

S. C. M. P.

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## 200 remain on strike

By EILEEN WONG

More than 200 workers from an optical factory in San Po Kong entered the second day of a strike yesterday, demanding the re-employment of 11 foremen sacked on Friday.

One of the sacked foremen, Mr Tom Kui-bang, claimed they were dismissed by the International Optical Co Ltd, because the company wants to operate on a smaller scale.

It dismissed them on the pretext that they were irresponsible and not co-operative at work so it need not give them severance pay, he said.

Mr Tom said the foremen have all been with the company for an average of 10 years, and, apart from himself, had acted as worker-representatives prior to their dismissal.

He said 10 other workers had been dismissed earlier this year and predicted that more dismissals will follow.

However, the managing director of the company, Mr Albert Gazeley, denied that his company is to operate on a smaller scale.

"In fact," he said, "we are expanding."

He said his company has appointed a German production manager, who will train new technicians, and that new equipment is arriving.

In a statement regarding the dismissals, the company said they were dismissed "due to their continuous irresponsible attitude and challenge to management, making it impossible to run the factory."

"Their defiance and lack of co-operation clearly demonstrates that they were not suitable or qualified for responsible positions that they held."

The dispute between the workers and the management has been brewing for two months following the dismissal of a tool room foreman.

Other foremen then brought the factory out on strike for about a week when eventually a four-week cooling off period was agreed on by both sides.

The cooling off period was to expire at the end of last month.

However, the workers accused the management of breaking the agreement by dismissing 11 of their representatives on September 29, a day before the cooling off period ended.

The management said the 11 foremen had been sabotaging peaceful negotiations and it was necessary for it to take action on them to keep discipline and control in the factory.