st Decbr. 1918.

I hereby acknowledge the receipt of a letter of yesterday - from 38 men of the crews on the whaling steamers - to which letter an answer is demanded within 12 o'clock today .

On account of this, we cannot omit to draw attention to the impropriety of the fact that all crews already early this morning refused to shift their respective steamers to the bunkering place.

With regard to the demand about higher wages, I am forced to submit to this, namely, an addition of 70 kroner per month, from 80 kroner to 150 kroner ~~per month~~ and a ^{bonus} ~~bonus~~ on the whales of 8 kroner per whale generally instead of 6 kroner for hunchback, 7 kr. for fin- and 8 for blue-whales.

In my opinion the sailors should earn no less than the labourers ashore. They are therefore hereby granted as minimum wages the same as the labourers ashore since the last strike, namely 80 kroner per month and 2 øre per barrel oil and a ~~guarantee~~ guarantee of 80000 barrels for this season.

Regarding the complaints about the slopchestprices, we have ~~expl~~ explained, that this is due to a misunderstanding, whereafter the workmen ashore have dropped this question.

With respect to the bunkering of the whaling steamers, we admit, that the watch below ought to be spared as much as possible during the most busy time of the season. But if a steamer has been in harbour most of the night in order to get bunkers in the morning, then it is evident

To 38 sailors on the whaling
steamers from the manager.

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L.H., S.G., 21/12_1918.

that the watch below must work. While boilercleaning, for instance,
the sailors do not keep watch and must of course work. The decision
in each case is left to the gunner.

The term of the agreement will be limited to about the 20th
of June 1919 and departure will take place by first available ship.

Most respectfully

(Signed) L. H. Hansen.

From the stewards ~~to the manager~~ of the whaling steamers to the
manager. (Translation from Norwegian.)

(No date)

To the manager .

Sir,

The stewards of the whaling steamers
desire their bonus raised to 10 kroner a whale and the bonus
calculated after the average catch of the three best whaling
steamers and 200 kroner montly wages. - We expect your answer
by our return to port next time.

Most respectfully

(Signed by 6 stewards)

From the second engineers to the manager. (Translation from Norwegian)

(No date)

All the second engineers on the whaling steamers apply for a rise in their wages and bonus from the beginning of this season.

A rise of wages to 180 kroner per month and a bonus of 9 kroner per whale is proposed.

Most respectfully

(Signed by 9 second engineers)

Letter from workmen arrived by S/S Overdale 1/1-19, to the manager.
(Translation from Norwegian)

Leith Harbour 2/1 - 1919.

The undersigned workmen, who arrived at Leith Harbour the 1st January 1919, demand the old agreement renewed on the same conditions as the rest of the workmen, 80 kroner per month and 2 øre per barrel and a guarantee of ~~XXXXX~~ 80 thousand barrels of oil for a season.

But we are willing to remain till next season, 1920.

Most respectfully

(Signed by 23 workmen.)