

CHRONICLE

NOVEMBER 1987

Leaders of the FOL and of the Australian Council of Trade Unions announced in Melbourne on 2 November that they had decided to lift all bans against the military regime in Fiji as a temporary measure, on the advice of the Fiji Trade Union Congress.

The Opposition sought to introduce a Labour Relations (Flexible Bargaining) Amendment Bill in Parliament on 25 November, but was blocked by the government majority. The Bill aimed to restore voluntary union membership, repeal the 1 000-member minimum for registered unions, and allow separate workplace bargaining. Mr. Rodger denounced the proposal as "dreadful, nasty, time-wasting and incompetently drafted".

The Auckland Trades Council filed an application on 27 November for a warrant for a union-owned radio station, which would broadcast throughout the Bay of Plenty, Waikato, Auckland and Northland.

Air New Zealand won an injunction in the Labour Court requiring its pilots to fly direct from Auckland to Singapore. The Airline Pilots Association had instructed its members not to fly non-stop because of disagreement over rest facilities.

The four trading banks terminated tripartite working parties set up in 1985 jointly with the Bank Officers Union and the Human Rights Commission to examine equal opportunities for women employees. The chairman of the Commission expressed his regret at the decision and hinted that legislation might be the only way to guarantee women equality.

Talks on the carpenters' award broke down over an employers' demand to deprive maintenance carpenters of the industry allowance and their refusal to go beyond a 7 per cent offer. The union held stopwork meetings which gave full support to strike action. By 16 November some 600 Auckland carpenters had walked off their jobs and had brought major building projects to a halt. The union continued its campaign with two-day stoppages at selected sites.

The Clerical Workers Union gained a 9 per cent increase - the highest so far in the wage round - for some 3 000 members employed by trustee savings banks. It also achieved a breakthrough by gaining a provision for tangi leave in the award for school secretaries.

According to figures released by the Health Department, some junior hospital doctors earned as much as \$45 000 a year in overtime pay, in addition to their regular salary of between \$25 894 and \$41 516. This meant that these doctors earned more than their senior colleagues.

Drivers stepped up their campaign for an \$8 an hour minimum by picketing selected major clients and by stoppages and overtime bans at selected companies. About 100 employers in Wellington, Canterbury and Otago accepted the union claims, but in other

districts, such as Auckland, Hawkes Bay and Southland, the unions refused to sign separate deals so as not to endanger the national award. In Greymouth the union rejected a 7.5 per cent offer from the local Road Transport Association. Ready-mix concrete drivers went on strike in Auckland on 4 November, but the union withdrew a picket from the Chelsea sugar refinery under threat of legal action. Negotiations resumed on 10 November, after the union negotiators had expressed their willingness to replace the general drivers' award with regional or industry specific documents.

The employers proposed to negotiate three separate awards for carriers, contractors and ancillary drivers, but the initial talks broke down and Canterbury drivers stopped work on 10 November, followed by Otago and Northern drivers. The drivers' national officials called for a return to work to allow talks to start on a separate contractors' award, but drivers' meetings on 17 November decided to continue the strike. The vote was reversed on the following day and award talks opened in Wellington, but collapsed when the unions rejected an employers' offer of an 8 per cent increase and a \$25 allowance, equivalent to an overall increase of about 10 per cent. On 19 November talks opened on a new carriers' award and here agreement was reached for an overall pay rise of about 14 per cent, or a gross weekly wage of \$309, compared with the original union claim of \$320. This award covered some 10 000 workers, or almost 70 per cent of the previous general drivers' award.

When informal talks on a new ancillary drivers' award adjourned indefinitely on 23 November without progress, Auckland ready-mix concrete drivers voted to strike for a week, causing widespread disruption and staff suspensions in the building industry. Negotiations on the contractors' award resumed on 24 November, but also failed to reach agreement when the union stood by its \$8 an hour claim.

The award for electricians in the electronics industry was settled on 11 November at 7 per cent, and some 2 000 workers employed by electrical contractors won a basic 8 per cent rise on 30 November, plus other payments equivalent to an overall 12 per cent increase. Negotiations for an award for electrical maintenance workers however failed to reach agreement.

The Hotel Workers Union continued its campaign to amalgamate the three awards covering hospital and resthome domestic workers into one health service workers' award. After preliminary stoppages in Wellington and Auckland and a march up Queen Street, 800 resthome workers went on strike in Auckland on 4 November. The Labour Court refused to issue an interim injunction to prevent separate negotiations on a public hospital workers' award, but it also rejected a bid by hospital employers to prevent industrial action beginning on 9 November. On 13 November however the Court granted an interim injunction to the Wellington and Auckland Hospital Boards to prevent a reimposition of work bans. Individual union members nevertheless imposed bans on non-essential work, leaving management staff to clear rubbish and linen and work in the kitchens.

The Minister of Labour on 17 November rejected a request to intervene from the chairman of the Auckland Hospital Board, calling it "purely a propaganda exercise". The employers won another injunction preventing a planned total stoppage on 19 and 20 November; the Auckland union ordered its members to continue working, but announced another stoppage at public and private hospitals for 3 and 4 December, to be followed by restricted duties from 5 December. A last-minute meeting in Wellington on 30 November however, convened by the Arbitration Commission and attended by the FOL and Employers Federation, as well as the interested parties, was able to reach a compromise solution which averted the planned strike. The question of a combined award was to be looked at over the next 10 months by a joint working party. The Hotel Workers Union also lodged a claim for a \$45 a week rise for licensed hotel employees, equivalent to a 16.7 per cent

increase. The employers offered a 7 per cent wage rise, described as "paltry, pitiful" by the union secretary.

Members of both journalists' unions voted in support of industrial action over the breakdown of their award talks. Negotiations resumed in Wellington on 27 November, but the union negotiators sought an adjournment after the employers proposed an 8.5 per cent wage rise but made no offer on an across-the-board productivity payment linked to the introduction of computer-based technology. The Photolithographers Union negotiated an 8.75 per cent increase for about 800 graphic artists and platemakers in commercial printing, for a 15-month term. It also gained an 8.25 per cent rise for newspaper platemakers. Commercial and packaging printers held a series of stopwork meetings starting on 16 November to discuss the breakdown in their award talks. The union claimed an 11 per cent rise, while the employers offered 7 per cent. The meetings voted in favour of a co-ordinated campaign of action, which took the form of stoppages, overtime bans and go-slows in Auckland, Wellington, Christchurch and other centres.

Crane-drivers and their assistants began a 48-hour strike in Auckland, Wellington and Christchurch on 12 November over the collapse of their award talks. They stopped again on 30 November for 24 hours. On 18 November builders' labourers in the northern region voted to strike in protest against a 7 per cent wage offer. They resumed work after stopping for 5 days.

The Police Association reported that support was surprisingly high among its members for joining the new Council of Trade Unions. The Post Office Union settled the award for about 10 500 New Zealand Post employees with a 7 per cent wage rise.

A full day of discussions between Electricorp and the PSA on 1 November failed to resolve the dispute over the corporation's staff reductions. Electricity workers implemented the first stage of the announced power cuts on 2 November, but late that evening the corporation obtained an interim injunction from the Labour Court halting further industrial action. The PSA also applied to the Labour Court for an interim injunction to halt the corporation's job shedding on the grounds that it had failed in its statutory duty to act as a "good employer" in terms of the State-Owned Enterprises Act. If the application succeeded, said the PSA, the cause for industrial action would disappear. Electricorp in turn threatened to sue the PSA for costs incurred through power cuts. It acknowledged the right of the PSA to be consulted about job losses, but it was not prepared to negotiate the issue. The Court heard the PSA application on 4 November and issued an interim injunction restraining Electricorp from advertising any new positions or granting voluntary severance applications except where commitments had already been made to staff. It stopped short of granting a PSA request for a total halt to the restructuring pending a full hearing of the application, which was scheduled to start on 10 December. On 5 November Electricorp and the PSA agreed to adjourn indefinitely the substantive hearing on the corporation's interim injunction halting industrial action. Both side reserved the right to call an urgent hearing if required.

The PSA was also involved in negotiations with the Airways Corporation for a new award - the first for employees of one of the new state-owned enterprises. A corporation proposal for longer hours of work and shorter meal breaks for air traffic controllers brought the threat of stopwork meetings halting flights on 6 and 9 November, but the action was called off after urgent negotiations of 5 November. In mid-November the PSA again gave notice of industrial action but a week later, after 25 days of discussions, both side were reported close to a settlement.

The Seamen's and Cooks and Stewards Unions decided to amalgamate within three years. The first joint elections for office will be held in 1990.

Talks on the supermarket and grocery workers' award opened on 2 November. The employers wanted an additional 12 hours of weekly trading and the flexibility to open up to 9 pm every trading day, but they lowered their claim to 6 additional hours. The union reduced its claim to a 10 per cent rise for senior workers and \$25 a week extra for juniors. The employers offered a 7 per cent rise, and talks adjourned on 4 November. Negotiations on the non-food retail award had already collapsed over the issue of extended trading hours, and talks on the butchers' award suffered the same fate. The Distribution Workers Union called stopwork meetings to discuss award breakdowns; in Christchurch shop assistants voted for a 48-hour stoppage starting on 16 November, while in Auckland workers also stopped that day and picketed major stores. They also voted to refuse to work extra late hours at Christmas unless the employers shifted their position.

New negotiations on the non-food award on 19 November again broke down, and employees in Auckland responded with stoppages at selected stores. A stopwork meeting of retail butchers in Auckland on 26 November decided to stay out until 30 November. The supermarket and grocery award was settled on 27 November, with a 7.5 per cent rise in wages and improved conditions. The employers gained 6 extra trading hours and the right to open to 9 pm on four nights a week. Talks on the butchers' award adjourned indefinitely on 30 November without reaching agreement, while the non-food sector employers claimed that the expiry of the old award on 29 November left them free to open whenever they wished. Storeworkers and other staff employed by Nathans and Foodstuffs walked out on 11 November for 48 hours, in protest against the breakdown in the storeworkers' award talks. The union claimed a 7 per cent wage rise for a 10-month term, so that the award would expire at the same time as the metal trades award. The employers conceded this demand on 20 November, and on 30 November some 400 freight forwarders in the Northern, Hawkes Bay, Canterbury and Westland districts won an 8.5 per cent increase.

Northern timber workers held several one-day stoppages in protest against their award breakdown, and followed this up with overtime bans and pickets at major hardware stores. The union sought a "bottom-line" 7 per cent wage rise for a 10-month term with a legally enforceable pass-on to above-award rates, while the employers offered a 9 per cent rise for 12 months. The Timber Workers Union called further one-day stoppages on 27 and 30 November, and kept the overtime bans in place.

The Waterside Workers Federation and the Association of Waterfront Employers agreed on a further 244 voluntary redundancies to be offered to watersiders at the ports of Whangarei, New Plymouth, Wellington, Lyttleton, Timaru, Dunedin, Bluff and Westport. Redundancy payments to some workers were expected to be as high as \$40,000.

DECEMBER 1987

A joint deputation of manufacturers and unionists, including Mr D Rowlands, the president of the Manufacturers Federation, Mr K Douglas and Mr R Jones, the secretary of the Engineers Union and president of the Labour Party, met the Minister of Trade and Industry on 1 December to urge less haste in cutting import duties so as to protect employment in new Zealand industry.

The Employers Federation appointed a new director-general, Mr D Jessup, to replace Mr Rowe. The director of advocacy, Mr S Marshall, was promoted to deputy director-general.

In elections for contested posts on the Council of Trade Unions, Ms Angela Foulkes, of the Bank Officers Union, was elected vice-president over the clerical workers' nominee, Ms Therese O'Connell.

Five smaller but active unions - the Northern Pulp and Paper Workers, Wellington Boilermakers, Wellington Coachworkers, Wellington Moulders, and New Zealand Shipwrights - announced plans to combine into a Manufacturing and Construction Workers Union.

The Minister of Labour announced an increase in the statutory minimum wage by 7 per cent, from \$210 to \$225 per week, from 8 February 1988.

The Equal Opportunities Tribunal began public hearings on 30 November of a claim by the Human Rights Commission against Air New Zealand on behalf of 17 air hostesses who alleged discrimination because of their sex. The hearings were adjourned for two months on 18 December, after 15 of the women had given evidence.

Bakers gained a 10.4 per cent increase on 1 December, but the term of the award was for 14 months and the union forfeited a penal payment for Friday afternoon baking. Butchers gained an 8.25 per cent increase after striking in Auckland, Wellington and Nelson, but they conceded the right to trade on Saturdays and to remain open to 9 pm on two nights a week.

Resumed talks on the carpenters' award broke down when the union rejected employer proposals to split the document and negotiate separately for maintenance carpenters and carpenters on construction sites. The union delayed further stopwork meetings until after the holiday break.

Ancillary drivers - who are employed by manufacturing and retail firms to deliver their goods - continued their campaign for a settlement to match the 14 per cent rise gained by carriers' drivers. About 125 Auckland ready-mix concrete drivers resumed their strike on 1 December, after unsuccessful negotiations for a separate award. On 7 December Mr B Andersen named several major firms in Auckland, including Watties, New Zealand Towel Supply, Arnotts and Griffins, which had agreed to meet the union's pay claims. He also announced intensified action against firms which had refused to pay, among them Winstones, Foodtown and the Auckland Star. The concrete drivers voted to end their strike on 9 December, after accepting an improved offer equivalent to a 14 per cent pay rise. The same increase was won by contractors' drivers: an 8.6 per cent basic rise plus a weekly \$32.50 industry allowance, but even higher increases were negotiated in a separate deal with three major construction companies, Fletcher Challenge, Downer, and Wilkins and Davies. After week-long strikes drivers for Winstones and Progressive Enterprises (owners of Foodtown and 3 Guys supermarkets) also gained increases of around 14 per cent, but the ancillary drivers' award remained unsettled by the end of the year. Drivers of armoured security vehicles in Auckland called off a threatened strike on 21 December, after reaching agreement on pay increases of about 10 per cent.

Renewed negotiations on the maintenance electricians' award failed to reach agreement. The employers offered a 7 per cent rise but claimed that there was no need for this award and that the electricians should be covered by separate workplace composite agreements. At a stopwork meeting in Auckland on 14 December electricians in non-essential industries voted to hold a 48-hour strike, while staff in essential industries gave 14 days notice of industrial action. On 31 December electricians in non-essential industries started an indefinite strike, which was joined two days later by their colleagues in essential industries.

Harbour workers voted overwhelmingly in favour of industrial action, after rejecting a pay offer of 7 per cent. The union, which claimed a 12 per cent increase, blamed the Auckland Harbour Board for the breakdown of the award talks, but informal discussions with the Board averted a threatened strike. The award was signed on 21 December, with a 7 per cent increase over a 9 month term (equivalent to 9.33 per cent over 12 months) and protection for local agreements negotiated under section 65 of the old Industrial Relations Act.

The award for resthome domestic workers was settled on 5 December, with a 7 per cent immediate increase and a further 6 per cent rise from next June, plus other payments and benefits, including recognition of tangi leave and the removal of youth rates. Private hospital domestic staff later gained a 9.6 per cent increase, which the union described as satisfactory, and public hospital domestic staff won a 7 per cent rise.

Auckland hotel workers voted 1 117 to 73 on 1 December to strike for two days on 3 and 4 December and to continue their campaign with rolling stoppages in the following weeks. A large picket outside the Regent Hotel on 4 December was joined by Mr J Barnes, the 80-year old leader of the 1951 waterfront dispute. Hotel workers in other centres also held one or two-day stoppages. Inner-city hotels were most affected by the stoppages, and in Wellington police intervened in clashes between management staff and union officials who claimed the right of entry under the Labour Relations Act. An Auckland union official was arrested on 9 December after a flare-up on a picket line. Negotiations on the award resumed on 18 December. The employers tabled a new pay offer which was accepted at stopwork meetings in Auckland, Wellington and Christchurch. The package provided for a 7 per cent pay rise plus a \$2 payment for unpleasant duties. The employers dropped their demand for increased part-time and casual staff. Chartered and licensed club staff held a 24-hour strike in Auckland on 11 December, after their award talks broke down.

Newspaper journalists south of Taupo accepted a revised pay package on 11 December, including an 8.5 per cent wage rise and an agreement on the introduction of new technology. Staff on the *Dominion* newspaper however walked out on 15 December to show their opposition to the award settlement. Auckland private radio journalists held an unprecedented 24-hour strike on 23 December in protest against employer attempts to change provisions in their award.

Auckland labourers held a stopwork meeting on 15 December, followed by a 24-hour strike over the breakdown of their award talks.

After stoppages in Auckland, Wellington and Christchurch, commercial printers won overall increases of between 10 and 11.4 per cent on 9 December, including an 8.5 per cent rise in wages and allowances for a 10 month term. Two days later similar increases were announced for packaging printers, but award talks for newspaper printers failed to get off the ground because one company, Independent Newspapers Ltd, insisted on a separate deal with its printing staff.

A government pay offer of 7 per cent, backdated to 10 November, was approved overwhelmingly at meeting convened by the PSA on 8 and 9 December. The offer applied to some 70 000 public servants, but did not include staff of the new state-owned enterprises or staff employed in education, health and broadcasting. Electricorp offered its employees a 7 per cent increase conditional on the document being split into 7 divisional agreements, but the PSA insisted on a single document. Telecom Corporation's 23 500 staff accepted a 7 per cent increase, as did police officers up to the level of superintendent.

On 9 December the Minister of State Services introduced a new State Sector Bill, which is to replace the State Services Conditions of Employment Act of 1977 and the State Services Act of 1962. The Bill proposes to give to the Prime Minister the power to appoint heads of government departments (to be known as chief executives) on the recommendation of the State Services Commission. These chief executives will be employed on individual contracts of up to 5 years, and will have the power to hire and fire staff free from existing restraints. State servants will lose the right of appeal against outside appointments and will be subject to the provisions of the Labour Relations Act, apart from some specific provisions for the state sector. State unions will lose the right to take claims to compulsory arbitration. The state unions announced their intention to conduct a major campaign against the Bill, which their chairman, Mr C Hicks, described as outrageous and "little short of industrial and political hooliganism". Mr Hicks warned that the Bill, if passed, would signal the end of New Zealand's politically neutral public service. At its final meeting of the year the Cabinet approved the closure of the State Pay Research Unit.

The Railways Corporation reached agreement with the Locomotive Engineers Association on the single-manning of freight trains as an economy measure.

The non-food retail award was settled with a 7.5 per cent rise in pay and allowances, with the employers gaining the right to remain open until 9 pm on up to 4 nights a week. Auckland wholesale liquor employees went on strike on 7 December, when the employers rejected a 17 per cent pay claim. They were joined by wholesale employees in Hamilton, Tauranga, Rotorua and Christchurch. The dispute was settled on 17 December, when the workers accepted a 10 per cent rise in wages over a 14 month term and a 50 per cent increase in their industry allowance.

PPTA members attended mass stopwork meetings in the first week of December to consider government proposals to give school principals the right to allocate teachers' salaries. At Okaihau, in Northland, 200 teachers called for a campaign of rolling stoppages to start in February. The Auckland meeting, attended by some 2 000 teachers, decided to hold another stopwork meeting in February. The chairman of the Secondary Schools Principals Association said principals were completely opposed to the new salary structure proposals because they were too divisive.

JANUARY 1988

Figures supplied by the Employers Federation showed that by the end of 1987, 138 out of 243 awards had been settled. Fifty-nine negotiations were adjourned without agreement, and 46 negotiations had yet to begin. Three-quarters of the settlements were at 7 per cent, the remainder were above this figure, with 14 settlements at or above 8.5 per cent.

The Minister of Women's Affairs, Mrs Shields, spoke on 25 January in favour of legislation to enforce equal pay for work of equal value. Mrs Shields had just returned from a six-week overseas tour which had enabled her to study moves towards such legislation in Sweden, France, Italy, Britain and the United States. She anticipated the setting up of tribunals which would compare the value of different kinds of work and would order increases in the wages of underpaid groups.

The number of registered unemployed, excluding students, at the end of December 1987 passed 6 per cent of the workforce for the first time since the second world war. Including students and people on subsidised work schemes, the total stood at 119 189 unable to find work.

Christchurch clothing workers voted for a one-day strike on 15 February over a breakdown of their national award talks. Auckland drug and chemical workers won an 8.5 per cent wage settlement.

The strike of some 700 Auckland maintenance electricians continued throughout January. Six Nelson electricians at the Sealord Products factory walked out in support, but the Wellington branch of the union, whose secretary is Mr T Neary, delayed a decision on support until 27 January. A stopwork meeting that day, addressed by the national secretary, Mr J Fisher, voted in favour of an immediate 48-hour stoppage. The dispute had meanwhile spread to Northland, Hamilton and Tauranga and it involved workers who were not covered by the disputed award but by separate tradesmen's agreements, as was the case at the New Zealand Sugar Co and the breweries. The union argued however that several clauses in these agreements were based on the national award. Factories which were forced to cease production when electrical equipment broke down, sent their workers home and by the end of the month some 1 500 Auckland workers were suspended without pay. The employers nevertheless refused to budge from their 7 per cent pay offer.

In negotiations for another occupational award, for factory maintenance engineers, the employers also stood fast on a 7 per cent pay offer. The Engineers Union claimed 8.5 per cent. Auckland factory engineers voted in favour of a nationwide strike, the union made plans to co-ordinate this action with the maintenance electricians, but when some other engineers' branches voted against a stoppage, the Engineers Union decided to hold further consultations with its members.

Wool scour workers decided to impose a load-out ban from 24 January after a further breakdown in their award talks. Negotiations on the freezing workers' award had also broken down, with the unions asking for an 8.6 per cent rise and the employers offering 7 per cent. The Meat Workers Union decided to hold shed meetings and to take a ballot on a national stoppage at an opportune time, when the freezing works were busier.

The first employers' attempt to opt out of award coverage under section 152 of the Labour Relations Act was adjourned in the Labour Court in Wellington on 21 January. A new firm, Otaki Abattoirs, which is owned by West Coast International Corporation, had signed a house agreement with 11 of its 16 freezing workers in December, but the Meat Workers Union alleged bullying tactics by the company and mounted a 2-day picket at the works gate in mid-January which prevented the killing of stock. The union proposed an agreement under section 134, which would leave the workers outside the award but would be legally enforceable and would recognise the union as the workers' bargaining agent.

Stopwork meetings of daily newspaper journalists in Auckland and Hamilton approved a pay package with a basic 8.5 per cent increase, already accepted by their southern colleagues.

More than a hundred workers, including labourers and drivers, at the Martha Hill goldmining project in Waihi stopped work on 19 January because the company refused to conclude a site agreement, as is customary on major construction sites. The company sought a compliance order in the Labour Court. The Labourers Union was also involved in demarcation disputes with the Engineers Union over riggers' work at the reconstruction of the earthquake-damaged Bay Milk Products factory in Edgecumbe and at the Tasman mill site in Kawerau. Crane-drivers, who are members of the Northern Distribution Workers Union, stopped work in Edgecumbe on 5 January to avoid becoming involved in the dispute, and the Labour Court refused to issue a compliance order to force them back

to work. The FOL held a meeting of affiliates on 27 January to discuss the Edgcombe deadlock and Mr K Douglas afterwards visited the site.

In the Tasman mill site dispute Fletcher Challenge claimed that the Labourers Union had imposed a ban on the handling of Fletcher products in Auckland from 13 January because the company had given some riggers' work at Kawerau to members of the Engineers Union. Fletcher Challenge sought a compliance order in the Labour Court, but the union argued that the ban was in support of its award campaign and the Court refused to issue an order. On 23 January labourers stopped work for a day at three central Auckland building sites and at all Fletcher Construction sites in Wellington as part of their award campaign.

The award covering some 2 000 practice nurses was settled on 29 January with a 7 per cent increase. The passenger bus award, covering some 2 000 bus drivers, was settled at an average 11 per cent. The Post Office Union launched a \$100 000 publicity campaign on 22 January in favour of continued state control of telecommunications. In support of its case the union released a glossy brochure "Keeping in Touch".

The PSA gave notice of industrial action by power workers over the breakdown of award talks with Electricorp. All eight North Island thermal power stations were to shut down for 24 hours on 13 January, to be followed by indefinite bans on overtime and on call-out requests. After informal talks collapsed on 8 January, the stoppage went ahead as planned and caused widespread power cuts, particularly in the Auckland area. The day of the strike, 13 January, also happened to be the day when electricity was first generated for public use in New Zealand a hundred years earlier, and New Zealand Post marked the centenary by issuing a commemorative set of stamps. Twizel hydro station workers joined the overtime and call-out bans and gave notice of their intention to shut down all South Island generating plants. A second one-day strike was set for 27 January, to be followed by weekly stoppages. The PSA later deferred this stoppage to 3 February, but on 19 January it called off all industrial action, after Electricorp had agreed to a PSA request to resume negotiations under an independent chairman, Mr M Teen, an industrial mediator with the Labour Department.

Sir Thaddeus McCarthy, who had chaired three Royal Commissions on the state services in 1962, 1969 and 1972, told the press that the government was going "too far too fast" with its State Sector Bill. "This is possibly the destruction of the state sector as we know it," he said. The public service needed shaking up but "at the same time I do not want to see a career organisation destroyed. I think this Bill could do that." The Minister of State Services dismissed published comments on the Bill as "little more than scaremongering" and praised it as "one of the most enlightened pieces of legislation that we have entered into" and which would prove itself over the next 25 years. The PSA made plans for stopwork meetings and strike action in opposition to the Bill, and the NZEI set dates for stopwork meetings of primary and intermediate school teachers in February to protest against the Bill. The teachers' main concern was the removal of the right to take disputed claims to arbitration. The PPTA women's officer, Ms H Watson, described proposals to give school principals power to determine teachers' salaries as "a male model, based on male careers and a competitive male business world". Most women teachers, she said, would have to bargain with a male principal, as 197 out of 207 co-educational state secondary schools were headed by men. The PPTA Maori officer, Mr K Mair, denounced the proposals as "diabolical" because principals, who mostly came from white, middle-class backgrounds, would give a low priority to the teaching of maoritanga.

FEBRUARY 1988

The state employees' campaign against the State Sector Bill gathered momentum in February. The PSA issued 4000 campaign kits to delegates outlining the implications of the Bill and reasons for opposing it, and set 16 February, when Parliament was due to resume, as a national Day of Action. On the eve of the planned mass march through the capital, the Prime Minister appealed to state servants to ignore the rallies, but he also stressed that the 1 April starting date for the new law was not negotiable. Mr Lange urged state unions to talk to ministers about their concerns, but the Nurses Association replied that it had tried in vain to meet the Prime Minister, the Minister of Health or the Minister of State Services. In Dunedin, on 15 February, banner-waving PSA members carried a coffin containing a copy of the Bill to Mr Rodger's electorate office, intent on burying it "in Stan's backyard." The protest march through Wellington on 16 February stretched for 2.5 km and was the biggest march since the demonstrations against the SIS Bill in 1977, with participation estimated at between 13 000 and 20 000. A small group of health workers also demonstrated from the parliamentary galleries.

Protest rallies also took place in other centres, such as Hamilton, Rotorua, Palmerston North and Masterton. Auckland public servants attended indoor 2-hour stopwork meetings in their departments, and voted to support a national 24-hour stoppage on 14 March. The government, undeterred by the protests, moved to speed up consideration of the Bill by introducing a motion which allowed the select committee, which was hearing evidence on the Bill, to sit at the same time as Parliament. Among those who gave evidence to the select committee was a former chairman of the State Services Commission, Dr M Probine, who said the Bill in its present form would mean a return to inefficiency and corruption and would make it virtually impossible to attract able staff and to maintain a career public service. He suggested withdrawal of the Bill and the appointment of a Royal Commission to recommend changes to the state sector.

The Nurses Association also voiced its opposition to the State Sector Bill which, it claimed, could lead to discrimination against women through "tap-on-the-shoulder" appointments and the scrapping of child-care facilities and part-time arrangements. The Association gave its support to the PSA's Day of Action on 16 February and asked members to raise public awareness, lobby MPs, and organise direct action. Wellington and Masterton hospital nurses voted to strike for 5 days from 7 March, without jeopardising the health and safety of patients. Nurses from Auckland public hospitals held a stopwork meeting on 15 February - their first since 1985 - and decided, with one abstention, to join the 5-day strike from 7 March. Support for this "week of industrial action" also came from many other hospitals, despite a warning in the Catholic journal *Tablet* that the nurses' action would cause the death of patients.

Twenty-nine massively attended stopwork meetings of primary and intermediate school teachers throughout the country condemned the government's refusal to negotiate the State Sector Bill with the Combined State Unions, called for its withdrawal, and supported the holding of rolling stoppages, electorate by electorate. The NZEI executive decided that the stoppages would start on 1 March, and would continue until further notice. The PPTA opened its attack on the Bill with a training seminar in Wellington on 14 February, attended by about 70 teachers from around the country. It followed this up with a series of 2-hour meetings at secondary schools, but, apart from its campaign against the Bill, the PPTA also held meetings to discuss the breakdown of pay talks. It decided to start a campaign of rolling stoppages on 1 March. Staff at teachers' colleges also held stopwork meetings which condemned the Bill; Auckland technical institute tutors held a stopwork meeting on 23 February, and kindergarten teachers stopped work throughout New Zealand on the afternoon of 26 February and voted to strike on 14 March.

A Heylen research poll commissioned by the Business Roundtable showed strong public support for enterprise bargaining, union contestability, and politically independent unions. Thirty-one per cent favoured compulsory union membership and 45 per cent opposed it, with the remainder neutral. Mr R Barker, secretary of the Service Workers Federation, dismissed the figures as "rubbish" and entirely predictable, because asking the Roundtable to commission a poll on trade unions was equivalent to the Master Butchers Association sponsoring a poll on vegetarianism.

The bank officers' award was settled with a rise of 7.24 per cent for officers over 20, and higher increases of between 8 and 9 per cent for those below 20. The award covers the traditional trading banks only, and negotiations are continuing with two new retail banks, National Australia and Countrywide.

Negotiations between the Cleaners and Caretakers Union and the Education Department for a new award for school cleaners broke down, with the union asking for a 9.13 per cent wage rise and the Department offering 7 per cent. Stopwork meetings of cleaners voted in favour of industrial action, which took the form of a nationwide 48-hour stoppage on 23 and 24 February and forced many primary and secondary schools to close for hygiene reasons. Pay talks with the Department resumed after the strike.

The Building Workers (formerly Carpenters) Union accepted a 7 per cent increase in the carpenters' award. It successfully resisted employer attempts to split the award into separate documents for construction workers and maintenance carpenters, and to deny the industry allowance to the latter. Building labourers continued with industrial action over their award breakdown. They stopped work for 48 hours in Christchurch on 2 and 3 February, and held stopwork meetings which voted for an indefinite strike in Wellington and for a 10-day strike in Auckland which ended on 22 February. The employers had offered a 7.8 per cent rise but the union asked for an overall package of about 14 per cent. "If the carpenters want to settle for a low settlement, that is their affair," commented the labourers' Auckland assistant secretary. Fletcher Challenge filed papers suing the Labourers Union and 8 of its officials for \$10 million - by far New Zealand's biggest industrial damages claim - and also sought an injunction to prevent the union continuing its ban on Fletcher products at Auckland building sites. The case was adjourned in the Wellington High Court on 22 February and next day pay talks resumed. This time agreement was reached on a two-stage wage rise: 7 per cent from 1 December, the expiry of the old award, to 1 February, and 8.5 per cent on wages and allowances from 1 February to 30 November. In separate negotiations about 100 oil rig workers on two drilling platforms off the Taranaki coast won a pay increase package totalling 13 per cent, after they had gone on strike in protest against a 7 per cent offer.

Some 80 workers at the Maori Arts and Crafts Institute in Rotorua went on strike on 5 February over the dismissal of 4 carvers and 2 other staff members. They returned after 3 days, after the Institute Board had agreed to the combined unions' demands for reinstatements and negotiations over redundancy payments.

The Clothing Workers Unions settled on a 7 per cent wage rise for their 13 000 members.

The maintenance electricians' strike continued, causing the suspension of up to 2 000 production workers between Taupo and Northland. Meetings of strikers rejected a modified employers' offer still based on a 7 per cent rise, but they endorsed a union executive recommendation to seek individual pay deals with companies. By 5 February between a third and a half of maintenance staff had resumed work in Auckland, after gaining satisfactory pay rises from their employers. On 11 February, when the union settled the

award at 7 per cent, it claimed that a significant number of electricians had made separate deals at an average increase of 8 per cent, with some packages as high as 21 per cent.

Factory maintenance engineers settled their award at 7 per cent, to be added to actual paid rates. On 5 February the Engineers Union signed an agreement with the Nissan Manufacturing Co to introduce Japanese-style work practices ("The Nissan Way") at its Wiri car assembly plant in South Auckland. It divides the 200 workers into teams of 10, replaces traditional job classifications with a single pay scale so that all workers are available for all jobs, and scraps conditions allowances and service pay. In return for the loss of allowances, the workers were given an increase of 5 per cent on top of the basic 7 per cent rise, and they became eligible for further pay rises of between 1.5 and 5 per cent depending on job performance. Sixty-five Nissan stores, clerical and other workers, who regarded the engineers' agreement as a sell-out, went on strike indefinitely on 18 February after rejecting a company offer of a 5 per cent rise. The strikers later offered to return but demanded the reinstatement of a storeworkers' delegate whose employment had been terminated earlier. The company refused reinstatement and on 23 February it dismissed the strikers, suspended the production workers, and threatened to close down the plant permanently. Storeworkers also went on strike on 24 February at the New Zealand Motor Corporation's national parts warehouse in Mt Wellington over failure to renew a site agreement.

In the meat workers' award negotiations both sides agreed on a flat wage rise of \$24.13 a week, but the talks broke down on 19 February over the employers refusal to make separate shed deals part of the national award. The unions considered the option of a national strike, but they were in a weak bargaining position; farmers were holding back stock because of the low prices received and the companies had laid off some 3000 meat workers.

Talks on the tearoom and restaurants award, which covers some 15 000 workers, broke down and the Hotel Workers Union decided to hold stopwork meetings of the members affected. The union also made efforts to bring cooks working for Ansett under the Air New Zealand award, which would give them better rates of pay and conditions.

The Registrar of Unions approved the registration of the IHC Staff Association, which covers about 2 000 paid workers for intellectually handicapped children. The association had operated for 9 years as an incorporated society. It claimed to be the first union in the world established specifically in a voluntary agency.

Award negotiations covering some 3 000 local government officers in 72 local authorities north of Taupo broke down over employer attempts to exempt between 350 and 800 senior officers from the award and place them on individual contracts. At present only the two top management posts in each authority are excluded. The Northern Local Government Officers Union planned to call stopwork meetings.

As part of its campaign against the deregulation of Telecom, the Post Office Union brought to New Zealand a former general secretary of the British National Communications Union, Mr B Stanley, who toured the country to speak to union members and media about Britain's experiences with deregulation.

A split in the employers' ranks, with INL withdrawing from the Newspaper Publishers Association negotiating team because it wanted to make a separate agreement with its printers, disrupted negotiations for a new newspaper printers' award. INL offered its printers substantial lump sum redundancy payments in compensation for the introduction of direct editorial input systems. The INL printers wished to accept the offer, but their

union wanted the INL deal attached to the schedule to the national award, while the NPA preferred two separate awards, for INL and the rest. Frustration at the lack of progress led to sporadic strikes which interrupted publication of the *New Zealand Herald*, the *Auckland Star* and the *Christchurch Star*. On 25 February printers struck at the *Dominion*, which is published by INL, in protest against their union's refusal to agree to a separate INL award.

Public service typists in Auckland, Northland, Masterton, Wanganui and Christchurch held a 24-hour stoppage on 3 February and followed this up with work bans and other restrictions. The action was in protest against a breakdown in their award talks with the State Services Commission, which had proposed the introduction of regional rates, with salaries set by local management. Wellington typists stopped work on 4 February and also placed restrictions on overtime and on work for Parliament. They resumed normal work on 9 February.

Airport crash firefighters employed by the Airways Corporation discussed industrial action in protest against plans to put crash fire services out to tender from 1 April, when airport authorities will become responsible for this service. At New Plymouth and Tauranga airports the Corporation had already lost the contracts to private tenderers. Christchurch airport firefighters walked out on 7 February, which halted Air New Zealand and Ansett flights in and out of the city. They were not prepared to be treated as a commodity, they explained, to be bought and sold in some commercial lottery. The Airways Corporation applied to the Labour Court for an injunction, but the strike was settled on 8 February in a secret deal between the PSA and the Christchurch City Council, which gave assurances of job security, retention of existing conditions and union recognition after 1 April. Auckland crash firemen called off a threatened stopwork meeting to ease negotiations with the Corporation, but an Airways Corporation spokesperson said the Christchurch precedent was unhelpful and it was not able to guarantee jobs to all its crash firemen. When further talks broke down, firemen voted to strike nationwide for half a day on 10 March.

After inconclusive mediation sessions with Mr Teen, the PSA asked Electricorp on 10 February to allow Mr Teen to make a binding decision on their pay dispute, failing which it threatened renewed industrial action. The corporation refused the request, but invited the PSA to resume negotiations. In further talks, chaired by Mr Teen, both sides agreed on 19 February to an 8.2 per cent pay rise and to splitting the single award into 7 separate industrial agreements.

The Auckland Tramways Union laid a complaint with the Human Rights Commission because the Auckland Regional Authority gave free travel "spouses' passes" to married and de facto partners of bus drivers but refused them to gay partners. The Wellington City Council had agreed last year to issue free travel passes to male and female homosexual partners, but in Auckland a lesbian driver who had received such a pass last year had it confiscated when the ARA "found out about her". On 23 February the ARA staff committee recommended that the Authority issue an "associates' pass" to whichever person a driver wished to nominate.

Herbert Roth

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