

## Special

"The workers can't afford it!" protested Muldoon, and Talboys, looking tough as he took over the top job while his boss left the country, echoed the cry.

"That's precisely the point", replied the workers. "But if you think that by holding down wages you are going to stop us taking strike action to try to get a fair deal, you've got another think coming!" And on Thursday, 20 September, hundreds of thousands of workers up and down the country staged New Zealand's first general strike since 1913.

With a mere 54 hours notice, no one could have expected a 100% response. On top of that, some union leaders had not done as much as they perhaps could have in the previous weeks to familiarise their members with the conditions of the Remuneration Act and likely options for action. Nevertheless, industry and transport ground to a halt, a high percentage of Government employees responded to the recommendation to go out, and many service sectors closed their doors.

From a numbers point of view, the strike was a success. Its effectiveness can already be seen in the fact that since the Government's intervention in the Driver's settlement, two more major awards have been settled at a level higher than the unofficial 10% cut off point and the Government has not intruded.

But if the trade union movement is to be properly effective in stopping the erosion of the living standards of its members and keeping the Government out of wage fixing procedures, there must be a lot more united and determined action still to come. For the trade union movement, from the rank and file all the way up, and for all those others in New Zealand who oppose the Government's attempts to use working people as the whipping boy in its economic policies, this round of the struggle has just begun.

This Salient Special looks at events leading up to the strike, comments on some of the leading protagonists in it, analyses the conflicting reports on the strike's effects, and examines the options left up to the various parties as they decide on their on-going strategy. There is also a special article on some of the previous major industrial disputes in New Zealand's history.

## General Strike!

### General Strike: The Political Reality

Photo of a protest rally with people holding a banner reading 'Unity is strength'

"We are coming up to the General Wage Order Application. That's our big fixture for the year.

"We had a new team, rubbed down and rarin' to go with a new plan. This time we were going for a minimum living wage for all workers. We wanted the whole team to be involved.

"Out with percentage play, we were going to spin it around. This way we'd get relief for the low income workers. They'd been taking a lot of knocks lately.

"Even Muldoon, he's the skipper of the other team, he'd said our strategy was sound.

"We'd worked out our moves, and we were running out onto the field when, all of a sudden, the captain of the other team comes over the public address system and says that he's calling the match off!

"He says that he's changed the rules because he didn't like the way that we were going to play. Maybe he just thought we were going to win.

"Anyway, says be doesn't think the ref would be able to handle the match, so he was talking over. He said he would talk it over with his team and from now on They would make up the scores and announce the results!

"I just about threw the liniment at him when he said we'd all get a few percent later, but there'd be no more footy.

"This is taking politics in sports Too far!!

"This time it is more than just a game, even a game of rugby. The stakes are my livelihood and my family's. I'm not going to take this with my boots off. We all need to get into it!"

That's how a Wellington Trades Council leaflet summed up the introduction of the Remuneration Act in August of this year. At the time, the FOL had its application for a minimum living wage order before the Arbitration Court. This Court has a history of acting on behalf of the employers and the Government when the

crunch comes (see separate article) but it is not a direct arm of the Government. With a well prepared case, the unions know that they have at least a chance of getting some of what they are asking for.

So in stepped the Government. Muldoon seized prime television and radio time to announce that the General Wage Order Act (1977) would be scrapped. This meant that the FoL no longer had the ability to apply to the Arbitration Court for a general wage order. It also rendered any other applications the FoL might make (like the one for a minimum living wage) invalid, unless they related to a specific dispute. General wage orders might still be made from time to time, but solely at the discretion of the Government and without any provision for representation by the trade unions. There would be no appeal.

Muldoon also announced that the Executive (Cabinet plus the Governor General) would take upon itself the right to scrap any agreements made between employers and unions that it doesn't like. So "free wage bargaining" was properly out the door.

Under the new scheme, the practice of taking days off in lieu of overtime, with the approval of the employer, could be stopped. Perhaps worst of all, a regulation could be passed making it a condition of employment that you are not a union member.

The Act that allows the Government to do all these things is the Remuneration Act. It was introduced into Parliament straight after Muldoon's unprecedented "simulcast" announcement. It is quite clear from the above that the Act strikes at the very basis of trade union rights.

## **Dare to Struggle, Dare to Win**

For years, unions have been fighting for the right to bargain freely with employers over wages and conditions. Even the right to represent workers was not easily won. The living standard of workers today, their wages and conditions of employment, have not been handed to them on a platter. They have been fought for, every step of the way.

Many commentators (the latest, as we go to press, being Catholic bishops) have argued that the unions, employers and the Government should find a way of sitting down together and working out a way of resolving differences without resorting to industrial strife. What they don't seem to realise is that the whole weight of history shows that employers do everything they can to increase profits, and workers benefit from the fruits of the products they make only inasmuch as they struggle for those fruits. That's the way the system works, whether we like it or not. When the going gets tough for the employers, it's the workers who suffer.

Profits in New Zealand are high (for the monopolies, that is) yet living standards are steadily deteriorating. Unemployment is soaring, while prices continue to climb. Electricity, to take just one example, is up 300% since 1975. It's not the wealthy who suffer. They are well insulated by the rising cost of living. It's the poor: the low paid workers, beneficiaries and people trying to raise a family on the type of wages most workers are paid these days.

The Government and the employers aren't going to look after the hard hit of their own accord. It isn't in their interests. They have an efficient propaganda machine in the mass media which spouts rubbish about the "national interest". Times are hard, says the Government, and no-one affected by the economic crisis can doubt it. Therefore, argues the Government, you all have to pull in your belts. So many small businesses, workers and others who have been cutting new notches in their belts for a while now, get out their knives and cut another notch. And meanwhile, "restructuring," which will put the economy on a new footing, proceeds apace.

## **It's a Beautiful Country — Take it**

"This is a beautiful country!" screamed the odd bystander watching the Auckland Trades Council march last Thursday. It certainly is, but is it ours? The Government's policy of "restructuring" means essentially that raw materials, energy resources and a "cheap white" labour force are being offered to foreign multinationals at bargain rates. The idea is supposed to be that they will invest here, develop our industry, boost our exports and provide more work.

In fact, we can expect the siphoning of massive profits out of the country, precious little increase in New Zealand's technological expertise and a bankrupt local manufacturing sector. On top of all this, the multinationals generally operate on a capital-intensive basis, so far from providing more jobs they actually put people out of work. Many multinationals, already function in this way in New Zealand.

If the Government (and others who have joined the call) are to be successful in fully bringing about this "restructured" economy, they must be able to guarantee a docile, stable and cheap workforce. Measures like the Remuneration Act are an attempt to provide this guarantee. The unions, and a great many other people as well, oppose the Government's concept of "restructuring". They know that if it is successful it will be directly at the expense of working people, the social welfare system and small businesses.

The transformation has already been made in other countries, for example in South Korea and Singapore. Both of these are controlled by fascist regimes. If the New Zealand Government and its backers are to succeed, they too will have to use harsh measures to crush all who oppose them or are likely to.

From many people's point of view, the choice is "simple": either we fight now to defend our living standards and democratic rights, or we lose. That is the context of the general strike and the struggle against the Remuneration Act. It's political alright, but that doesn't make it unjustified. The reality is that politics is the name of the game, and often it isn't easy.

## General Strike: The Lead Up

When the Remuneration Act was introduced, the FoL held a special conference. The decision of that conference was to empower the FoL National Executive to call for nationwide action if the Act was used. Nothing was specified, but the clear intention of delegates was that if the trade union movement didn't fight this law it might as well pack up and go home.

Then the Drivers' dispute, three and a half months in the running, came to an end. Agreement was reached on a new award that would give drivers' an 11% increase, plus the 4.5% general wage order and some other concessions. Word of the proposed settlement came out before it was finally resolved, and Muldoon threatened to use the Remuneration Act if the 11% was granted.

The Government joined with the Employers Federation in vying to produce the "definitive" set of figures that would prove that the drivers were getting between 17% and 25%. The top end of this range included overtime calculations. That really got the drivers: for one thing many drivers don't work overtime; for another, this country is supposed to operate on the principle of a 40 hour week. That principle was won 139 years ago. Wage settlements have never been calculated on an "overtime included" basis and it is patent nonsense that they should do so now. The Government and Employers Federation soon dropped that part of their calculations.

At the low end, which included all the other agreements as well as the basic award rate, the figure doesn't quite match up to the rising cost of living. Unacceptably high, said Muldoon. When journalists pointed out that MPs had received 17% themselves, he claimed the circumstances were entirely different, because MPs didn't go on strike.

With that he exposed another aspect of the attack on trade unions. Workers have only one weapon in their struggle to gain decent working standards: the right to withdraw their labour. They can't sack their bosses, they can't close down the factory and open up somewhere else, they can't import new technology to make bosses redundant and they can't hold unemployment over the bosses heads to make them accept the workers' demands. A strike is also a legitimate form of protest because no-one can have the right to force others to continue working for them regardless of the conditions of that work.

## One for all

The Drivers' award is important because it will have a trend-setting effect for many other unions. This particular sector of the working class fought long and hard to get a decent award, not just for themselves, but for thousands of other workers as well. When the Government responded to the settlement by stating it would use the Remuneration Act, the reply from unionists was immediate.

They recognised that this attack represented not only an attempt to split the ranks of the working class, but was also a two-fold attack on all unions. If the Government was to succeed with the drivers, all the other workers who might have benefited from their settlement would lose out. Furthermore, if the Remuneration Act could be used successfully once, there would be no stopping its continued use.

While the President of the FoL (Jim Knox) was out of the country, telegrams demanding action poured in from unions, delegates and workers around the country. Knox withheld from making any statements until he had been "fully briefed". FoL Secretary, Ken Douglas and Vice President Jim Boomer flew to Australia to consult with Knox, and two days later the latter made his first statement. The FoL is not seeking a confrontation with the Government, he announced, and will do everything it reasonably can to avoid such a thing. But, said Knox, pulling his meanest face, the Federation of Labour will take "firm action."

Meanwhile, Trades Councils around the country had been holding a series of meetings of all union members to discuss the Remuneration Act and the resolution of the special conference. These meetings were often held in a bit of a vacuum. No-one had a clear idea of what was being proposed in the event of the Act being used. Sometimes union members weren't properly mobilised to come to the meetings. Nevertheless, the coverage, especially among the industrial unions was fairly comprehensive. The response was overwhelming. Workers wanted the Remuneration Act stopped and they were prepared to fight to that end.

## All for one

Came Tuesday 11 September, the day after the use of the Act was announced, and the meetings took on a new flavour. At Seaview, 1500 workers called on the FoL to stage a general strike to be followed by rolling stoppages. By the Friday, Knox was back in the country with the announcement that the FoL Executive would meet on Monday to plan what to do. Most people thought that meant no strike: decisions that took a week to make, leaving unionists in limbo, did not usually turn out to be decisions that required a lot of build-up work if they were to be successful.

But the pressure was on. If the Government attack was to be stopped, urgent action was required. The FoL met with the Government on Monday and made an offer: calm down, forget it, was the substance of the Government's message. Shortly after 5pm, Knox announced that the FoL was calling a "nationwide stoppage" for Thursday 20 September. New Zealand's first general strike since 1913 was on.

## General Strike: "An Historic Occasion"

The Labour Party came out in favour of the strike. Rowling called it "an historic occasion," mindful perhaps of the fact that history has plagued the Labour Party's role in the 1951 lockout dispute. On that occasion, then Opposition leader Walter Nash pursued an infamous policy of "neither for nor against," and did his party a lot of harm.

For September 20, Labour politicians gave more than verbal support: they boycotted Bellamy's. With their own private food supply brought in the day before, they presumably huddled in the Beehive corridors giving a clenched fist salute every time a Cabinet minister tottered drunkenly out of the Bellamy's doors.

Bill Rowling refused to move into his new quarters on the day. A worthy gesture, underscored symbolically (he must have hoped) by the fact that the new rooms were the ones previously occupied by the Prime Minister before his shift to the Beehive. The question still remains though, of just what Labour would do in the Government's position.

Nothing in its policies or past record gives the faintest suggestion that it would follow anything other than the same "restructuring" policies of National. The labour movement might not stage a general strike against a Labour Government, and that would appear to be the only significant difference between the two parties.

The response to the FoL call was overwhelming in the industrial areas. Factories, ports, buses, trains and aeroplanes all went out in decisive numbers. Most pubs closed, entertainment was cancelled and no newspapers appeared. Most shops opened, as did the banks and many small businesses. However, the vast majority of shops had the management and/or a small number of non-striking workers serving behind the counter.

## Who's Intimidating who?

Employers' Federation executive director Jim Rowe played a consistent role right through the lead up and aftermath to the strike, he tried to claim that the Drivers' award was higher than it was. That was disproved. Then he tried to claim that the general strike wouldn't prove anything. It proved something alright: that the working class is capable of organising to fight back on a mass scale against attacks on its living standards.

So Rowe claimed that the reason many workers had stayed home was that they had been intimidated by their union officials. Salient has heard of some cases of intimidation that it thinks provide a suitable answer to Rowe's charge. But they don't concern union officials. Just the opposite.

It was announced that only one Ministerial Press Officer went out on strike. Apparently, several others were told by their Minister that if they didn't turn up on Thursday they could expect to be down the road on Friday.

In another more widespread case, also concerning government employees, it seems that in some Departments all those who wanted to strike were called in to see their director. There the individual pressure was put on. In at least one department, the workers were told that they were part of the management! Those who didn't accept such a sudden revelation were asked if that meant they did not expect to get promoted up the scale.

Under such conditions of harassment, it is surprising that the PSA managed to get the large numbers that it did. But such tactics were not limited to the public sector. During the days leading up to the strike, a group of people calling itself the "Combined Unions" telephoned many offices in Wellington to inform the workers that the strike was not official. These examples point to the kind of pressure that can be exerted on employees who have some degree of union consciousness.

## Reds Under the Bed

It was not surprising that Muldoon used his old red-baiting tactics to try to discredit the strike. From overseas, he announced that the strike call was the work of a small group of communists and should be ignored. The idea is that people will be distracted from considering the real issues by worrying about whether they might be aligning themselves with "communists". (It is worth noting in passing that the SUP is not a communist Organisation, and would have to be pushed very hard before it even tried to pretend it was.)

The response to Muldoon's red-baiting was, in many quarters, to deny that communists were involved in any significant way in the strike call. This was done in such a way as to suggest that if the opposite was true, it would be alright to engage in red-bashing. It is unfortunate that many of the people who claim to abhor Muldoon's tactics actually go along with him at least half the way.

## Official Responses

The next morning, the Dominion came out gloating that the strike had been a failure and would have strengthened the Government's resolve to stand firm. The Government must have taken a different view of the matter, because Acting Prime Minister Brian Talboys cancelled a trip overseas at the eleventh hour in order to be here for whatever happened the next week.

Labour Minister Jim Bolger called the strike "completely ineffectual", but when he sat down with the FoL to work out the next step in the Drivers' dispute, he wasn't able to turn his opinion to any advantage. The talks broke up with no advance having been made. Dairy farmers in the Waikato, pouring thousands of gallons of milk down the drain, knew how effective the strike had been as far as they were concerned.

The Chairman of the Combined State Unions, Ivan Reddish, called the response "excellent in the time available to organise". But it was Knox himself who may have put his finger on the immediate sign of success: two awards were settled at a level above that allowed the Drivers, and no Government action had been taken or was forthcoming. Bolger, asked to comment on this, resorted to the old arguments about strike action and overtime payments. It was clear though, that the Government's determination over the Drivers had been significantly deflected.

## General Strike: The Next Step

What happens next is a matter for speculation as we go to print. Both the FoL and the Government, it is claimed, are looking for a settlement without either losing face. If that is true, then the FoL leadership may be in danger of forgetting the basis on which the whole dispute flared up: the Remuneration Act. The aim of the working class movement now must push home its demands that the Act be scrapped and that free wage bargaining be properly set up.

To do this, three things are needed. The first is a good understanding among the workforce and other sections of the public of what the Act and its related powers mean. For this to happen, the Trades Councils and their unions will have to step up their efforts to get out among the members. The PSA and CSU must also take it upon themselves to ensure that their members are informed of what is happening.

The second need is unity. The Government's tactic in this dispute has been to pick on one union (the Drivers) and try to isolate it from the rest. If it beats the drivers, it will turn on the next, and then the next, and so on. This unity must involve workers of different unions on the same job sites, and also different union organisations: principally the PSA and the CSU.

No less important is the support, active and otherwise, of other sectors of the public. Students will be joining the workforce soon for several months. We should make sure that we understand the struggles of the workers, join unions, and not be fooled into scabbing on the workers should the possibility arise. Unions have supported students in the past and we must stand with them now.

The third factor in the struggle is the continuing determined action that unions must mount. The general strike was an important show of strength that made the Government realise it wasn't dealing with a complacent movement. For its full effectiveness to be felt, there must be a programme of sustained industrial action. Workers gave up a day's pay that they could ill afford last Thursday to show the Government that they were not prepared to stand by and watch their trade union and democratic rights cut away from under them.

It's like the Education Fightback campaign really. The struggle is on for the defence of our living standards. The Government wants to keep wages down, smash the unions and slash welfare spending, all for the sake of the fat pockets of the monopolies poised like vultures over the New Zealand economy and the New Zealand

people. The Government is hitting those who can least afford it where it hurts the most. There is nothing they can do but fight back. They deserve our support.

As for the Tripartite conference proposal, involving employers, unions and the Government, it must continue to be rejected out of hand. Any system where the Government tells the two main parties that they can do what they like except that they can't really (which is what such a conference would involve) is not free wage bargaining or anything like it. It would be like telling the unions they can play rugby again but they aren't allowed to score tries.

As the Acting President of the Manufacturers' Federation said last Tuesday, "No-one should forget that this week's production is next week's earnings". He meant that workers shouldn't go on strike. What he showed was that workers produce the wealth in this country, and they have the right to benefit from it.

Kathy Jamieson

## A History of Struggle: 1913 Strike

Last week's General Strike is an important milestone in the history of New Zealand's industrial relations. However it is not the first union struggle of impressive dimensions.

In a sense, there has only been one "general" strike called in New Zealand's history. It occurred in 1913; and interestingly, involved the Industrial Conciliation and Arbitration Act of 1894. This Act set up an Arbitration Court; and the Arbitration Court procedure was very much involved in last week's strike.

### Weak Unions

After 1890, the trade unions were in a weak position due to the failure of that year's Maritime Strike, and in 1894 the Liberal Government introduced its Arbitration Act.

This Government had earlier passed some progressive labour policy — and despite the fine principle of forced arbitration on employers — this Act was one which weakened the Union movement for many years. Before a union could come under the power of the Arbitration Court it had to register under the Act. In doing so, it was the Government which determined what were "acceptable" union rules and dues. The Act also gave the Government the power to rescind registration of a [unclear: union] for any reason (especially if a union were to go on strike) and had the power to determine which unions would be registered.

Unions were registered on a regional basis — effectively destroying any chance of a national union movement. Registered unions could not legally strike, and unregistered unions were not in a position to strike.

### A Drop in Real Wages

From 1894 to 1900, the Arbitration Court granted wage rises which kept up with the cost of living. But in the first six years of this century — with an industrial boom and profits soaring — the Arbitration Court let real wages fall. In the 12 years between 1894 and 1906 there was not one strike. However rising discontent with the Arbitration system led the Auckland [unclear: ramwaymen] to successfully strike in November 1906. The strike was important as a morale boost to the union movement — it showed that strikes, and successful ones, were possible.

Further strikes occurred in 1907 and 1908 after the [unclear: Arbitration] Court refused to grant fully justified union claims. The [unclear: success] of the miners' strike of 1908 further discredited the [unclear: Arbitration] procedure. It was this West Coast mining strike [unclear: hat] sparked the formation of the United Federation of Labour (UFL) or "Red Feds".

### Clampdown on the UFL

The growing power of the UFL made the employing class [unclear: anxious] enough to precipitate a chain of events designed to crush the UFL. On October 6, 1913, E.W. Alison (Chairman of the Taupini Coal Company, and personal friend of Prime Minister Massey) dismissed 16 Huntly miners, causing 560 [unclear: hines] to strike. In Wellington, in the same month, employers [unclear: locked] out 1500 watersiders at the end of a stop-work meeting. [unclear: before] long, all miners', watersiders, and seamen's unions [unclear: affiliated] to the UFL were on strike. But the Government, clearly working in the interests of the employers (the wharves were in a slack period at the time) created "special constables" from groups of farmers in order to crush the strikers' movement and re-open the ports. The Government also called in two ships from the Royal Navy — and armed sailors conducted exercises in Auckland, Wellington and Christchurch ports, as a reminder to the strikers of the power and role of the State.

When the Government-organised farmers' groups registered under the Arbitration Act as "trade unions", the Auckland based UFL called a General Strike on 10 November 1913. But the response outside Auckland was poor. The response of the Government was to arrest UFL leaders on charges of sedition.

In some areas the strike lasted until the end of the year, but employers sensed victory and demanded total surrender and the destruction of the UFL. The Courts, aiding the employers, ruled that "registered" unions could not give money to the strikers. Similarly, the Government passed legislation making all strikes illegal, and strikers liable to prosecution. Thus the strike, and the "Red Feds" were broken by collaboration between the employers and the Government.

## The 1951 Waterfront Dispute

The 1951 dispute is probably the most important union struggle in our history — it is certainly the most talked about. Although a General Strike was not called, after last week, 1951 came the closest thing to a General Strike that this country has seen. As in 1913, this dispute shows clearly that the role of Government and its state machinery is firmly on the side of the employing classes. However, in 1951 the Government had an unexpected accomplice — a perfidious Federation of Labour.

At the 1950 April Conference of the FoL, the Watersiders' Union (lead by Toby Hill and Jock Barnes) presented a letter accusing the FoL leaders of working with the Labour Government, against the interests of union members.

The whole affair culminated with an ultimatum from the majority of delegates: that if the letter was not withdrawn the Waterside Workers would be expelled from the FoL by May 31.

However the Watersiders did not wait. They walked out of the FoL, taking with them an estimated 75,000 watersiders and other union members (fully one third of the FoL's total membership). Between them they formed the New Zealand Trade Union Congress (TUC). Thus the TUC was the more militant, left wing section of the Trade Union movement, which had split away from the moderates.

## Time for Red-baiting

Naturally, both the National and Labour parties branded the TUC as "communist-led" and conducted a determined campaign of red-baiting. The FoL did little to oppose it.

In August 1950 the first congress of the TUC was held, although the movement remained little more than the Waterside Workers Union. It was an isolated group of militants and thus an easy target for Government propaganda. The lack of public support was not helped by the actions of the TUC leaders, especially Jock Barnes, who took a militant separatist stance all through the period. Because of this the possibility of co-operation between the sympathetic and militant Railway-men's union at the end of 1950 proved fruitless.

At the same time, Labour lost power and a National Government was elected on a policy of abolition of compulsory unionism (sound familiar?) and compulsory arbitration of disputes.

The whole Waterfront Dispute was sparked off by the announcement of a 15% General Wage Order by the Arbitration Court in January 1951. The Waterfront employers, in a blatant attempt to cut back the wage increase, claimed they had recently given a wage increase to watersiders, and therefore would give them less than was awarded under the General Wage Order, so that the total increase over the period was 15%.

## Fighting Wage Cuts

In protest, the Watersiders (in reality the TUC) began to refuse to work overtime from February 10. This overtime ban spread to cover every New Zealand port. As the ban spread, workers began to get dismissed. The 1951 lockout had begun.

Overcome by a wave of panic (or was it a calculated move?) the Government implemented the infamous Public Safety Conservation Act of 1932 and introduced the "Waterfront Strike Emergency Regulations". Under this pernicious piece of legislation the Minister of Labour could suspend awards, seize union funds and use armed force in cases of strike. It became illegal to hold pickets, demonstrations, meetings, to print posters or write favourably about the lockout, or even to give food to workers and their families.

## Public Kept in Ignorance

A major factor in the 1951 dispute was that, through this legislation, the majority of New Zealanders just didn't know what was happening.

Naturally the Trade Unions were sent into a state of shock by these measures and a total of 22,000

watersiders and FoL affiliates (including freezing workers, miners, drivers and hydro-workers) went out on strike.

By February 27 the Government had de-registered the Watersiders and sent troops in to operate the docks.

On March 6 representatives from all the striking unions went to the Minister of Labour in an attempt at negotiation. However the Government was completely unwilling to accept the presence of Hill and Barnes (ie. the Watersiders' representatives).

The FoL, seeing its chance to ruin their rivals in the TUC (and with little regard for the waterside workers) embarked on a campaign of red-baiting all of their own. Calling Hill and Barnes "communist mis-leaders", they urged the watersiders to hand their grievances over to them.

When the watersiders refused, many of the FoL affiliates began to drift back to work. But the watersiders were not prepared to back down and it became a grim battle to the end, with the Government and the FoL in a position where they couldn't lose.

By the end of April 1951, strike-breakers had filled the ports of Auckland and by May had done the same in Wellington, Christchurch and Dunedin. And on July 15, the watersiders' staunchest [unclear: allis] the miners, finally returned to work and the lockout could do nothing but end.

In all the lockout lasted 151 days and had cost 42 million pounds and a million working days.

Stephen A'Court

## Editorial Note

This special issue has been brought out at short notice in response to an important occasion in New Zealand's history: the general strike. There wasn't going to be an issue this week. Salient has found it very difficult to get advertising over the last few weeks and the budget did not allow us to bring out two more full issues. In addition, the staff did not work on Thursday in sympathy with the strike.

Next week our last issue will appear, featuring our very own review of the 1970's as recorded by Salient. Watch for it.

Peter Beach  
Editor

## Complaint Concerning 1979 and 1980 Presidential Elections

- The Election Committee has received the following complaint concerning the 1979 and 1980 Presidential elections:  
*"We the undersigned hereby lodge a complaint with the Election Committee concerning the defamatory posters that appeared on or about the 11th/12th of September 1979, in breach of the VUWSA Constitution.*  
*"We petition that the Election be invalidated and that the whole Election process be recommenced for the position of President 1979 and 1980."*  
(Signed) Andrew Tees, Tarek Sorour, Anne Byrne, Kathy Drysdale, Alan Philips, Robert Stainthorpe, Andrew Ross, Michael Carr-Gregg, Ron Bellman, Tina Hailstone.
- Accordingly, as required by the Constitution, the Election Committee has appointed three impartial persons to act as Arbitrators with full powers for investigation and inquiry into the cause of the complaint. The Arbitrators will decide whether the election was valid or not.
- The Arbitrators are Stephen Franks (Convener), Peter Cullen and Therese O'Connell.
- The Arbitrator will be hearing evidence in the Student Union Building Boardroom at 5.00pm on Tuesday 25 September 1979. Members of the Association may attend. Any person not already contacted who wishes to make a submission to the Arbitrators should contact the undersigned. Submission should be in writing.
- It is hoped that the Arbitrators' [unclear: decision] whether the Presidential Election was [unclear: va] not will be available by Thursday 27 [unclear: Sep] ber. In the event of the Arbitrators [unclear: dec] the Presidential elections invalid, [unclear: this] allow time for a further election for [unclear: Presi] to be held on 3 and 4 October.



John Blincoe  
Convener  
Election Committee

SAUNA ATLANTIS 157 Karori Road Wellington \* \* \* \* \* 1/3 Student Discount Weekdays: 5.30 p.m. - 12.00 Weekends: 3.30 p.m. - 12.00 Monday — Ladies only Tel. 768-308

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Trampers — Pedal Pushers — Overlanders A new type of camping shop specialising in equipment and information for walkers, cyclists and travellers is opening on the fourth floor of the Williams Building, Plimmer Steps on Friday October 12. Special treatment for students.

DOWNSTAGE THEATRE Prisoners of Mother England or "New Zealand 1958 — 1968 Ten Years Hard" By Roger Hall Opens Thursday 27 September Sometimes nostalgic, sometimes provocative — always funny, always perceptive, Prisoners of Modern England is a play for all New Zealanders whatever the origin. Coming Soon Coming Soon Coming Soon Coming Soon High as a Kite by Robert Lord Opens Saturday 20 October A high flying modern comedy.

Victoria Book Centre BOOK OF THE MONTH THE BIRDS AROUND US by Geoffrey Moon Available for October only at \$15.95 Normally \$27.50

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