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## Downsizing deals - Corus Corby workers to ballot over bonus dispute

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It is reported that steel workers in Corby are to be balloted on whether to take strike action in a dispute over bonuses. More than 300 employees at the Corus plant have opted to hold a vote on whether to strike over the firm's announcement that it will not pay bonuses for their last three months' work.

A mass meeting was held on Sunday where they decided on the ballot for strike action. The Community Union said that the steel company is in violation of more than 30 years of procedure, custom and practice.

Workers in India, who are employed by Corus' parent company TATA, have been given bonuses of up to 18.5% and an additional payment in arrears of 8.33%. Statements from the company say that the decision was made to respect old traditions.

But bonuses for Corby steelworkers are integral to take home pay, based on long standing contractual and procedural agreements dating back to the early 1980s.

Mr Roy Rickhuss the union national officer for steel said that "Our members have taken a stand and said that they will not let Corus rip up their contracts. The Community Union has repeatedly stated that we are willing to sit down and talk, but we will not allow Corus to put a gun to our heads and negotiate away our members' terms and conditions under duress."

The decision by Corby steelworkers comes as workers at Corus Tubes in Hartlepool started their vote on whether to down tools. And the support from Corby branch workers means the pay dispute has now been spread around all Corus Tubes businesses in the country. It is believed Corus has blamed the recession on their decision to stop bonuses this year.

Mr Rob Simpson from Corus said that "Corus has written to employees re affirming that bonuses cannot be paid for the quarter just ended in view of the fact that bonus agreements with the trade unions for 2009-10 have not been concluded. The company is hopeful that discussions with the trade unions can commence shortly and have confirmed to employees that any payments due under the new agreements will be paid to them at the next scheduled payment date."

(Sourced from [www.northantset.co.uk](http://www.northantset.co.uk))

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