

CHRONICLE

MARCH 1982

The Government advised the Federation of Labour on 8 March that it had decided to drop the requirement for triennial union ballots on the unqualified preference clause. A new bill would be drafted providing for such ballots only when requested by 10 percent or 50 financial union members, whichever was the lesser number. The provision for ballots stemmed from the National Party's 1975 election manifesto. It had been expected that a majority of unionists would vote for voluntary membership, but in fact the ballots held gave a 84 percent majority in favour of compulsory unionism. The *Auckland star* thought it ironical that the ballots were dropped not as a matter of principle, but as part of the Labour Department's 3 percent cost cutting exercise.

Discussing the proposed cutback in government expenditure, the Associate Minister of Finance, Mr Falloon, said these cuts were "in the wider context of the total budgetary process, including a wage/tax trade-off". This was contrary to earlier assurances by the Prime Minister that the trade-off would not be financed by cutbacks in the state sector. The Federation of Labour and the Combined State Unions wrote to Mr Muldoon expressing concern at Mr Falloon's statement and seeking explanations of the Government's stand.

Following a Radio New Zealand report on 26 March that the Public Service Association was considering strike action against the Government's expenditure cuts, the Prime Minister told a National Party meeting that the Government would deregister the PSA if it took direct action. "We are not going to permit this kind of activity for totally spurious reasons", he said to loud applause. The PSA denied that it had contemplated strike action. It also lodged a formal complaint with the Broadcasting Corporation, which found that the news report had been based on anonymous sources, was unjustified and therefore misleading.

The debate on trade union links continued in the Labour Party. Two unions, the Wellington and Timaru Waterside Workers' Unions, decided at stopwork meetings to disaffiliate from the Labour Party in protest at statements that unions were to blame for the party's election defeat. Mr F. Gerbic, who supported Mr Rowling's stand on the affiliation issue, told the Electrical Workers' Union conference on 23 March that it was "common knowledge that members of the Socialist Unity Party have control of many trade unions affiliated to the Labour Party" and that it was an intolerable situation to have members of another political party sit in determination of Labour Party policies on the Joint Council of Labour. Mr Gerbic later said that his remarks were intended to apply to three unions only, the Northern Drivers', Engine-Drivers', and Storepersons' and Packers' Unions. The Labour Party president, Mr J. Anderton, strongly attacked Mr Gerbic's statement and pointed out that soon after his election as MP, Mr Gerbic had attended a meeting of the Storepersons' and Packers' Union and had urged members to affiliate to the Labour Party, which the union did soon afterwards.

The Engine-Drivers' Union continued its job-by-job campaign for extra payments for first and second-class certificate holders. When talks with NZ Forest Products broke down, 65 boilermen at Kinleith held a 32-hour protest stoppage on 4 and 5 May which forced the closure of the entire plant. They were joined by boilermen at the company's Penrose and Whakatane plants. The dispute was settled without, according to the company, "significant change" to the structure of the boilermen's agreement. At the Auckland firm of Abels meanwhile, the union reached agreement on extra pay for qualifications.

The three NZ Forest Products plants were again affected by a dispute when maintenance engineers went on strike on 10 March, following a breakdown in their wage negotiations. The men were asking for an extra payment of 20 cents an hour to cover "the

complexity of the work place". They resumed work after 24 hours, but continued to refuse overtime or to do maintenance on certain equipment.

Two thousand two hundred workers at the Kawerau mill of the Tasman Pulp and Paper Co. held a 24-hour stoppage on 2 March to protest against the breakdown of their annual wage negotiations. They claimed a 15 percent increase, while the company offered only 10 percent. Further one-day stoppages took place on 13 and 22 March and, when pay talks broke down again, yet another stoppage was called for 1 April.

Auckland car assembly workers held stopwork meetings on 25 and 26 March to consider their current wage talks. The unions were seeking the general wage rise plus a catch-up payment to bring their wages up to those paid to Toyota workers, who received 2½ to 5 percent higher rates. The employers offered the general rise but only 40 percent catch-up instead of parity with Toyota. After the stopwork, men at the Ford assembly plant walked off their jobs. The employers, taking advantage of last year's amendments to the *Industrial Relations Act*, responded with a threat to lock out all car assembly workers unless the Ford men returned. The industrial mediator, Mr T.E. Skinner, then arranged an informal meeting to prevent a general lockout of some 2300 workers at six plants. The employers raised their offer to 50 percent catch-up, which was put to a combined stopwork meeting on 1 April. More than 1200 assembly workers attended and, despite union recommendations for rejection, voted 622 to 580 to accept the employers' offer.

In negotiations for the Northern Margarine Workers' agreement, the employers offered a 12 percent rise over a 14 months' period, while the Food Processing Union claimed 13.75 percent. Two Auckland firms were involved, Abels and Aspak Industries. A hundred persons at Abels went on strike late in February, while the Aspak workers struck for a week and then imposed overtime and load-out bans. The dispute was settled on 9 March when the workers accepted a 13 percent rise.

About 200 fertiliser workers at six North Island plants went on strike late in March over a pay relativity claim. Tradesmen at these works had negotiated house agreements giving them an extra 16.5 cents an hour, which the Chemical Fertiliser Workers Union claimed should be extended to all workers. The employers agreed that relativities had been upset, but argued that no changes could be made during the currency of the existing award.

The national freezing workers' strike ended on 3 March, just when 8000 members of the Auckland-Tomoana union were due to join in. The Hawkes Bay Farmers Freezing Co. agreed to increase redundancy payments to 600 Gear Meat workers to 3 weeks' pay (\$900) for the first year of service, plus one week's pay (\$300) for each subsequent year, and to drop its insistence on a 20-year maximum. The total pay-out came to \$1.7 million, or \$300,000 more than the company had offered originally.

The Meat Workers Union conference in Christchurch decided on 2 March to take all necessary action to ensure that non-union labour ceased at the Oringi works within two weeks. On 18 March members of the union (about one-third of the Oringi work-force) and meat inspectors belonging to the Public Service Association refused to continue working alongside non-unionists. This forced the hands of the Pacific Freezing Co., which agreed to ask its 200 non-union employees to join the union. Work did not resume however until 22 March, after the company had also agreed to recognise the elected officials of the West Coast branch of the union as shed officials and to pay full wages for the time lost during the strike. Charges of trespassing brought against two officials of the West Coast branch by the Pacific Freezing Co. were dismissed on 16 March in the Dannevirke District Court. The judge said the circumstances did not justify invoking of the criminal law and that the matter should have been resolved by the parties without calling the police.

Negotiations for a new site agreement at the Marsden Point oil refinery extensions broke down on 5 March. The old site agreement had expired in January, and 280 construction and office workers called a 24-hour strike in protest against the deadlock. At the Huntly thermal power station, 400 private sector workers stopped work for four days when

negotiations for a new site agreement collapsed. On 11 March agreement was reached on an hourly rate of \$6.33, with an allowance of \$1.65.

Wellington newspaper delivery boys and girls went to see the Federation of Labour president Mr Knox on 11 March to ask for assistance in negotiating better wages and conditions. They claimed sick leave, wet weather allowances, and extra payments for excess weight, and wanted their wages tied to the national newspaper printers' award. Mr Knox promised to help and welcomed the deputation to the "trade union family".

In protest against the government decision to hand major contract work on the Clyde dam project to private sector enterprise, the N.Z. Workers Union placed a ban on extended overtime and on the cartage of concrete by private contractors already working on the site. The State Services Commission told the union that it would not negotiate on the renewal of the annual project agreement unless these bans were lifted.

Mr R. Campbell was elected secretary of the 29,000 strong Shop Employees' Association.

The Government Services Tribunal on 12 March rejected the primary school teachers' claim for salary parity with secondary teachers, on the grounds that it could not consider internal relativities within the state services, but only benchmarks between similar occupational groups in the public and private sectors. The N.Z. Educational Institute directed its 92 branches to hold stopwork meetings in school hours to discuss the next move — the first time such action had been taken in the union's 99-year history. In Auckland a thousand teachers who met at Eden Park called for rolling stoppages as the next form of direct action. Altogether, in the area of the Auckland Education Board, 4034 teachers, or 73 percent of all those employed by the Board, attended meetings and had their pay docked. Throughout New Zealand more than 16,000 teachers, 90 percent of the NZEI membership explicitly called on the executive to use all means to pursue the claim. The executive met on 2 April and decided to take a case to the Court of Appeal.

APRIL 1982

The Federation of Labour and the Combined State Unions issued a statement on 7 April on the wage/tax trade-off negotiations. They wanted to know how the Government would separate the trade-off from tax reform measures, how it would prevent inflation clawing back the tax cuts, and how other groups, besides wage and salary earners, were expected to trade-off their tax benefits. They also asked the Government to restore access to the Arbitration Court for cost-of-living wage order applications. Mr J.W. Rowe, of the Employers' Federation, replied that in view of forthcoming income tax reductions and a declining rate of increase in the consumer price index, there was no case for a general wage order and that this year's wage round need not be in double figures. The Minister of Trade and Industry agreed that "realistic" wage demands in the coming pay round should not exceed 10 percent if inflation were to be reduced. He expected a rise of about 15 percent in the consumer price index, but said that wage and salary earners had to spearhead the attack on inflation.

Top level talks on the trade-off resumed on 26 April. Mr Muldoon said afterwards that there were now no outstanding issues, and Mr Knox agreed that the parties had come much closer together. Mr Knox stressed however that the FOL executive was still not satisfied with Government responses on how the tax cuts were to be financed or on whether the Federation would get an opportunity to take a living-wage case to the Arbitration Court. The Government proposals were to be submitted to the Federation conference in May, but Mr Bolger warned unions that if no voluntary agreement was reached, the government would impose wage fixing by regulation.

Women gained the right to work night shifts in factories by Order-in-Council, after the Government had renounced the relevant convention of the International Labour Organisa-

tion and had repealed a section of the Factories and Commercial Premises Act.

The Arbitration Court rejected an appeal from an employer for exemption from the Clerical Workers Award on grounds of Christian conscience. The applicant had stated that he was happy for the Labour Department to supervise matters contained in the award, but not for the union to do so. Judge Horn said in his ruling that he could see no difference in principle and "one can only assume that the applicant dislikes unions rather more than the Labour Department." Several similar appeals by other employers belonging to the Exclusive Brethren were adjourned *sine die*.

The National Council of the Federation of Labour considered the independent auditor's report on the financial affairs of the Wellington Boilermakers' Society, which the Federation had commissioned in the previous August. According to Mr Knox, the report highlighted incorrect bookkeeping procedures but contained no hint of illegal activity. The Council decided to ask the Minister of Labour to reregister the union, which had been deregistered in September 1976. The Minister, who had received a copy of the auditor's report, released it to the media, while his colleague, the Attorney-General, handed it to the police for possible action.

Sixty-nine boilermakers employed by CERS Ltd on the Huntly power station project, walked off the job on 5 April, in protest against the hiring of a man who had not been a union member for the previous six months. CERS insisted on its right to hire staff without union interference and suspended trade assistants for whom no work was available. On 13 April the boilermakers agreed to resume work unconditionally, but the company demanded a prior written assurance from their union that there would be no further direct action over this issue. The union refused to give such an undertaking, and the strike became a lockout as CERS turned away the boilermakers when they presented themselves for work. On 21 April the Arbitration Court sat in Hamilton to consider the dispute. The Boilermakers' Union withdrew its claim that new staff had to have six months' membership as well as its objections to the man at the centre of the dispute. The Court directed that normal work should now resume and that the appropriate dispute procedure should be used in future. The boilermakers returned to work on 22 April but, within an hour, members of the Engineers' Union (riggers, fitters and trade assistants) held a stopwork meeting and then walked off the job. Their action was in retaliation against the suspension of more than 40 engineers during the boilermakers' dispute. Normal work did not resume until 26 April.

Meanwhile 21 boilermakers struck on 17 April on the Marsden Point oil refinery extensions over a claim for special payments for work inside confined tank space. Negotiations on a new site agreement were due to start in Whangarei on 22 April, but the contractors refused to negotiate while the boilermakers were on strike. In protest against the deadlock some 400 construction site workers began a 48-hour strike on 23 April. Mr Knox, who was to have led the union team in the site negotiations, accused the contractors of planning to give preference to foreign workers. Advertisements had appeared in the British press offering employment at the refinery extensions to boilermakers, carpenters, electricians and engineering tradesmen, but the project operations manager gave assurances that foreign labour would be used only if New Zealanders with the necessary skills could not be found. The British advertisements, he said, were "simply testing the market", but he expected that several hundred skilled workers would have to be recruited overseas. On 28 April the boilermakers settled their dispute over extra payments, which cleared the way for negotiations on the site agreement.

The partial closure of Hellaby's Shortland meat works in Auckland cost the jobs of some 600 workers. There was no confrontation however, as the company had concluded a redundancy agreement with the freezing workers' union based on the formula known as "4 and 2": four weeks' pay for the first year of service and two weeks for each subsequent year. This was better than the Gear Meat scale of "3 and 1", but short of the "6 and 2"

formula achieved by some Auckland unions.

The three-man committee set up by the Minister of Labour last year to investigate northern power board officers' pay rates, rejected the union claim that officers' margins for skill and responsibility over electrical workers had been eroded. The committee majority held that no historical relativity existed between the two groups of workers. The union's nominee on the committee, Mr R.G. Trott of Wellington, dissented in a minority report. After his experience with the committee, he told the Minister of Labour, he would be extremely loath to ever advise a union to agree to refer similar disputes to a committee of inquiry.

The Arbitration Court failed to settle the ferry officers' claim for travelling allowances and advised the men to open negotiations with the Railways Corporation on a new document prescribing terms and conditions of employment. The dispute had been referred to the Court by the Minister of Labour under recent amendments to the *Industrial Relations Act* but the Court did not welcome the new duties thrust upon it. It had been "compelled" to hear the dispute, it said in its decision, and "this is a far cry from the Court's normal arbitral function where it is required to resolve an industrial dispute on the application of one or more of the parties concerned." Mr F. Gerbic, the shadow Minister of Labour, commented that the Court's decision was an example of the inability of legal processes to deal adequately with basic issues at the work place. The new section 125C of the *Industrial Relations Act*, he said, was a hindrance to good and effective industrial relations and should be scrapped.

In another maritime dispute, over pay rates for harbour pilots, the Merchant Service Guild called for an indefinite work-to-rule from 22 April by some 60 pilots employed by Harbour Boards throughout New Zealand. According to the Guild, Harbour Boards had refused to offer adequate pay margins for skill and responsibility. After negotiations broke down in March, the union took a secret ballot of the members affected and then gave the required 14 days' notice of industrial action. Pilots offered themselves for 40 hours' work only, from 8 am to 5 pm, Mondays to Fridays. Urgent talks in Wellington with the Minister of Labour failed to resolve the dispute, and the Harbour Boards then suspended the pilots and threatened to suspend other workers. Shipping built up in ports, but on 28 April another meeting in the Minister's office brought agreement after six hours of talks: the Harbour Boards lifted the suspensions, the pilots resumed normal work, and the Minister undertook to call a compulsory conference to settle the dispute.

The NZ Workers' Union annual conference decided on 16 April to place a ban on the Clyde dam project, when the contract to a private firm was officially announced. On 21 April the Government announced that the contract had been awarded to a German-New Zealand joint venture, Zublin-Williamson. The union then imposed bans covering overtime, supply of concrete to private contractors, work on a coffer dam, the handing over of machinery to private contractors, and the shifting of houses from Twizel to Cromwell. The ban on overtime was lifted a few days later.

An attempt to re-enact last year's Kiwis Care march in Auckland failed. Mr John Luten spent \$1200 advertising a march against compulsory trade unionism to be held on 2 April under the slogans of "Remember Oringi?" and "Vote With Your Feet!" but only a handful of people responded and the march had to be abandoned.

MAY 1982

The annual conference of the Federation of Labour met in Wellington from 4 - 7 May. Mr Knox, in his presidential address, stressed the need for an alternative economic strategy, and drew attention to the contradiction between the Federation's policy for a minimum living wage for the lower paid and the pursuit of increased margins for skill. New Zealand's rigid system of relativities meant that a minimum wage would lead to compensatory rises

for all other workers and to higher prices, and would thus leave the lower paid relatively no better off. On the other hand, margins needed to attract skilled workers to the big construction projects were likely to flow on into other areas and upset the level of wages and prices. Mr Ball, of the Engineers' Union, criticised plans for closer economic relations with Australia which, he claimed, would destroy many manufacturing industries in New Zealand and reduce employment opportunities.

The conference rejected the Government's wage/tax trade-off proposals, with only a handful of the 393 delegates voting in favour. The trade-off, said Mr Knox, was essentially a subsidy of employers' wage bills and would eventually be financed by cuts in Government health, education and welfare services. The conference decided to launch a five-point campaign to publicise the harmful effects of a trade-off, to voice opposition to Government wage controls, and to stress the need for a minimum living wage, the right to a cost-of-living adjustment and the desirability of tax reforms.

The conference accepted a call from the Labourers Union that unions should use 1 per cent of their income to assist unemployed workers' organisations. An Electrical Workers Union remit opposing contacts with the World Federation of Trade Unions was defeated by 363 votes to 128. On the other hand, five remits expressing support for the Polish Solidarity union were accepted unanimously. Four unions submitted remits asking for the trade ban on Chile to be lifted. Among them was the Harbour Boards' Employees' Union, which had conducted a ballot of its members in which 78 per cent opposed the ban. Mr Knox undertook to raise the subject at the next executive board meeting of the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions. (This meeting took place in Brussels on 13 and 14 May, and confirmed that affiliates were free to lift the ban. The timing will now be decided by the Federation of Labour.)

The election to the Federation's national executive returned all four retiring members. Mr G.H. Andersen polled lowest of the successful candidates, but with 346 votes, he had a 100-vote margin over the next contender. Newspaper reports after the conference that the Electrical Workers', Hotel Workers' and Clothing Trades Unions planned to leave the Federation of Labour were denied by their secretaries. Mr Neary, of the Electrical Workers' Union, said however that his executive council would look at the overall relationship with the Federation within the next few months.

A Conditions of Employment Bill was introduced in Parliament on 6 May by the Labour Party. It required companies to give 90 days' notice of closure, set minimum redundancy payments, and provided for a redundancy fund financed by levies on employers, as well as "employment task forces" to assist companies in difficulties. Mr Goff, MP for Roskill, claimed that the bill would end the present "law of the jungle" in redundancy matters under which "the weak and moderate go to the wall and the strong and militant take what they can." Government members denounced the bill as totally negative in approach and a burden on the productive members of society. They voted to block the bill.

The Labour Party's annual conference debated on 10 May a report by a working party, which recommended strengthening the traditional ties with the trade unions. The report was seen as a rebuff to the party leader, Mr W. Rowling. The conference decided to postpone a decision until next year's conference and to refer the report meanwhile to the membership. The conference supported a remit from the Engineers' Union in favour of reducing the working week to 32 hours at the rate of 2 hours a week a year.

The Arbitration Court on 14 May overturned a mediator's decision which allowed unused sick leave to be included in a redundancy settlement negotiated for Wellington Hospital Board staff. The Court did however approve the rest of the settlement based on a "4 and 2" formula for redundancy payments. The Minister of Foreign Affairs told the Otago-Southland Division of the National Party that he favoured legislation to restrict redundancy payments to a "3 and 1" maximum, and that he opposed legislative provision for minimum payments.

The Minister of Labour, speaking at Levin on 25 May, said emphasis should be placed not on the amount of cash compensation for loss of job, but on finding new employment. Commenting on this speech, the *Auckland star* pointed out that the government's recent decision "to reduce its financial support for industrial training schemes hardly suggests an urgent concern about the country's needs for more skilled workers". The Canterbury-Westland Division of the National Party approved remits calling for the inclusion of youth rates in all awards, ballots on compulsory unionism and legislation to allow enterprises to set up their own separate unions.

A conference of more than 80 union advocates met in Wellington on 26 May to co-ordinate policy in the coming round of wage negotiations. The Federation of Labour, which had convened the meeting, offered support to any union which had difficulties in negotiating adequate wage rises.

The Airline Stewards' and Hostesses' Union grounded all Air New Zealand flights by holding a 12-hour stopwork on 31 May in protest against the failure of the Civil Aviation Division to set firm rules on flying duties and rest periods. The company's public relations manager claimed that cabin crew were in the air for an average of only 14 hours a week, but this was dismissed by the union as "rubbish".

The closure of the Patea meat works, with a staff of 800, was announced late in May. It brought the total number of freezing workers' jobs lost in the previous 20 months to 3000. In this period, only 1000 new jobs were created in works at Oringi, Takapau and Taumarunui. Some 900 meat workers at the Ocean Beach works accepted a 10 percent wage cut to help overcome losses which threatened the future of the plant.

Tauranga City Council salaried staff expressed disappointment when Council members late in May voted backdated pay increases to themselves. The staff had agreed in March to defer pay increases due to them for a year, to help the Council in its financial difficulties.

Talks for a site agreement on the Glenbrook steel mill extensions broke down when the unions insisted that clerical, security, cleaning and furniture workers should be included in the document. The employers wanted to meet independently with unions representing these workers. The staff walked off the site on 19 May in protest against the deadlock. In Whangarei, negotiations resumed on 20 May for a site agreement on the Marsden Point oil refinery extensions and reached agreement on an hourly rate of \$6.45, with a \$2.35 site allowance. In Taranaki, the contractors for the Motunui synthetic fuel plant, Bechtel, agreed to a core rate of \$6.45, with a construction allowance of \$2.023 an hour. The agreement, backdated to 12 March, caused concern to the Employers' Federation, which anticipated great pressure on local employers to match these rates.

Meat inspectors at the Rangiora works near Te Puke stopped work on 20 and 21 May, because they were not allowed to inspect a new deer slaughtering plant at Kaimai. They later imposed an overtime ban.

The Court of Appeal on 18 May heard an appeal by the NZ Educational Institute against the Government Service Tribunal's decision to reject the primary teachers' claim for pay parity with secondary teachers. The Court reserved its decision.

Wellington maritime unions stopped work on 26 and 27 May in protest against the visit of the American nuclear-powered warship *Truxtun*. The stoppage disrupted inter-island ferry services.

JUNE 1982

The Drivers' Federation announced, on 2 June, that it would lodge a claim for an all round pay rise of \$35 a week when negotiations with the employers begin on 9 August. The union advocate, Mr R. Campbell, claimed that this was "the lowest we could go to meet our responsibility to members". Thirty-five dollars represented an increase of between 16 percent and 20 percent, but being expressed as a flat increase, it would give

maximum benefit to lower-paid drivers. Mr Muldoon commented that the drivers' claim was too high and that wage controls were inevitable. The president of the Employers Federation, Mr S.W.B. Duncan, welcomed the idea of Government wage controls: "In the short term," he said, "some people will face hardship from wage controls, but it will benefit them in the long term."

On 22 June the Prime Minister went on the air to announce that the Government had decided to impose a 12-month freeze on all rates of remuneration, prices of goods and services, rent and interest rates. In return he promised substantial tax cuts in the Budget. Among the few exemptions to the freeze were major construction projects where negotiations for a new agreement had not yet been finalised. Employers' and farmers' representatives expressed qualified support, but trade union leaders denounced the freeze. Tax cuts of 30 percent or even 40 percent were needed, they claimed, to maintain current standards of living.

The Drivers' Federation insisted that it would go ahead with its \$35 claim despite the clamp-down. More than a thousand union delegates met in Auckland and voted to support any measures deemed necessary to defeat the freeze. The president of the Auckland Trades Council, Mr G.H. Andersen, urged more meetings, more rallies, marches and strikes properly co-ordinated by the Federation of Labour. The Prime Minister countered with a threat to call a snap election, if the unions tried to defeat the freeze, but 400 delegates who met in Christchurch on 29 June called for united action, and in Auckland a "task force" of union officials met on 30 June to organise a local campaign against the freeze.

The Federation of Labour issued a statement on 9 June opposing the draft proposals for closer economic relations with Australia. It also sought discussions with its trans-Tasman counterpart, the Australian Council of Trade Unions, to work out a common approach. A survey of company chief executives, conducted by W.D. Scott Ltd on behalf of the Institute of Personnel Management, showed a majority of those who responded expected a 35-hour week to be introduced in New Zealand within the next three years. Their main concerns were shortages of skilled labour and middle management, the disincentive effects of high personal tax, and lack of motivation, poor work attitudes and low productivity.

Actors gained a 20.79 percent pay rise in the Arbitration Court. The director of the Mercury Theatre in Auckland commented that actors' low wages had subsidised theatres in the past. Operators of Auckland child care centres met on 14 June to set up an employers' union. It will negotiate awards with the recently formed Early Childhood Workers' Union, and the proprietors expressed concern at the prospect of child care workers' wages being tied to those of kindergarten teachers. In yet a third low-wage area, milk vendors challenged a claim by the Drivers' Federation that an Arbitration Court decision in Palmerston North on 5 March had given the drivers' unions coverage over milk boys. Mr Campbell of the Drivers' Federation said that the rates paid to milk boys were substantially below other youth rate payments, including those in the drivers' award.

Carpenters and labourers employed by Fletcher Challenge in Dunedin struck in support of a new redundancy agreement. Although confined to the Dunedin area, the strike had national implications affecting the entire building industry.

The executive of the Electrical Workers' Union decided on 23 June to hold a ballot of the union's 11,000 members on the question of continuing affiliation to the Federation of Labour.

Air New Zealand engineers held stopwork meetings on 3 June to discuss threatened redundancies. The airline planned to reduce its staff by 962 by next March, and by 1418 over the next three years. Engineers were the hardest hit with 320 redundancies, followed by 254 clerical workers, 200 middle management, 94 cabin crew, and a similar number of pilots. More than 60 engineering apprentices who were finishing their training with the company, were also told that there would be no jobs for them. Negotiations for a redundancy agreement opened on 9 June, with Mr E. Ball of the Engineers' Union leading the combined staff side.

Assembly plant workers at the Ford Motor Co. at Wiri, South Auckland, walked out on 28 May because they considered welding equipment in the body shop unsafe. They returned to work but, even after the Labour Department had checked the equipment, the dispute continued and spread to the entire plant. By 14 June, the assembly line had come to a standstill, halting release of a new Falcon model. Fords sent telegram dismissal notices to 65 body shop workers but the strike continued until 28 June, when the parties agreed to refer the dispute to an independent chairman. All dismissed workers were reinstated. At the neighbouring Nissan Datsun plant, 250 engineers stopped work on 21 June over the dismissal of a colleague, but resumed on 28 June. Two days later, 300 assembly workers walked out at the NZ Motor Corporation plant at Panmure, because the company refused to fix a date for negotiation of a redundancy agreement.

Mutton butchers at the Oringi freezing works were locked out on 17 June for taking unauthorised toilet breaks. The union had claimed four five-minute breaks during each daily chain run, but the men agreed to defer their request and killing resumed on 23 June. At the Pacific Natural Gut String Co. at Kaupokunui, near New Plymouth, the Meat Workers' Union imposed a ban on deliveries to press its claim for coverage of the firm's 20 workers. The company had made moves to set up a separate shop union.

Mangere Bridge construction workers asked to renegotiate their 18-months old agreement with the contractor, Fletcher Construction, to bring it in line with recently negotiated site agreements for major projects. After two days of talks, the Federation of Labour and the company issued a joint statement, on 11 June, that the old agreement would stand until the completion of the contract. Talks for a site agreement for the Glenbrook steel mill extensions resumed on 10 June, after the employers had agreed to negotiate jointly with all unions on the site. Negotiations for the Petralgas methanol plant at Waitara began in Wellington on 24 June.

Salaried officers of the Tauranga Electric Power Board placed a ban on extra duties in protest against the adverse decision of the committee of enquiry into their pay relativities. Some 80 officers went on strike on 9 June when a part-time worker was suspended for refusing to carry out extra duties. The union agreed to end the action if the Power Board agreed to negotiate.

The Arbitration Court issued a new award for rail ferry officers, granting them the same travel and accommodation expenses as paid to seamen, cooks and stewards. The Minister of Railways, who criticised the decision, estimated the extra cost as a quarter of a million dollars.

The State Services Commission announced that it would not pay out a 10.7 percent backdated wage rise to meat inspectors, because inspectors at Rangiora had not observed agreed dispute procedures. One hundred and fifty inspectors stopped work on 1 June in protest against the Commission's announcement; they were out again on 2 June after another argument over start-up pay. Hastings inspectors held a stopwork meeting on 3 June. The country's 1600 inspectors gave 14 days' notice of industrial action and held a 24-hour national strike on 14 June. Negotiations with the State Services Commission resumed on 18 June but made no progress.

The transfer to restricted duties of a railway guard, after written complaints from passengers, led to strikes and overtime bans which caused major disruption to Wellington train services in the last week of May. The National Union of Railwaymen wanted to refer the dispute to an independent arbitrator, but the Railways Corporation asked the Chief Ombudsman to intervene. The Ombudsman declined, since the guard at the centre of the

dispute had expressed no wish to discuss the matter with him. The union lifted the seven-days old passenger guards' overtime ban on 2 June, but imposed a similar ban on freight services from 3 June. On the following day, the railways management agreed to independent investigation into the allegation of misconduct against the guard, and normal work resumed.

More than 300 Kaingaroa forest workers struck on 17 June, because the State Services Commission rejected their claim for wage parity with forestry workers employed by private companies. They were joined by workers from four other state forests in the Bay of Plenty. The men agreed to postpone their claim when the Government announced the general wage freeze, but they continued the strike, this time in protest against the transfer of a worker. On 28 June, Cabinet announced that work on the Clyde dam project would cease within six weeks if the deadlock over empowering legislation continued. A National Party backbencher had expressed his opposition to such legislation, leaving the Government short of the necessary majority. Up to 800 workers on the project faced the prospect of redundancy, with no other work available in the district.

The hearing of a High Court action over a black ban put on the Nauruan ship *Enna G* in 1973, began in Wellington on 1 June and continued throughout the month. The Nauruan Local Government Council sued the New Zealand Seamen's, Waterside Workers' and Harbour Boards' Employees' Unions and their officials (in 1973) for damages totalling \$318,620.

The dismissal of a storeman for an alleged breach of safety rules led to a strike of 90 storemen at Todd Motors in Porirua on 18 June. The company then suspended 620 coach-workers and engineers because no work was available for them. The storemen returned to work on 24 June, after a conciliator's conference. At Wiri in South Auckland, Nathans suspended 100 members of the Storepersons' Union on 25 June, after the union had imposed load-out bans in protest against insulting remarks made to a Polynesian worker. The dispute was settled on 2 July. About 100 members of the Northern Storepersons' Union struck at the Ford car assembly plant at Wiri on 29 June, because a job delegate had been transferred. Only a day earlier 350 engineers had resumed work at Fords after a two-week strike. The storepersons returned on 1 July, after the company agreed to reinstate the delegate. In another dispute over the dismissal of delegates, 35 members of the Northern Storepersons' Union refused to unload meat at Industrial Cool Stores Ltd in Auckland. They resumed normal work after seven days, and the industrial mediator ordered the reinstatement of the delegates.

H. Roth