

CHRONICLE

JULY 1988

After a meeting of affiliates' advocates on 4 July, the CTU announced plans to hold separate meetings of unions in 7 industrial sectors to discuss a common wage round strategy. The 7 sectors were state corporations, state-linked, primary processing, import substitution, retail, tourism-recreation, and communications and personal services. Mr P. Carroll, of the Auckland Employers Association, welcomed the move away from general awards to industry-specific bargaining, but both employers and government representatives pushed for a low or nil wage round. A Treasury report submitted to the Tripartite Wage Conference on 13 July forecast continued high unemployment and cited a study which suggested that every extra one percent added to the wage bill was likely to cause a loss of nearly 14,000 jobs. The CTU denounced the Treasury document as inept advice from "an outfit with a proven record of institutional incompetence", and rejected calls to keep wage rises below the rate of inflation. The conference agreed to establish a joint taskforce to look into active labour market questions.

A report prepared by the Working Group on Equal Pay and Equal Opportunity recommended that all occupations where more than 60 percent of the workforce were women should be evaluated to see whether they were underpaid and to what extent low pay was due to discrimination. It also recommended legislation to raise pay where discrimination could be proved, and the establishment of a commission to promote equal opportunities. The current gap between male and female pay rates was 20 percent and this was "a cause for considerable concern", said the Deputy Prime Minister. Mr Palmer announced that the government would call for submissions on the report by October and would then decide what action to take.

The closure of the Islington and Burnside freezing works and of the sheep-killing chains at the Westfield works caused the redundancy of about 2350 meat workers. CTU president Douglas condemned the "slash and burn mentality" of the retrenchment programme, but an employers' spokesman forecast further closures to reduce the still remaining massive over-capacity. Waitaki International, the owner of Islington and Burnside, offered a redundancy package of 4 weeks pay for the first year of service and 2 weeks for each following year up to a maximum of 28 years. The union however asked for 8 weeks for the first year and 2 weeks for each following year at peak season average earning rates. When negotiations broke down, the meat workers took action at both plants on 12 July to prevent the loading out of some 600,000 lamb carcasses, as well as tonnes of tallow and pelts and bales of wool. The pickets were called off at the end of July, after the company agreed to pay \$2500 for the first year and payments based on 3 categories for each following year.

The Labour Court rejected an application by the small Tirau meat company Ventec Corporation, to exclude its 33 staff from the pay rates and conditions set in the national

meat workers' award. The application was based on section 152 of the Labour Relations Act, which allows for exemption from an award where a union initiates separate second-tier demands. In this case, however, the union had not made any approach to the company but the employer had created "a fiction, an appearance of an approach by the workers initiating negotiations". The employer, wrote the judge, was bound by the act to negotiate with the union and was given no right to negotiate with individual workers either by themselves or formed into a group. The meat workers' union secretary announced that many of the Tirau men would now be entitled to significant sums of backpay and that the union would enforce award conditions of employment at the Ventec plant.

Harbour workers held a 24 hour strike on 15 July at the ports of Auckland, Wellington, Lyttelton and Port Chalmers, in protest against the breakdown of their award negotiations. The main cause of the breakdown was the Otago Harbour Board's refusal to agree to the inclusion of a "subsequent party" clause, which would have made the award binding on the new port companies which are to take over the commercial activities of harbour boards. The port companies were expected to press for reductions in staff levels and other employment conditions, along the lines of a report by the Auckland port company establishment unit released on 12 July. This report proposed to start from a "zero base" in employment relationships by cancelling existing manning, demarcation, shiftwork and allowance provisions, and it called for a single union covering harbour workers as well as watersiders, and employed under a single award confined to the port of Auckland. The two unions had earlier rejected amalgamation and the Waterside Workers Federation announced that it would fight "with a vengeance" any moves to bring watersiders under the control of port companies.

Auckland *Sun* staff rejected the company's redundancy offer after the newspaper ceased publication on 8 July with the loss of 250 jobs. The combined unions, including journalists, printers and clerical workers, picketed the newspaper office on 20 July and succeeded in gaining an improved package which provided for 9 weeks pay for the first year of service for most employees, 2 weeks for each subsequent year, an additional 4 weeks pay in lieu of notice, and up to 10 days unused sick pay. For the first time in New Zealand the redundancy package also covered the non-unionised youngsters who worked as street sellers and delivery staff.

Negotiators for 8 site unions at the Tasman mill in Kawerau recommended acceptance of a two year agreement providing for a 7.75 percent pay rise in the first year and an increase equal to the movement in the consumer price index in the second year. The deal also included formal procedures for consultation and profit sharing, but the unions accepted restrictions on their right to strike. A similar agreement had been accepted earlier by 4 other site unions but the largest union in the mill, the 600-strong Northern Woodpulp and Paper Products Union, rejected the deal. The pulp industry was undergoing turbulent times, said their secretary, and the union wanted to keep all avenues open.

The Telecom Corporation told a parliamentary committee of plans to lay off 3000 workers. On the same day, 1 July, the Railways Corporation announced plans to dismiss half its track maintenance staff of 1000 workers over the next 3 years. The Corporation also introduced steep rent increases for its 2300 rail tenants. Yet another state-owned enterprise, the Shipping Corporation, met the four maritime unions to discuss the dismissal of 200 staff, 140 of them sea-going. The other main shipping employer, the Union Shipping Co., was at the same time negotiating with the maritime unions on job cuts of more than 100 staff.

The Northern Distribution Union launched a campaign for more "progressive" redundancy deals. In a severance settlement at the Kiwi bacon factory in Auckland, the employer agreed to give 3 months notice of further lay-offs and gave the union \$4000 to engage an employment consultant to assist redundant staff to find new jobs. After a strike at Bluebird Foods' factories in Auckland and Levin, the company agreed to a nationwide redundancy agreement which provided for disclosure to the unions of "relevant financial

information" concerning the reasons for closures or staff cuts and an extended notification period.

AUGUST 1988

An employers' wage planning conference in Rotorua on 10-11 August heard conflicting views from Roger and Ken Douglas. The Minister of Finance warned that "a wage round, as a general catch-up or anticipation of inflation, centrally determined or collectively negotiated, becomes a recipe for disaster in many workplaces". The CTU president, on the other hand, offered a stable wage outcome in a trouble-free award round, based on an agreed wage rise, agreed union rights provisions and a joint approach to the government to set up committees to revamp bargaining arrangements in each sector of industry. His package, he said, was a proposal to manage change; the alternative was to "just let the jungle take over".

A further meeting of the Tripartite Wage Conference on 18 August discussed reform of the basic bargaining structure, but there was no consensus on wage rises, with the employers ruling out agreement on a central wage movement and insisting that wage increases depended on improvements in productivity. The Stores Union lodged a claim for a flat \$30 a week increase, drivers asked for an extra 7 percent, and food workers for 9.5 percent. Such claims, said the employers, had nothing to do with reality, they were out of this world, but the Auckland secretary of the Engineers Union predicted trouble if the employers made a nil offer in negotiations on the metal trades award.

Employers also forecast job losses for women if the pay equity proposals of the government working group were implemented, but union officials pointed out that they had made similar predictions in 1972, when equal pay was introduced, and had been proved wrong.

A new trade union health centre, the second in Auckland, opened in Henderson on 19 August. Prospective patients were waiting at the door and more than 4000 West Aucklanders registered on the first two days.

The Labour Department's quarterly employment survey showed a loss of 21,003 jobs (or 1.8 percent) in the year to May 1988. This figure did not include the fishing, farming and waterfront industries, or domestic work.

The downturn in the construction industry caused lay-offs of carpenters and building labourers. Some Auckland firms signed redundancy agreements for carpenters providing for 4 weeks pay for the first year and 2 weeks for each subsequent year, but other firms refused to make extra payments on the grounds that the construction industry allowance had a built-in redundancy component. On 11 July, six carpenters employed by Hawkins Construction in Whangarei went on strike for redundancy payments after the company had told them that there was no guarantee of further work after the completion of the current contract. The company applied to the Labour Court for a compliance order to force a return to work, claiming that the strike was illegal, but on 26 August the Court refused to rule on the dispute and instructed the parties to form a disputes committee. "The strike may yet prove to be illegal, but there will be no decision by this Court as to whether it is", said Judge Finnigan. Auckland building labourers held a 24 hour strike on 2 August in protest against the refusal of the Master Builders Association to accept a national redundancy agreement based on 8 weeks pay for the first year and 3 weeks for each following year. The union decided to seek agreements with individual firms after the collapse of the national talks.

Car assembly employers rejected a union proposal to set up a national award for the industry. All motor assembly firms had signed separate agreements in 1988, which reflected the needs and circumstances of the companies involved, said their advocate. The Ford Company submitted a draft agreement to its workforce in south Auckland which provided for "employee involvement" through joint committees with management. The

Engineers and Electrical Workers Unions accepted the principle of the scheme, but the Stores Union saw similarities with the "Nissan Way" proposals which had caused a lengthy strike earlier in the year. "It has the same result at the end of the day - to smash union organisation", said Stores Union assistant secretary Bruce Fowler. The Ford Company, he claimed, had a hidden agenda to include all staff at its plant in a single union covered by a single agreement. The national secretary of the Engineers Union, Rex Jones, told a stopwork meeting in Hamilton on 22 August that his union favoured the idea of consulting committees jointly with employers to discuss issues other than wages.

The national meat workers' award was settled on 4 August, with a pay increase of \$24.13 a week and a redundancy clause requiring prior notice of lay-offs. The contentious pass-on clause regarding second tier agreements was dropped from the award. At Westfield, where some 800 workers were to lose their jobs on 30 September with the closure of the lamb and mutton chains, the staff went on strike over failure to reach agreement on a redundancy package. They returned on 15 August to allow negotiations to resume with the participation of CTU president Douglas. These talks broke down again and 1400 Westfield workers went back on strike on 29 August. A conference of union, government, employer and farmer representatives to discuss the future of the meat industry met in Wellington on 31 August at the invitation of the CTU.

Following the example of the Kiwi Bacon Co., the Auckland Harbour Board engaged the same consultant, Philippa Fox, to help redundant workers with advice on finding new jobs, stress management, household budgeting and other problems. About 300 Harbour Board employees were to become redundant on 1 October, when the port's commercial operations were transferred to a new company.

The PSA decided to launch a campaign, with a publicity budget of \$120,000, against the government's privatisation proposals. The CTU agreed to assist with a special publication and the maritime unions launched their own campaign to save the Shipping Corporation from being sold. At the Government Printing Office, which is one of the departments scheduled for sale, the staff imposed a ban on all parliamentary work from 18 August and held a 24 hour strike on 23 August, including a march on Parliament. They were asking for a guarantee that existing terms and conditions would be carried over and that whoever bought the printing office would continue contributions to the staff superannuation scheme. The management threatened to suspend workers who took part in industrial action, but this threat and all bans were lifted on 31 August to allow negotiations with the State Services Commission to continue.

PSA members employed by Electricorp at the Ohaaki geothermal power scheme decided by secret ballot to strike for 24 hours on 22 August and to follow this with a ban on overtime beyond 44 hours a week. The action was in protest against the Corporation's failure to transfer existing service conditions to new agreements, and the overtime bans were joined by workers at the nearby Wairakei power station and at the Clyde hydro project. On 26 August the PSA lifted the bans and decided to invoke the disputes procedure and call in a mediator.

The Railways Corporation on 17 August announced staff cuts affecting 480 mainly workshops employees, with a further 1300 jobs to be axed over the next two years.

The Appeal Court reversed a ruling of the Arbitration Court that 5 workers dismissed by the Ford Company in December 1986 were not entitled to a personal grievance hearing because the strike which led to their dismissal had been illegal. The Appeal Court referred the personal grievances back to the Labour Court.

A two week strike by 15 timber workers at Roskill Joinery Ltd in Auckland, a Keith Hay Homes subsidiary, failed to persuade the company to sign a redundancy agreement. The company professed to be Christian and civic-minded, said the Timber Workers Union branch secretary, but it had demonstrated an uncaring attitude to staff.

Watersiders in Auckland and Wellington held a 24 hour strike late in August, after a series of meetings to discuss lack of progress in their wage negotiations.

SEPTEMBER 1988

CTU leaders repeated their calls for an Australian-style prices and incomes compact with the government and for an understanding with employers on a managed wage round. The CTU proposed a two-tier structure of wage deals comprising a general increase to recover at least the rate of inflation, and a second tier amount negotiated on an industry basis. The employers rejected this approach and the final session of the Tripartite Wage Conference on 8 September broke up without agreement. Mr Rodger made it clear that the government would not intervene in the wage round, but in a speech to the Electrical Workers Union he blamed the employers for showing no real desire to engage the CTU in constructive debate on bargaining structures. "I am disappointed", he said, "that at the point at which unions are prepared to contemplate major reform, employers are adopting a conservative position. The CTU has laid its cards on the table - it is time for employers to respond with equal purpose."

The wage round opened on 13 September with negotiations on the metal trades and commercial printers' awards, followed by talks on the northern and Canterbury stores award. In each case the employers demanded concessions on working hours as a precondition for pay increases. The unions claimed that the concessions demanded would cut weekly take-home pay by reducing overtime and that the pay offers were "miserable". When the award talks collapsed, CTU president Douglas warned of "co-ordinated union reaction" if employers continued this approach to the wage round. He repeated the CTU offer to negotiate a central wage deal, but the employers insisted that each document must address its own specific circumstances. The CTU decided to call delegates' meetings to consider a response to the award talks deadlock.

The Engineers Union lodged a claim for a 7 percent pay rise in the metal trades award, with a minimum payment of an extra \$25 a week. It also put forward proposals designed to improve productivity and efficiency through joint consultative committees in each workplace, the establishment of training committees, paid training leave of up to 320 hours a year and new safety and health provisions, as well as safeguards in case of redundancy, including longer advance notice. Negotiations on the award opened in Wellington on 13 September, but adjourned indefinitely when the employers refused to make a counter-offer on pay until after the union had accepted demands to remove restrictions on working hours and shiftwork. The employers' advocate did, however, agree that union calls for more training and consultation merited further discussion and he anticipated a split of the metal trades award into separate documents for the plastics industry, metal manufacturing and heavy engineering. The Engineers Union next launched a publicity campaign with television and full page newspaper advertisements stressing its objective to work with employers to promote efficient, highly productive and competitive industries. The key, it said, was a more cooperative relationship rather than one of confrontation and mistrust.

Talks on the commercial printers' award opened in Auckland on 13 September. The union sought an increase of 8.7 percent; the employers made no counter-offer on pay but asked for more flexibility in the workplace, with overtime not payable until after 10 hours work per day. On the second day the employers offered a 3 percent increase conditional on acceptance of their flexible hours claim. When negotiations resumed on 29 September the union reduced its claim to 7.5 percent, but no agreement was reached and the union withdrew from the talks. In large newspaper advertisements the Printing Trades Union claimed that the employers were "putting the boot in" and were expecting New Zealand workers to compete with "the sweatshops of Asia and South America".

Award talks for northern and Canterbury stores workers opened in Auckland on 14 September, with the unions seeking a \$30 a week increase, while the employers demanded variations in working hours and new provisions for shift and weekend work. On the second day the employers made a 2 percent wage offer, equivalent to a \$4 increase,

dependent on concessions on flexible hours. The unions denounced the employers' stance as provocative and confrontational and the talks adjourned.

Negotiations on the road carriers' award opened in Wellington on 19 September, but adjourned the next day when the unions rejected an employers' offer of a flat \$7.50 a week, conditional on changes in shiftwork and overtime payments. This offer was equivalent to a 2.4 percent increase, while the unions had claimed a 7 percent rise. The unions also lodged a claim for an employer-funded insurance and superannuation scheme which would provide drivers with accident and death benefits and a retirement fund.

Dairy workers' award talks opened in Rotorua on 27 September with the employers offering a 3 percent increase in response to union claims ranging from 9.5 to 12 percent. The union also sought a profit bonus linked to factory milkfat payouts. On 29 September the employers raised their offer to 4.5 percent, while the union lowered its claim to 9 percent.

The Nurses Association lodged a wage claim for a flat all-round \$20 a week rise. The PSA advised state employers that its wage claims would not exceed 7 percent or an appropriate dollar amount. Pending negotiations it held some 120 stopwork meetings to discuss its claims. The Distribution Workers Federation decided to seek a \$20 a week pay rise for its retail section.

Figures released by the Department of Statistics showed that 20,000 jobs (6.67 percent of the total number employed) had been lost in the manufacturing sector in the year to February. According to a Department of Trade and Industry survey, employment in the clothing industry declined by 22 percent (5300 people) since 1971, with most of the fall (18.5 percent) occurring since 1979. Ministry of Forestry officials announced that nearly 7000 jobs, or a quarter of the workforce, had been lost in forestry and timber processing since 1984. In reply to a question, the Minister of State Services told Parliament that 1818 state employees took voluntary severance last year at a total cost of nearly \$85 million.

The announcement that the government intended to sell the Bank of New Zealand induced the Bank Employees Union to negotiate a redeployment and redundancy package under which the bank will try to offer at least one comparable job in the same location before offering redundancy, and will also make agreed payments and superannuation concessions. Staff at the Government Printing Office agreed to cease industrial action over the projected sale of the department in return for a \$2000 incentive payment and the promise of a further \$2000 after the eventual sale. Workers taken on by the new owners will transfer with at least the present terms and conditions.

Seamen and cooks and stewards, led by the Seamen's Union president Dave Morgan, occupied the boardroom of the Shipping Corporation on 29 September to protest against the proposed sale of the company. The newly appointed chairman of the Shipping Corporation told the Seamen's Union to accept the need for reduced manning levels because otherwise the government would sell the company's assets piecemeal.

Unease at the prospect of deregulation in the petrol industry prompted the combined unions at BP New Zealand to seek compensation in the event of staff cuts. They negotiated a redundancy agreement providing for 9 weeks pay for the first year of service and $2\frac{1}{2}$ weeks for the 2nd to 20th years, and 1 week's pay for each subsequent year. It also demanded conclusion of a redundancy agreement covering all plants owned by Weddel Crown and not just Westfield. When further negotiations in Wellington, led by CTU president Douglas, failed, workers at the other Weddel Crown works in Whangarei, Cambridge (Aotearoa) and Hastings (Tomoana) joined the strike.

Auckland harbour workers picketed a "shift ship" on 3 September, claiming that the Harbour Board was attempting to change working conditions on such ships and reduce their union's work coverage in favour of the watersiders' union. The dispute spread to the ports of Onehunga, Lyttelton, Napier, Nelson and Port Chalmers. In Auckland, which

was hardest hit, 200 watersiders suffered suspension before harbour employers agreed on 12 September to include a shift clause in the national award.

OCTOBER 1988

CTU president Douglas repeated his call for a managed wage round when he addressed the annual convention of the Manufacturers Federation on 12 October. The retiring president of the Federation welcomed the CTU's offer of a more cooperative and constructive relationship, but the president of the Employers Federation denied any suggestion of a split in the employers' ranks. A group of Wellington unionists, calling themselves the Trade Union Solidarity Committee, denounced the CTU policy of "finding the community of interest with employers", but the Prime Minister, in a speech to the Auckland Chamber of Commerce, blamed the employers for failing to respond to the CTU initiatives. "So far this round", he said, "there is only deafening silence from the employers' side of the table." Employers, said Mr Lange, had to decide what they really wanted and start talking seriously with workers and unions about how they wanted bargaining to develop.

The wage round proceeded sluggishly meanwhile and the CTU complained that some of last year's documents which were now being renegotiated, had still not been registered by the Arbitration Commission. There was a backlog of about 180 of last year's awards and agreements waiting for registration and many workers had not received the pay increases due to them under these documents.

The first settlement in the current round was an award for some 700 shipping clerical officers which provided a 3.5 percent pay increase. The first major settlement, covering some 15,000 workers under the retail grocery and supermarket award, was reached on 19 October. The union had asked for a flat \$20 a week increase but it accepted a 4 percent pay rise, with a minimum of \$8 per week which gave the lowest paid members a 6.1 percent rise. It also obtained a pass-on clause for above-award workers. The employers gained the right to open to 9 p.m. on 6 nights (previously only 4 nights), but they dropped other flexible hours claims. The next major settlement covered some 20,000 clothing workers. It provided for a 3 percent rise, to be followed by a 1 percent top-up next August, but the agreement was for a term of 15 months instead of the usual 12.

Dairy workers gave the required 14 days' notice of industrial action starting on 20 October, in protest against the deadlock in their award talks. The industry was buoyant, said their secretary Ray Potroz, and a 9 percent wage increase would cost farmers 3¢ per kilogram of butterfat, out of their return of \$6.05 per kilogram, compared with \$4.07 last year. The employers' advocate replied that farmers had suffered great hardship over the past 4 years, had debts in arrears and were in a precarious financial position. The Minister of Finance attacked the employers' offer of a 4.5 percent increase as "self-centred, short-sighted and anti-social" and "a disservice to tens of thousands of business and working people", but the president of the Dairy Factory Employers Association denounced the Minister's interference as uncalled for and untimely. His association was negotiating on behalf of the dairy industry only, he said, and did not represent the government.

Award talks resumed in Rotorua but collapsed on 18 October and industrial action began at noon two days later. The union promoted a variety of disruptive tactics designed to slow down production and increase costs, but to avoid the dumping of milk. On 23 October, however, there were the first reports of milk dumping in Northland, and next day the Alpine Dairy Co. at Temuka suspended its 180 workers until they resumed normal duties. On 25 October the NZ Cooperative Dairy Co. suspended the 200 workers at its Paerata factory and this was followed by suspensions in the Manawatu, all causing the dumping of thousands of litres of milk. The union accused the employers of engineering milk spillings to gain public support, but it agreed to a return to normal work from 27 October to allow award talks to reconvene with a mediator.

Award talks for workers in the electronics industry opened on 11 October but reached deadlock with the union claiming a 9.9 percent increase and the employers offering either 2.5 percent tied to concessions on flexible hours, or a 1 percent rise without concessions.

There was no progress on the metal trades award where the Engineers Union refused to attend a meeting set for 6 October because the employers had still not made any pay offer.

Hotel workers lodged a claim for a 7.5 percent increase over an 11 month term from 1 January 1989.

Talks on the public hospital nurses' award opened on 12 October. The Nurses Association claimed an increase of \$30 a week, or 6.2 percent, but the employers demanded a reduction in penal rates and the talks adjourned to December.

Some 500 workers covered by the northern paint, varnish and ink manufacturing award went on strike in Auckland on 19 October, in protest against the employers' refusal to make a pay offer without union acceptance of casual and temporary labour and changed work hours. "Concessions the union makes will be reflected in our wage offer", said the employers' spokesman. "We are not going to sit there and throw money at them."

In negotiations on the photo litho workers' award which opened on 19 October, the union asked for an 8.5 percent increase, a reduction in the working week from 40 to 35 hours, and longer holidays. The newspaper employers countered with a 2.5 percent offer tied to a demand for the right to publish on all public holidays and for concessions on overtime pay and the employment of youth labour. The talks adjourned to December but the union decided to call immediate stopwork meetings.

Talks on the packaging printers' award broke down when the union asked for a 7.5 percent rise and the employers countered with an offer of 2 percent, dependent on union concessions on flexible work hours and other conditions. The printers called nationwide stopwork meetings which voted in favour of industrial action.

Negotiations on the non-food retail award opened in Christchurch on 25 October, but stalled with the union claiming an across the board \$14 a week increase, equivalent to a 4.4 to 5 percent rise for most adult workers, and the employers offering 2.75 percent conditional on the acceptance of extended late night trading.

Two dozen Auckland stores workers employed at two companies struck for 24 hours on 11 October over the breakdown of their award talks. A stopwork meeting of Christchurch stores workers decided to strike for 48 hours and to levy members \$15 a week to support "the longer struggle".

New legislation which took effect on 1 October allowed stevedoring companies to bring their own mobile equipment on to wharves to move cargo from a ship's side. This work had long been the preserve of members of the Harbour Workers Union but the intention of the legislation was to reduce costs by avoiding the double handling of goods. On the day the new provision came into force, Auckland harbour workers picketed the Japanese ship *Toyo Fuji II* to prevent watersiders employed by a stevedoring company from unloading it. The watersiders respected the picket line and were paid off by their employer. The harbour worker claimed that the picket was in protest against the breakdown, on 29 September, of their national award talks and was therefore legal. The Harbour Workers Union had amended its membership rule to cover employees of "other bodies undertaking work within the ports industry previously undertaken by employees of harbour boards", but this clause was challenged by the watersiders' and seamen's unions and was not accepted by the harbour boards for inclusion in the new award.

Harbour workers at Lyttelton also took action to prevent the unpacking of containers and the loading of the supply ship *Holmdale*. The Japan Line and the stevedoring company sought interim injunctions and a compliance order to force the Auckland harbour workers to lift their picket which, they claimed, was illegal because the issue was a demarcation dispute. They also sought damages from the Harbour Workers Union. On 10 October the harbour workers held up two further ships, one in Auckland, the other in Lyttelton. In a letter addressed to "fraternal brothers" Auckland harbour workers asked watersiders to respect their customary work, but the watersiders' president replied that if

the Labour Court ruled in favour of his union, his members would do the work. On 11 October the Labour Court ruled against the harbour workers, but without detailing reasons. The union lifted the picket on the *Toyo Fuji II*, which was unloaded by watersiders, but the order did not cover the ships held up in Lyttelton and elsewhere. On 13 October the Harbour Workers Union stopped shipping at all New Zealand ports by refusing to crew tugs and pilot launches. It ordered a return to work two days later, after positive discussions with the employers, but there were further local holdups at several ports.

On 20 October the Waterside Workers Federation called a 24 hour stoppage at all ports for 25 October, to protest against the involvement of CTU representatives in the Lyttelton dispute over the right to unload the Chinese ship *Bai He Kou*. CTU policy was that where work practices changed, unions should keep their traditional coverage, but on 26 October Lyttelton watersiders crossed the harbour workers' picket line to discharge the *Bai He Kou*. The chief judge of the Labour Court, on 27 October, upheld the validity of the harbour workers' membership rule, but he also expressed the opinion that there ought to be one union only covering waterfront work. When award negotiations stalled over delays in settling local conditions, the Harbour Workers Union called a 4 day stoppage on 28 October. It affected 25 ships around New Zealand, but the harbour workers called off their action after 2 days on strike.

Air New Zealand announced its intention to promote six hostesses who had complained to the Equal Opportunities Tribunal about sex discrimination by the company. The Airline Stewards and Hostesses Union protested that the company was breaking an agreement with the union to maintain the status quo until the tribunal had given its decision, and it gained an interim injunction in the Labour Court on 18 October which required Air New Zealand not to change the rankings of the women concerned.

The strike by some 2500 Weddel Crown meat workers over a redundancy agreement continued throughout the months. Meat workers at other plants contributed a levy of \$10 a week to the strike funds, and many unions and workplaces made donations. The meat workers' union also appealed for support to workers at Weddel Crown plants in Australia. Ventec Corporation, which had failed in its attempt to gain exemption from the meat workers' award, closed its Tirau plant with debts of more than \$2.5 million, less than a year after its opening.

Two officials of the Northern Labourers Union were arrested in Auckland on 10 October on a charge of trespassing at a Fletcher Construction building site. They pleaded not guilty and were remanded for a hearing in December. Inner-city building labourers walked off their jobs in protest against the arrests.

Coalcorp told the Runanga Miners Union that staff at the Strongman mine would be cut from 70 to 22 workers. Before corporatisation the mine had a staff of more than 140.

Kinleith paper workers walked out on 4 October over the sacking of a union delegate accused of theft. They stayed out for the rest of the week claiming that the man had been singled out and that the company had never considered dismissal before.

Searail submitted to the four maritime unions new timetables and shift rosters which involved a significant reduction in staff numbers and a changeover from salaries to wages plus overtime. The oil companies put before the maritime unions proposals for staff reductions on coastal tankers, including the total withdrawal of cooks and stewards. According to data released by the Shipping Corporation, the average cost of a New Zealand seaman, at US\$3,700 a month, was twice that of a British seaman and was the highest in the world. The Minister of Transport told Parliament that the average cost of employing a New Zealand watersider was \$45,940 last year, including wages and other charges. Waterside workers worked on average 29.93 hours a week, at an average hourly cost of just on \$30.