

Today was the day after the day after the day after the day that the numbers had gone on strike.

Everywhere was in chaos.

Computers had stopped working.

The trains didn't run on time, as there was no particular time for the trains to run on.

In the schools, maths lessons ground to a halt as the numbers refused to be added together, subtracted, multiplied or divided. Most of the letters had come out in sympathy and were refusing to participate in algebra.

The numbers refused to negotiate with anybody except the Prime Minister, who they felt would be sympathetic.

The meeting took place at his house in Downing Street. After an hour, and another hour, and some minutes, and some more minutes, the Prime Minister emerged to announce the demands of the numbers to the waiting press.

"It appears that this is not a dispute about pay or working conditions, although some of the smaller numbers do feel they work long hours and have to endure rough treatment from young children.

No, it seems that above all, the numbers wish to be properly appreciated and recognised. They feel that the position they used to enjoy as respected contributors to society has been lost. Much of their work is now carried out unseen, in computers and other machines. They feel that their hard work, consistency and attention to detail goes unnoticed.

In short, they feel that despite the important contribution they make to our well-being, they are taken for granted."

The waiting journalists, who would normally be phoning the Prime Minister's announcement through to their news desks, began the long trudge back to their offices.