

Dear Sir,

For five years I have been working for Irvin and Johnson, but I only earn R9,50 per week and if I come to work every day, I get another R2. But you never get it because if you are one minute late during the day they take your bonus away. You know what, the bus and the train are alike. I start every morning before 6 a.m. to get to work before 7.30 a.m. Some nights we leave the factory at 9 p.m. and I only get home at 11 p.m. if I am lucky.

Yesterday Irvin and Johnson sacked 6 European supervisors because they cannot drive the hotnots enouth. Now they have got a man from Johannesburg by the name of John to make us work harder. My boss said to me last night that they can pay a man R80 to come and chase the workers, but they cannot pay us a cent per hour more. I feel very sorry for him because he was very good to us. Do you know that this man speeded up all the machines to cut double the same money, but we have to work three times harder. He gives us targets and if we cannot reach them, they fire us. My boss told me that they are only going to use 300 girls to do the same work at 900. Die meide wat nie will werk moet voetsek. Do you think this is fair?

At work we have no place to sit and the young girls have no place to play. You are only allowed 3 minutes to go to the lavatory. Every time you go you must clock a card. Sometimes you feel shy to so many times to the toilet, but you must.

Can someone not come to the factory and help us? Come and see the conditions in which we must work. I cannot stop working because I cannot afford to let my children suffer.

My boss said the other day that the firm made R3,000,000 profit, maar niks vir die hotnots nie. Please come one day and see for yourself. Come and help us get something more. I would like you to come and ask if I am telling lies. Everyone will tell you stories. You know we never get a piece of fish or anything here if we want some. The girls steal some and then they put them in jail. There was only one boss that always gave us a parcel once a week, Mr. Van Wyk, but he works in the office now. There are only a few foremen left and if they do not drive us hard enough then John will also sack them. They are good bosses but they do it, because they also have families.

I have written to the Argus before, but they do not want to listen to my complaints. I think the firm gives them too much work.

I cannot give you my name because they will sack me. But please come yourself. I know you people will help the Coloureds.

Thank you.