

WASC 2073

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Newspaper article

' Scientists strike  
on pay '

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WA 10543

SCIENTISTS at Waltham Abbey's explosives research establishment walked out on strike on Wednesday to protest against their "poor" wages.

About 120 top-secret workers marched out of the Government-run Explosives Research and Development Establishment at midday bearing placards and posters. Then, while some stayed behind as pickets, the rest drove off to join hundreds of colleagues in a mass protest rally at Downing Street.

The strikers are members of the Institution of Professional Civil Servants. They were protesting at the delay by the Civil Service Department in answering their claim for an interim pay increase.

Scientists say that their salaries are 25 per cent. lower than they should be compared with people in other divisions of the service, particularly the executive division.

#### BEHIND

Mr. Geoffrey Williams, an official for the Institution at ERDE, said: "Negotiations have been going on for years and we have been falling behind all the time. Some people felt that this was not the right time to take action in view of the change of Government, but others decided that they had put up with the situation for long enough."

The main problem, said Mr. Williams, was that scientists were dissatisfied with the methods used to arrive at a suitable pay scale.

"Our officials have talked and talked," he said. "The Department seems willing to talk, but not willing to listen."

A young man with a scientific degree who takes a job as a junior scientific officer can expect a salary in the region of £1,318 a year, and Mr. Williams said that they should be entitled to at least £500 a year more.

#### RIDICULOUS

"The whole situation is ridiculous," he said. "Some of the younger chaps are working alongside less qualified people doing less responsible work, but who could be earning about £6 or £7 a week more."

This is the first time that the scientists have staged any national official action.



# 'poor' pay

6 March 1974.



Scientists walk out carrying placards.