advice that has been given to anyone who wishes to interfere with the existing system their award. I was in Britain when trade of industrial relations came from Woods, who wrote:(28)

"It is . . . because the system is not something on its own, but part of a way of life as a whole . . . that it should not be tinkered with by amateur hands or turned into the cat'spaw of political opportunists. It is capable of improvement, but improvement should come through the hands of those who appreciate the depth and the spread of its roots, both backward into history and tradition and onwards into the workplaces and the activities, feelings, and aspirations of men and women."

(28) Woods, Industrial Conciliation and Arbitration in New Zealand (1963), 201.

# NEWS and VIEWS

WELLINGTON: B. H. Holt\*

JANUARY: A meeting of 1500 Wellington City Council employees instructed their combined trade unions to take "whatever action might be needed" to make up the shortfall in the Trades Council referred the matter to the F.O.L. and Sir Thomas Skinner stated that "key unions such as transport and building and large unions such as engineering and clerical" would be called together to agree on a procedure to have the wage bargaining regulations repealed. This is a clear example of the difficult function that the F.O.L. attempts to perform of co-ordinating the aims and activities of the militants with the others who make up the majority of trade unionists in New Zealand. A further example is the series of stopwork meetings taken place about a joint approach to Govbeing organised in the major centres by the trades councils. The aim of these meetings is described by the F.O.L. Executive as the creation of "a well-informed membership fully aware of the economic situation," not the disruption of industry.

FEBRUARY:

The Wellington Drivers Union held secret ballots at stopwork meetings in all parts of the region and reported that more than 90% of members were in favour of a continua-

tion of the unqualified preference clause in unions there resisted the legal requirement to register under the Industrial Relations Act 1971 and witnessed the huge demonstration they held in Trafalgar Square ('Kill the Bill'). My view is that the effort unions here would need to make to produce a successful strategy on the same lines could only benefit them in the long run.

#### MARCH:

was surprised to walk down town at lunch-time and find a parade of armoured vehicles and soldiers in Lambton Quay. "It's Muldoon's answer to the P.S.A.," replied one of its research staff, when I asked him what he thought was the reason for it. The previous few weeks had been very lively ones for the P.S.A. The Government suspended Meat Inspectors at Whakatu and employees of the New Plymouth Power Station for failure to carry out their "normal duties." Powers to suspend employees (including employees not actually involved in a dispute but whose work is disrupted by one) were given to Government by Regulations introduced in 1972 by the Labour Government. That Government never used those powers, however, neither did they repeal them, despite strong opposition from the P.S.A. over their introduction with-Government's cost-of-living adjustment. The out consultation. Their use by the present Government gave rise to the charge of "lockout" and did not appear to aid in the solution of disputes of the kind where employees were objecting to working in noisy (Whakatu) and dangerous (New Plymouth) conditions.

The death in March of Dan Long, General Secretary of the P.S.A. since 1960, will be felt in many areas but particularly perhaps in the area of relationships between the CSSO and the FOL. In February he was reported as saying that discussions had ernment on the issue of wages. He said the State Services were not asking that the wage regulations be repealed but that the next wage order in July should make up the shortfall in the January order. In the September 1975 "N.Z. Journal of Public Administration" Long mentioned an idea Norman Kirk spoke about in August 1973 (recently refloated by Prime Minister Muldoon) of a single wage-fixing tribunal to deal with the claims of "the public service and the trade unions." Long expressed no dislike for this idea but said that the

Labour Government was in danger of overlooking the separate issue of the principle of "fair relativity" for public servants with those in the private sector.

A recent Wellington dispute would suggest that the present Government is equally in danger of neglecting this principle. The First Maritime Composite Agreement replaces fifty awards and covers all maritime unions and New Zealand ship-owners except the New Zealand Government. It took eighteen months to negotiate and originally employees of the Railways Department on ferries were included in the coverage. The present Government decided soon after it took office to exclude them because leave provisions in the agreement were an effective wage increase which exceeded the guidelines laid down by Government. Unions staged a twenty-four hour protest stoppage on March 11 when the agreement went to the Industrial Commission. In the meantime, the spokesman for thirteen Hutt Valley and Porirua Basin Combined Motor Company unions, Pat Kelly, has said that their next claims are being based on the ability of their particular industry to pay. They hope to have their economic research completed in time for the June negotiations.

Finally, fears of unemployment have been evident in the region. The New Zealand are to receive justice including fair com-Tramways Union has placed the issue of pensation for losing jobs through no fault the Council's desire to employ part-time of their own the Trade Union movement and contract labour in the hands of the will need to devote much of their time and F.O.L. The New Zealand Workers Union's Secretary has expressed concern at the possible sacking by Government of 100 permanent staff employed on roadworks around Wellington and others at power stations, to be rehired as relief labour or on a four-day week basis. He was quoted as saying that workers have a right to a forty- made up, are questions to be considered hour week, a statement to which I cannot at nation-wide stop work meetings called give my wholehearted support, having a yen for a thirty-hour week on my present salary. Nor can I join in the alarm being expressed by the journeymen butchers in the Wellington Shop Assistants Union at the fact that, when equal pay is achieved for women in April 1977, untrained women could be receiving the same pay as themselves. I will be interested to see whether the F.O.L. Women's Advisory Committee, which met for the first time in February, will offer its opinion on this issue.

# AUCKLAND: Syd Jackson\*

The election of a National Government in November last year with its misguided out-dated and dangerous views on labour and industrial relations ensured that 1976 would be a crucial year for Trade Unions.

As we move into the second quarter of the year it is clear that the activities of Trade Unions will centre not so much on the actions, or non-actions, of employers, as on the actions of this Government.

One of the major concerns will be to decide how to cope with the tragedy of a Government which is intent on deliberately creating unemployment as part of its socalled economic package.

This policy, which is based on the fallacious belief that a little unemployment would be a good thing since it would help increase the national growth rate, will have serious consequences for many people. The main fear is that if there is not a fundamental change in economic policies there is a real danger that unemployment will become a permanent part of our social structure with a great number of indirect social consequences. The maintenance of full employment is vital because obviously the effect of any unemployment does not fall evenly on the whole of the population.

Associated with the problem of unemployment is the all-important and contentious question of redundancy. If workers resources to fighting redundancies. People who have given their lives to a company deserve a better deal than they are getting.

The specious and spurious January cost of living order which, of course, did not cover the increased cost of living, and ways of resolving how this loss can be by the Federation of Labour. These meetings are also important showings of strength by the Trade Union movement and will largely determine the policies Unions will follow in Award negotiations which begin in earnest in the middle of the year, because the cost of living order poses a direct threat to negotiated Industrial Agreements.

A cost of living order should be seen for what it is. It is not a wage increase. It is

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compensation for price increases that have taken place in the preceding six months. Workers have been forced to take reduced orders on the last three occasions that they nave been made and each such reduction is yet another drop in their standard of living.

With a 23% increase in petrol, 100% increases in milk, 46% increases in electricity, astronomical increases in post office charges, flour and bread, the 3% January cost of living order can justifiably be said to ignore the cost of living. It is a blatant attack on the living standards of all wage and salary earners.

Other problems which will involve Trade Unions are the new Government's immigration policies and the renewal of dawn raids on "alleged" illegal immigrants. These two policies strike hard at particular sections of the Trade Union movement and should be of real concern to all workers. Protests against the resumption of sporting contacts with South Africa will also invariably involve some consideration and possible action from Trade Unions. The Government decision to allow U.S. nuclear ships into New Zealand could see Trade Union action as well to prevent these ships tieing up.

But the issue which is possibly of the greatest concern to all Trade Unions is the attack the Government intends to launch against the very existence of Trade Unions through its so-called ballots on voluntary or compulsory unionism. Government has stated that these ballots will begin before the end of the year and it seems at this stage that this will lead to a head on confrontation between the Government and the whole Trade Union movement.

The real question is not whether membership of a Trade Union should be voluntary or compulsory as the Government propaganda would have us believe, but whether there should be state control of Unions or not. Despite the denials of the Government their decision to proceed with this patently stupid policy is being interpreted as Union bashing. They are being seen as placing political expediency above the necessity for a responsible industrial relations policy.

The truth is that we have a stable system of industrial relations. A responsible Government should be concerned to maintain such a system rather than take destructive action which will result not only in a breakdown of that system but also industrial chaos.

### CANTERBURY AND OTAGO:

# P. Jenkins\*

Employment: At the end of January 1976 the number of unemployed in Christchurch was 1077 and Dunedin 260. The majority of these unemployed people did not qualify for unemployment benefits largely because they had either voluntarily left their last job or because they had refused suitable offers of employment.

At the same time that unemployment was 260 in Dunedin there were eight pages of "Situations Vacant" in the newspaper, many for unskilled workers. This general situation led the Otago Council to write to Government expressing concern at the shortage of labour in the area.

Redundancy: In Dunedin G. H. Ferguson Limited (owned by Bing Harris Sargood) is for sale and this could lead to 65 people being laid off. A.B. Consolidated are closing most of their 80-year-old plant in Dunedin and moving to Christchurch. This will put 100 out of 140 people out of jobs over the next 12 months. Mosgiel Limited Woollen Mills declared 17 people redundant, including an Accountant, following a reorganisation of administration procedures accompanied by installation of computers. Redundancy Agreements negotiated with the four Unions concerned have been extended to cover staff who are not Union members.

In Christchurch, Garden City Shoe Company Limited, which has been trading under a receiver since the beginning of the year, has dismissed 35 workers. The Christchurch Star reported the Secretary of the Canterbury Footwear Workers Union as saying he had not discussed the dismissals with the Company. He believed that experienced employees would have no difficulty in finding other jobs.

Unilever's closure of its frozen food production could affect some people but most of those employed in Christchurch will be offered work by Watties who are taking over most of the Unilever contracts in Canterbury.

Stop Work Meeting on Government Wage Order: At the time of writing Sir Thomas Skinner was due to address Union Members affiliated to the Canterbury Trades Council in Cathedral Square. The meeting was cal-

led to protest at the inadequacy of the January 1976 wage increase of \$3.60. A number of the Canterbury Trade Unions considered that the meeting was largely a waste of effort because it was held too late after the wage order and possibly because some accepted that the wage increase was all that could reasonably have been expected in the circumstances.

Award Negotiations: The Christchurchbased Conciliator (Mr L. Fortune) is to state a case for the advice of the Industrial Court on the matter of cross-filing of claims for a new collective agreement. The case to be referred by the Conciliator is related to the New Zealand Freezing Workers Agreement. Because of arguments over cross-filing the Conciliator was unable to set up the Conciliation Council on the due date in March. Under S.68 of the IR Act either the Union or the Employer Party may become the applicant by filing a set of claims at the correct time and in the correct manner. Traditionally it has been the Union that has filed the claims thereby making the employers the respondents.

However, S.76 of the IR Act gives the applicant party the right to withdraw from the proceedings at any time. The respondent does not have such rights. If the claims are withdrawn then the dispute of interest ceases to exist so it is therefore possible that the provisions of S.81 do not apply and hence a legal stoppage (strike or lockout) could follow. Clearly there is some advantage in being the applicant party - hence the arguments. In two recent award negotiations the proceedings have broken down because of arguments over (1) whether the employers have the right to be the applicant party, or (2) whether one Conciliation Council can be convened to hear two sets of applications in respect of the same dis-

A second case concerning the Public Passenger Transport Association and the N.Z. Tramways Union is also due to be referred to the Industrial Court for an opinion. The facts in this case are slightly different: in December 1975 the Union withdrew their claims apparently in protest at the employers pressing for a part-time workers clause. This then left the way open for the employers claims to be considered. Dates were set for early March to reconvene but the Union neither filed counter-proposals nor turned up at the meeting.

### SYDNEY: B. T. Brooks\*

Central to all current debate on industrial relations in Australia is the question of the future of wage indexation. Quarterly changes in the Consumer Price Index are subject to examination before the Australian Conciliation and Arbitration Commission with the various interested parties presenting a case for a wage movement according to the different reading of the figures by the parties. Surrounding this machinery is a fragile package which includes wage indexation, regulation of wage increases, and a form of control over price increases based on the thesis that price increases based on wage movements be restricted to the wage increases resulting from the indexation procedure. Additionally, there is widespread discussion of individual and corporate tax indexation and it is likely that some specific legislation in this area will soon be presented to Parliament. It is clear that this total package is intended to attack what is seen as cost-push inflation at its source and, hopefully, deal with unemployment.

The control over wages which is vested in the Commission is but one part of an overall picture in which industrial tribunals in Australia are asserting control not only over wage matters but over many other aspects of industrial affairs. The wage guidelines are well-known and the Australian Commission has refused to weaken them. A major vehicle-manufacturing company has very recently been subject to strong criticism from the Prime Minister for alleged breaches of the guidelines, and nurses in New South Wales have been refused a \$9 per week increase on the argument that the increase breaches the wage guidelines. Clearly, then, both the State and Federal authorities are asserting control over wages. Furthermore, there is a wealth of evidence in the law reports that the industrial tribunals are intent on ensuring that the orderly and legal regulation of industrial matters is not subverted.

The tight central control of wages, the re-emergence of the central tribunals as overseers of the system and the authoritarian attitude of the new Federal Government are three significant trends which, if pursued, will lead to an interesting 1976. Already there are clear signs of opposition from both workers and employers to wage indexation, the Prices Justification Tribunal is neither popular nor effective and far

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from diminishing in incidence there is a marked increase in strike activity. It is hard to resist the conclusion that the new Federal Government and the organised labour movement are on a collision course.

Thus far attention has concentrated upon the "headlines" of industrial relations in Australia. There are in addition many other features worth remarking. One such feature is the careful attention presently being given worker-participation. With but one exception, the attention has not yet become a matter of public debate but it is fair to say that various schemes are being canvassed by different bodies. The Federal Government sponsored a broad inquiry, the results of which have not been published, the Dunstan government in South Australia has published extensive proposals and is now enacting legislation and the ACTU at its 1975 Congress initiated a workingcommittee to report upon "worker-participation in the area of decision-making at all levels." There can be no doubt that the momentum behind this trend will accelerate. Likewise the initiatives in trade-union education will continue and expand. There has been enacted the Trade Union Training Authority Act 1975, the foundation stone of the central training college has been laid, trade union training centres in the various States are well established, superbly equipped and housed and staffed by qualified and committed people. This is a trend to which New Zealand could well pay very careful attention.

A third Australian initiative from which New Zealand could benefit lies in the broad area of manpower planning. Under the Labour Government, and specifically under the administration of Clyde Cameron, schemes were introduced to deal with longterm manpower problems. Hence, the National Employment and Training Scheme (NEAT) whick aimed to alleviate unemployment and shortage of skills, to remove imbalances in opportunities for employment and to assist in the long-term restructuring of the work force. A parallel scheme to deal with short-term problems was the Regional Development Scheme (RED). Clearly, both schemes owe much to the Swedish model and to a considerable degree the approach which they illustrate embodies much of what Professor J. F. L. Young has long advocated in New Zealand. The new Federal Government has already dismantled much of the initiative while at

the same time expressing public and constant concern with manpower policies. Accordingly, it is not an easy matter to forecast what may happen. Possibly Australia will see a return to a familiar line of allocation of resources. If this is to occur then it is doubtful whether such a line will have much relevance to attempts to lower unemployment.

Given the present trend to reinforce and, indeed, extend the reach of the traditional industrial tribunals one final development warrants mention and it is this: the legal definition of an "industrial matter" will be subject to strain. At the time of writing the NSW Labour Council is taking a test case on the provision of redundancy payments in awards. As the law stands claims for redundancy do not lie within the jurisdiction of industrial tribunals as entitlement to such payments arises after the employment relationship has terminated. The same is true of claims for pension schemes, relocation allowances, retraining and many other matters which are contemporary industrial relations problems. What this demonstrates is that the concept of "management prerogatives" is once again under challenge. In short, a question which will increasingly exercise the industrial tribunals and the courts is: how wide is the power of management to unilaterally alter the conditions of employment? In turn this is linked with exploration of worker-participation in decision-making and is a small but significant part of the broader problems of manpower policies, training and retraining and the allocation of resources. Underlying all this is the chronic problem of an industrial society: what is to be the relationship between the major groups of employers and employees to each other, to the various tribunals and to society at large?