



Decision To Erect New Factory

And I now get to the most important decision to which your Directors have come in the recent past, and that is to erect a new factory within easy reach of Cowley, where we can manufacture and assemble those motor car bodies for which we have no room at Cowley. You know that the number of employees in our service was limited after the war to the maximum which we had employed up to then. When the motor car trade expanded so largely in the early 1950s, we told the local authorities that we should hamper the export trade if we failed to deliver the bodies which the trade wanted, and they said that, in the circumstances, they would close their eyes to the excess number we employed.

However, we fully realised that this was only a temporary matter and that we must provide for something much more permanent. We had for years been trying to find a site, not too far from Cowley, which had available labour. We then heard there was a suitable site for industrial development at Stratton St. Margaret in the Highworth Rural District, just outside the Swindon boundary. In addition Swindon Borough has a housing scheme which has been approved, and this would provide an adequate number of houses for those employed.

A Handy Site

This seemed to all of us to be just what we had been looking for and, after investigations, which were favourable, we decided to go on with this scheme. In January, before I went to America, we had agreed to build a factory of 300,000 square feet on the site and to engage labour in London. I went to see the site when I came back from the United States and that our contractors had a large quantity of earth-moving equipment on the spot and had already levelled quite a lot of land and started to sink the concrete pillars on which the buildings will stand. We very much hope that by the end of this year we shall be able to start production in the new factory at Swindon - there is plenty of room there for very large developments as we have bought almost 138 acres. There will, we are assured, be houses available for our senior staff and management - this is a matter which we have constantly in mind, as we fully realise its importance.

I did not explain how handy the new site at Swindon is. It is less than 30 miles to Oxford, and convenient for Birmingham and Coventry, with an excellent direct railway service. We are all confident that this new exercise will be of the greatest use to your Company, I should like to add that the officers of the Borough of Swindon and of the Highworth Rural District have been most helpful and co-operative.

Glasgow Herald, 26 May 1955

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