

FORMER STORES MANAGER IS JAILED FOR £866 THEFT FROM FIRM

"A TRUSTED AND EFFICIENT
EMPLOYEE FOR 24 YEARS

A FORMER manager of Messrs. Suter's Ruislip branch was jailed for six months by Uxbridge Magistrates on Thursday for stealing £866 from the firm. The man, William Futcher (42), of Warwick-road, West Drayton, pleaded guilty to the charge of stealing £866 5s 9d between February 8, 1952, and January 9, 1953; and to charges of embezzling £2 10s on July 19, and of £1 5s on September 20.

Mr. J. McNaughten, prosecuting, said that Futcher had admitted taking the firm's money from as far back as October, 1951.

"He has been a trusted and efficient employee for 24 years," Mr. McNaughten stated, adding Futcher was made manager of the Ruislip branch when it was acquired by the firm in 1949. He was paid £500 a year, plus commission on turnover, which amounted to £183 the first year, £201 the second and £39 the third.

The directors of the company had no reason to believe there was anything wrong at the Ruislip branch until early this year. Acting on information from auditors, Mr. George Suter made inquiries and Futcher was interviewed. It appeared that instead of paying into the bank each night the whole of the day's takings from the branch, he had paid in less on one day and made up the balance on the next day's takings. The deficiency gradually developed.

It also appeared that in addition to a deficiency of £767 8s 11d on the cash takings, Futcher had drawn £26 6s 10d for National Insurance stamps and retained the money himself.

FRANK CONFESSION

When interviewed, Futcher explained that the missing money was in the safe at the Ruislip shop. He said he would pay it into the bank, but this was not done. He was suspended from duty and asked to hand over some National Insurance cards. He said they were at home and arranged to hand them over one evening at Ruislip station. This was arranged to save Futcher embarrassment.

At Ruislip station Futcher handed over a sealed envelope which was found to contain a full and frank confession of the matter. According to the letter, it was written at 4.30 a.m.

Futcher said to Mr. Suter: "I am very sorry for all this. I am afraid I have been a very wicked man. I am afraid that after all these years, sir, I have let you down."

Interviewed by Det.-con. Charles Spear, he admitted writing the letter. "It is a confession," he said.

NO RISE REQUEST

Mr. George Suter was cross-examined by Mr. Fearnley-Whittinghall, defending. He denied that Futcher would have known that at the beginning of his third year as manager his bonus would be adversely affected through falling prices. He said that he had found a receipt book taken from the bottom of a pile, which meant that Futcher had received money from customers which was not recorded in the firm's books. Futcher had never during the three years, asked for a rise in salary.

A testimony of Futcher's good character was given by Mr. Ian Norman Brevell, a Chertsey solicitor, who was Futcher's commanding officer in the Services during the war. For the defence, Mr. Whittinghall said that this was not a systematic attempt on Futcher's part to "keep up with the Joneses." Futcher had been forced to give up rented accommodation and buy a house with a mortgage, and he then found that his necessary expenditure exceeded his income by £20 a month.

"It is clear, therefore, that of this money £20 a month was used to bridge the gap," he said. The balance of about £630 had come about because it was the old story of a man who realised he had done wrong and hoped he had a certain amount of grace to put matters right. To do so he tried to make it up by football pools and dogs.

Futcher had thrown away his reputation and pension rights because he was "overwhelmed by pressure of economic," it was argued.

Said the chairman, Mr. L. F. Fogarty: "We can not do other than realise that this has been a persistent thing over a substantial period of time. We cannot regard his excuse." The sentence was on the larceny charge, the embezzlement charges being taken into consideration.

DIRECTORS HAD COAL OVER THE RATION

How the five directors of Peerless Fence and Products Ltd., of Harefield, ran a coal business as a side-line, and provided themselves with more than their ration of coal and anthracite was told to Uxbridge magistrates on Thursday, when each of the directors was fined £10 with £2 2s costs on each of two summonses for obtaining excess coal and anthracite.

The directors are Harry Atkinson, of Sandisplatt-road, Maidenhead; James McNally and James E. McNally, both of Winter Hill, Cookham, Berks; Charles Gibbons, of Sandy Lodge-way, Northwood; and Thomas Suter, of Harvil-road, Uxbridge.

Mr. D. J. Crisp, treasury solicitor, prosecuting, said that during 1951 and 1952 the directors obtained all their coal through their own company, with which they were registered. The coal business only supplied nine people—the five directors, and four other people who drew their correct ration of fuel.

A fuel enforcement officer started an investigation on September 13 last, and a check showed that each of the directors must have received more than their allocation. Each one had approximately two tons more coal and 15 hundredweight more anthracite.

For the defence, it was stated that the coal business was a small part of the company's activity, and that the directors had not acquainted themselves sufficiently with the necessary regulations about coal.

HOW MANY KNOW?

"I wonder how many people know what the coal ration is, anyway?" asked Mr. E. D. C. Langham, who represented all five directors. He added that the position was more complicated since certain types of coal had been taken off the ration. He stressed that two of the directors had since applied for a licence to obtain extra fuel, and one had been granted double the amount which was the subject of the summonses against him.

"They got more, and the other customers got the right amount," commented the Chairman, Mr. L. F. Fogarty. He mentioned that the law took a serious view of this offence, since the maximum penalty was a fine of £500 and two years' imprisonment.

EMBEZZLEMENT CHARGES

On three charges of embezzling money belonging to his employers, the Hillingdon Laundry, William George Weatherly (46), of Towers-avenue, Hillingdon, was remanded on bail for a week at Uxbridge Court on Monday.

Weatherly is alleged to have embezzled 5s 9d on December 18, 10s on January 16, and 14s 9d on January 13.

Stole camera

Admitting that he stole a camera worth £25 from a store at West Drayton R.A.F. Station between April 1 and June 23 last year, Aircraftman Norman Arthur Planes (17), from Barnes, Surrey, was fined £5 at Uxbridge Court on Thursday.

CHOSEN FOR COACHING COURSE



EVERY year at the All-England Schools' Athletic Championships, 60 young athletes are selected for a special coaching course under the A.A.A.'s chief coach, Geoff Dyson.

As there are about 1,800 competitors taking part in the championships, to be selected is a high honour for the athlete, his school, and his county.

This year five young athletes have been chosen from Middlesex, including 17-year-old Frank Gilbert Crozier, of 67, Parkfield-avenue, Hillingdon, a pupil at Bishopshalt school. At the Middlesex Schools' Championships last June he beat the intermediate boys weight putting record by over two feet.

Frank, who shows an all-round enthusiasm for sports, is a member of the school football and cricket 1st elevens.

Punter stole raincoat

Described as a professional punter, Denis John Hughes, 26, of Windsor-avenue, Hillingdon, was fined £15 or two months' imprisonment when he pleaded guilty at Lambeth on Friday to stealing a child's raincoat valued at £2 14s from a shop in Brixton-road.

Det.-Sgt. Stewart said that Hughes had previous convictions, but the last was in 1945. He had no occasion to visit Brixton and in fact had a business appointment in North London at the time of the theft.

It was difficult to access his means, but he appeared to be doing well as a professional punter who sold tips. He had a car of his own to take him to and from race meetings.

AIRPORTS DIAR

THEY ALL LOOK AF FLYING M

MORE than 20 young animals have so far answered newspaper last Friday. 7 animals at London Airport, 1 animal at the husband, with at a local clinic. A small fat

From Uxbridge, Ruislip, West Drayton, Eves, Windsor, Staines and Slough the applications rolled in. By Tuesday over 20 had been received. More were expected. "We are still running through them," reported the hostel manager, Mr. Frederick Salmon.

UNIQUE HOSTEL

The £20,000 hostel in the Bath-road near London Airport is the only one of its kind in the world. It was set up to provide a temporary home for animals travelling by air.

It can take every type of animal from a mouse to an elephant. Food, proper accommodation, first-aid if necessary, is provided to ensure that all animals arriving at London Airport are well cared for.

A typical week at the hostel brought 600 monkeys, 200 parakeets, 200 linnets, 50 canaries, three dogs and a cat. One day 24,000 tropical fish arrived.

Every care is taken at the hostel to keep the animals happy. They even have their own hot-water bottles!

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