



The Maritimes

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Election 2005: On the Campaign Trail



Maritime Unionists take to the streets
to fight for workers' rights



Vote for a Government that looks after workers

by Trevor Hanson
General Secretary

As we go about our daily work, the three yearly silly season has arrived with the 2005 election.

However, the issues and direction of the country are at stake.

Working class New Zealanders make up the majority of the population and the majority of voters.

We decide the result of the election. But we need to understand what it means if a right wing, anti-worker National Government was to return.

The modern world is currently dominated by a system which puts profit above all else.

The modest goal of workers is to have the dignity to go to productive work and earn enough to feed, clothe and house our families, and hopefully save enough for a holiday.

I fully realise that neither the Union nor myself have the right to tell any member how to cast his vote.

However the way I am going to vote has already been decided.

We are far better off with the industrial legislation we work under now even with its deficiencies that affect our union.

If a National-led Government is elected, we would see a return to the legislation of the early nineties.

The newly elected conservative big business dominated Government in Australia has introduced extreme changes aimed at attacking and ultimately destroying the Union movement.

The same thing would easily happen here.

With all the talk of proposed tax cuts, I would simply hate it if they funded their proposal by increasing the age of national superannuation to, say, 68.

There are many of us myself included that would be affected in the near future.

So I am giving Labour both my votes, and ask that you and your families give every consideration to the way you cast your vote.

This election is going to be one of the closest fought for years so please ensure that you vote – it is your future at stake.

Worker against worker

There is constant pressure in the modern world with a lack of security as we are constantly reminded by our employers of the competition breathing down our necks, and the need to do it better and cheaper or our jobs are on the line.

I recently attended an inquest for a Waterfront Worker who was killed on the job and as I sat and listened to the evidence I realized just how far we have let our society slip.

This tragedy could never have happened pre-Port Reform – quite simply because we would never have been working in the manner this ship was working.

In my view this and other accidents like it will continue, with each case being treated individually, which is like putting a sticking plaster on an elephant.

The authorities and Government have moved on Health and Safety but there is a serious gap between the theoretical protection of the law and the harsh realities of being on the job in the “free market.”

The Port Code does provide the ability to stop work in the event of safety, but in practice many workers, through fear of the boss and in some cases apathy, continue unsafe work practices.

While this continues, industrial accidents will continue.

It's that simple.

It is likely the future of our industry both in New Zealand and overseas will see increasing competition between shippers, Port Companies and Stevedores.

We need both OSH and MSA inspectors making regular inspections of our work sites.

Free Trade threat to jobs

I note with real concern the increasing numbers of local industries that are shifting their production – and jobs – to China.

This was predicted by both the Maritime Union and the CTU.

The next round of free trade talks are set down for December this year and the outcome of these talks is unknown.

I suspect there is a growing reluctance by many Governments to go too far down this path, as apprehension is growing with the increasing Chinese manufacture of cheap exports.

The media have recently reported the increasing presence of China in agriculture exports.

For an example of the damage done here in New Zealand, there is the recent announcement by a company based just south of Timaru that annually contracts large acres of peas for export.

Recently this company simply shut down its operation, because it could no longer compete with Asian and Chinese products.

I do not need to repeat that this is in the area of agricultural and horticultural exports.

These are the same exports that the politicians told us we would be selling in vast quantities to China in exchange for their cheap manufactured goods.

If we are now going to be buying peas off China, we have to ask the question: what do we have to sell to them?

At the moment we have not felt the full effects of the giant Chinese production unit.

However we are noticing some of its side effects.

One of the main reasons for fuel cost increases is because of the increasing use of oil by China.

It seems like the free trade plan has not taken long to unravel.

'The Maritimes' is the official magazine of the Maritime Union of New Zealand.

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**Deadline for all Port reports, submissions, photos and letters:
12 November 2005 for next edition**



What is at stake?

by Phil Adams
National President

It is very important that all members of the Maritime Union make full use of their rights and cast a vote at this general election.

We are asking our members to support one of the centre-left parties so we can get back a Labour-led Government.

A vote for National, United or NZ First will mean less rights for workers. That is certain.

We must think very clearly about the important things we need as workers: secure jobs, rights in the workplace, good quality public provision of health, education and other social services.

The current Labour-led Government has not delivered on everything we want but there has been progress on a number of fronts.

This includes the improved health and safety laws, which are so important in our maritime industry where we are still losing workers to death and serious accidents.

There has also been progress in holiday pay for casual workers, and the introduction of four weeks annual leave coming down the line.

Unemployment is lower, although we still would like to see more action on casualization, and the minimum wage has been increased.

Unions are able to function freely and we have training and education opportunities which benefit our members.

It is worth remembering that tax cuts have to be paid for by cutting something else.

This could be health, education or new bonuses like our union training schemes.

The "tax cut" National proposes means a small increase for a worker but a huge increase for the wealthy on very high incomes.

In return health care, education and social services for children and the elderly will be undermined, workers will have their wages, conditions and rights ripped away, and we will be working in more dangerous, worse paid and less secure jobs.

It is a no-brainer.

The recent result of the Australian elections is a warning sign that if workers get sucked into voting for the bosses' party or if they don't bother voting, they can end up with a very ugly, very anti-worker Government.

Only now are some Australian workers waking up to the fact that they are about to have a massive attack on their rights, wages and conditions, driven by the Howard Government and its big business allies.

We must keep out Brash and return a Government that will listen to workers.

It is the responsibility of every maritime worker in New Zealand to vote, and to think carefully about who they vote for.

National and their allies have never been friends of workers, and they have definitely never been friends of maritime workers.

Remember that Winston Peters and Peter Dunne would go with National if they could.

Workers must support a Labour-led Government by voting for Labour or a left wing party such as Greens, Progressive or Alliance.

We must all do our bit to honour and respect the work the old timers did for us to create a strong Union, just as we must think of the future generations when we cast our vote.

We need to get out there and talk to family and friends, workmates and neighbours, and especially our young people and give them some guidance and explain to them what is at stake.

Remember it will be too late to do your bit after election day: the time is now.

'The Maritimes'

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Front cover photos by CTU organizer Steve Bradley, showing maritime unionists campaigning for a worker friendly Government and leafletting commuters in downtown Auckland, August 2005



Methyl Bromide controversy reignites

The publication of a “cluster study” into deaths from motor neuron disease (MND) by Nelson port workers has failed to quiet concerns about the use of methyl bromide.

A leading toxicologist says that there are problems with a public health study that dismissed links between methyl bromide and motor neuron disease (MND) in the port of Nelson.

The Head of the University of Canterbury College of Science, Professor Ian Shaw, says it is possible there is a link between the fumigant and the disease.

Professor Shaw says there is no “positive evidence” that methyl bromide causes MND, but this does not rule out a link.

He says methyl bromide generates chemicals known as free radicals, which are instrumental in the cause of MND.

“There is no provable link but it looks like there is a connection between MND and methyl bromide.”

Professor Shaw says that the number of cases of MND in Port Nelson are highly significant.

His concerns with the Nelson cluster study carried out by Nelson Medical Officer of Health Dr Ed Kiddle are based around some of the methods used in the study.

These include the size of the sample groups, and the exclusion of MND sufferers with no proven exposure to methyl bromide from the data set.

“A more useful approach would be to first look for links between working at Port Nelson and developing MND, then focus in on methyl bromide.”

Professor Shaw says the MND cases could be the result of many different factors, including genetic inheritance, and methyl bromide could be a red herring.

He hopes to do more work on the Nelson MND cases, and may be working on the topic with his colleague Professor Douglas Mitchell, a UK-based world expert on methyl bromide.

The issue has been raised in Parliament as a local campaign continues to put pressure on authorities.

The Green Party tabled a petition in August from Nelson residents that calls for the ban of the toxic chemical.

A Nelson-based group, Campaigners Against Toxic Sprays (CATS), collected more than 1300 signatures for the petition, which urges the substance be banned by 2010.

Green Party Health spokesperson Sue Kedgley says she wants a parliamentary committee to investigate the use of methyl bromide, including its health effects.

Union amalgamation shelved

The proposed amalgamation between the Maritime Union (MUNZ) and the Rail and Maritime Transport Union (RMTU) has been shelved.

The national executive of the Maritime Union made the decision to withdraw from negotiations and effectively end the amalgamation process after a national telephone conference held on 27 July 2005.

A number of problems were identified with the proposed model for a new Union, and the following resolution was adopted by majority vote of the National Executive of the Maritime Union:

“Following careful consideration the National Executive Committee resolved that due to being unable to reconcile fundamental differences on a number of key issues within the amalgamation working party, we cannot recommend to the collective national membership that we proceed any further with the proposed MUNZ/RMTU amalgamation process.”



Mosquito threat

Two species of disease-carrying mosquitoes were discovered at Ports of Auckland in July.

MAF staff captured an exotic adult mosquito during a routine inspection, and found larvae on a cargo hatch during a follow up search.

The specimens that were found were yellow fever mosquito and asian tiger mosquito.

Both are able to spread yellow fever and dengue fever, and the asian tiger mosquito can spread Japanese encephalitis and west nile virus.

The cargo ship the mosquitoes arrived on had just travelled the south-west Pacific route, passing through Fiji, the Wallis Islands and Futuna.

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African FOC register source of multi-million fraud

Liberian Bureau of Maritime Affairs commissioner J D Slinger has been arrested for misappropriating government funds, Lloyds List reports.

Liberia is a key operator in the flag of convenience system.

The West African nation sells cheap registration fees and low taxes to ship owners.

Government chief prosecutor Theophilus Gold told the court in Monrovia that officials misappropriated \$3.5 million for the maritime programme.

Slinger was the first government official to appear in court to face corruption charges since the end of the civil war two years ago.

The civil war and corruption in Liberia was fueled by American business interests, with revenues from shipping companies wishing to register their vessels in Liberia responsible for keeping the Taylor Government in power, according to US press reports in 2003.

The Washington Post reported that the country's only source of money at the time was the Liberian International Ship and Corporate Registry (LISCR) in the United States, which sends at least \$18 million a year - or about one-third of its own revenue - directly to the Liberian government.

This money made up 30 percent to 40 percent of the Liberian government's income in 2002.

Maersk mega-merger causing jitters on waterfront

The maritime industry is preparing for stormy weather as a massive new shipping operator changes the rules of the game.

The acquisition of Royal P&O Nedlloyd by AP Moller Maersk is the largest takeover in the history of containerization.

There is some anxiety as to the effect that the new global shipping company - twice the size of its nearest competitor - will have throughout the industry.

Port calls and the role of shipping conferences are just two of the areas where the takeover is causing uncertainty.

The takeover has delayed a decision by RPONL as to whether it would choose Auckland or Tauranga as the base for its Asian and European services.

This could have a major impact on the level and security of jobs in both ports, which already face direct competition with Ports of Tauranga inland port in South Auckland.

The takeover was cleared by the European Commission and Australian Consumer and Competition Commission subject to conditions.

The new merged group has to pull out of vessel sharing arrangements with other lines, including the consortium which previously included RPONL, that runs ten "4100" ships from New Zealand to Europe.

That consortium includes CP Ships, Hapag-Lloyd, Hamburg Sud, CMA CGM and Marfret, and carries between 70-80% of Fonterra's ocean freight and 40% of New Zealand's total, according to industry sources.

The merged entity will control a fleet of approximately 500 vessels, and will have major international effects.

The new entity would be big enough to operate outside the conference arrangements, which have been a traditional feature of liner shipping trades.

Maersk are also an international terminal operator with APM Terminals, which with 30 container terminals is the third largest terminal operator in the world.

Exporting business interests have worries about the future of the Europe service via North America, where the current consortium has provided a fixed-day weekly schedule.

RPONL advised customers in August that changes would be taking place over the next six months.

Editor's note

Readers may realize this edition of the Maritimes is a little earlier than usual and a little smaller.

This is due to moving forward our usual publication date in order to provide a special election edition. We will be back to our normal size for our Christmas edition.



A Maersk ship enters the Port of Taranaki in a 20 foot swell (photo by Shane Parker)



Maritime Union members at a recent training course - from left to right, Patrick Honan, Cameron Murray, Bo Davies, George Baker, David Tollich, Terrence Tai, Jon Nutting, Bob Riwai, Brad Latimer, and Bill Shrimpton

Maritime Union Education and Training

By Fred Salelea

Our program is gaining momentum with courses still left to run in Auckland, Gisborne, Tauranga, Napier, Nelson and Lyttelton branches.

By the end of August, the one day 'Waterfront Industry and its Future Economic Development' advanced delegate course will have been delivered in both North and South Islands.

Still to come is the 'Women in the Waterfront Industry' two day seminar, which is expected to run mid to late November, one in the Central North Island and one in the Central South Island.

We are now setting course dates for our 2006 schedule which will come out in December.

Let us hope that we still have a left wing Government in power by then, because if Brash the Rash and his National Party gets in, all of our hard work will go down the toilet.

The National Party has already stated that all education leave and funding assistance will stop, health and safety amendments will be repealed, and (God forbid) a return to the days of the Employment Contracts Act.

Our members need to get out there and show their support for our MUNZ education program, by getting to the booths to vote come election time, to keep this present government at the helm of the nation.

This is to ensure we can still enjoy the fruits of all our hard work, and that our well being and safety is of concern not only to our workmates and family but to the employer.

We have the right to be educated and trained as employees under the Employment Relations Act through Health and Safety, delegate and Industry training through employment relations education leave (EREL).

So get out there and use your organizing skills to make sure everyone in your work area is registered to vote.

If you sit back and do nothing then we will lose what we have.

Talk the talk in your lunch rooms, walk the talk in your work place, and get out there and vote!



Vice President's Report

by Joe Fleetwood
MUNZ 0296

Comrades, the time to act is now.

Friends, family, work colleagues: we must set aside our differences and vote with our heads, not our hearts, for the survival of the working class of New Zealand.

I believe the way forward is with a Labour, Green, and Progressive-led Government; the alternative National-led Government would be a huge step backwards for the working class, and will bring back the draconian and anti-worker policies of the 1990s including the Employment Contracts Act, which saw New Zealand workers under attack.

Not only did National inflict this law on us.

They froze the minimum wage, privatised ACC, tried to deregulate Health and Safety laws, attempted to scrap our holidays and buy Christmas day off us, and prevented our young people from embarking on career paths by stopping apprenticeships.

They opposed paid parental leave, deregulated many industries, and introduced the so-called open coast policy – and with the loss of cabotage New Zealand shipping crashed when put up against the low-wage flag of convenience vessels.

These days National are talking tax cuts – a plan similar to the Howard Government of Australia, who promised Australians the tax cuts, and to stabilise mortgage and finance rates.

On average, these cuts have seen a return of approximately \$6 per week, and mortgage rates have fluctuated at inconsistent levels.

In return Australian workers are now looking down the barrel of Little Johnny's version of our dead and gone Employment Contracts Act. The result will be the wages and conditions of the working class will be raped and pillaged to the benefit of the rich, and the worker will remain oppressed.

The National Party here has the same agenda for our workers.

As workers of New Zealand, we deserve an improved minimum wage, penal rates for public holidays, four weeks minimum annual leave, improvements to Health and safety regulations, no privatised ACC insurance, an increase to apprenticeships, more paid parental leave, increased superannuation payments for the majority, a new approach to coastal shipping, secure permanent jobs (not casual jobs), the improvement of industrial labour laws, and much more.

I believe the only way to achieve and improve on the above is with a Labour-led coalition.

It is our duty to vote and to have a say in the direction of our country.

I urge you to seriously consider the positions of each of the political parties, and the impact they will have as leaders of the Government, on the lives of you and your families as workers.

We must be ever-vigilant in keeping our Government true and committed to advancing the policies of the working class of New Zealand.

Your cash will be slashed under Brash: make your vote count!

Kia Kaha, Tatau Tatau
Be strong, we are all one.

Obituary:

William Watker Henry 'Bill' Barber (1925 - 2005)



by Michael Lee

Bill Barber who passed away peacefully on Friday 18 June was one of the last militants of the 1951 waterfront industrial dispute and a veteran of the Second World War.

Born in the East End of London Bill grew up close by the historic Deptford naval ship yards – famous for being the provisioning base for Cook's great voyages of exploration.

When Bill was a boy the docks were still the hub of the great maritime Empire that Cook helped discover.

During the Second World War the area and most of the East End was heavily bombed during the Blitz.

As soon as he was old enough Bill joined the Royal Navy and served on the cruiser H.M.S. Danae.

He was on board the Danae during the D-Day invasion of June 1944 when it was part of the battle fleet which shelled German positions above the Normandy beaches and he was involved in the landing of troops.

After the War, the restless Bill joined the merchant navy as an able seaman on the 'Home Boats' which served the far flung British Empire.

This inevitably brought him to New Zealand. It was during a visit to Wellington in 1948 that he met his wife-to-be Rose (Roka) Johnson, a Wellington girl of Poutini Ngaitahu descent.

In a story as old as the Bounty, the smitten young sailor 'jumped ship' (or 'skinned out' as he put it).

This was a common practice amongst British seamen at the time and was not actively discouraged by authorities in labour-hungry post-war New Zealand.

After serving a brief stint at His Majesty's convenience Bill was free to stay and to marry his sweetheart.

The couple had two children, a son William (now a Wellington businessman) and a daughter Sandra (who was to become a cabinet minister in the 1999 - 2002 Labour/Alliance government and is now New Zealand High Commissioner to Niue).

After a spell on the New Zealand coast, mainly in Union Company ships, Bill was admitted to the New Zealand Waterside Workers Union on the recommendation of his wife's father, Charlie Johnson (an American) and her grandfather Tame Pihawai West (a Maori from the Bluff), both of whom were wharfies.

This interesting and rather cosmopolitan extended family shared the same residence in working class Thorndon.

Soon after this the 1951 waterfront dispute broke out.

The 151 days served to radicalise Bill Barber who became a life long socialist.

Whilst the Auckland union was smashed and members expelled, in Wellington and some South Island ports members of the old union somehow managed to hang on.

Discussion and debate with older self-taught working class intellectuals of that era in the waterfront 'donkeyrooms' whetted Bill's appetite for knowledge and he became an almost fanatical reader.

He later claimed to have 'read out' the Wellington Public Library.

Bill had a first class mind and his interests ranged from history to natural sciences and anthropology. He was a genuine expert in Maori tribal history.

Bill's socialism was of the purest kind – the original form of socialism.

Bill carried in his head the vision of a world-wide moneyless society in which the means of production would be owned by all the people and where production would be for satisfaction of human needs.

His political radicalism and intellectual integrity was uncompromised by the restrictions of membership of any political party – Bill preferred to remain his own man.

He instead sought self-expression in the Waterside Workers Union debating society.

During the late 60s and early 70s he was the wharfies' star debater

Along with many people at the time Bill Barber strongly opposed the Vietnam War.

During the late 1960s he would regularly telephone his local MP Sir John Marshall (later Prime Minister) and complain bitterly whenever he was particularly outraged by what he had read in the newspaper or seen on the television news.

Sir John apparently always took the call and always heard him out.

In 1972 he moved to Auckland where he worked the remaining 16 years or so on the Auckland waterfront before retiring in 1988.

After 'slinging his hook' his retirement years were devoted to the company of his beloved wife, gardening and more reading (he complained to me that he had also 'read out' the Panmure public library).

He of course closely followed his children and grandchildren's careers.

Bill's daughter Sandra inherited his political instincts and his formidable talents as a debater.

Her Ministerial warrants were framed and displayed proudly on the Barber's sitting room wall.

However the first and great love of his life was his wife Rose.

It was a life-long love match which lasted 57 years.

He is survived by Rose, two children Bill and Sandra, four grandchildren Michelle-Rose, Annabelle, Brent and Bridget, and six great grandchildren.

He was two months short of his 80th birthday.

At the request of his wife Rose he was buried in the Whenua Tapu cemetery near Plimmerton.

Michael Lee is Chairman of the Auckland Regional Council and former son-in-law of Bill Barber.



Make your vote count in 2005

Since 1999, the Labour-led Government with its Alliance (1999–2002) and Progressive (2002–2005) coalition partners, and support from the Greens, has delivered in key areas such as employment relations, health and safety, holidays, paid parental leave, superannuation, housing, apprenticeships, economic development, accident compensation, and minimum wages.

Employment Relations Act Strengthened

The Government improved the Employment Relations Act in 2004 by promoting collective agreements, addressing the freeloading problem, giving some teeth to good faith and protection for vulnerable workers when their work is transferred or contracted out.

But National has promised employers that they will repeal the Employment Relations Act and start again.

This means that the Employment Contracts Act is back on the agenda if National forms a Government this year.

Minimum Wage

When National was last in Government they only lifted the minimum wage in a whole 9 years from \$6.13 an hour to \$7.00. This was an increase of 14% in almost a decade.

National actually froze the minimum wage from March 1997 at \$7.00 for 3 years with a rate for those under 20 years of \$4.20 an hour.

But Labour with support from Alliance, Progressive and Greens since 1999 has increased the minimum wage from \$7.00 to \$9.50.

This is a 35.7% increase in just over 5 years. The increase for 18/19 year olds has been from \$4.20 to \$9.50 (126%) and for 16/17 year olds from \$4.20 to \$7.60 (81%).

Also under National industry trainees used to be able to be paid any rate, but now they must get at least the youth minimum wage.

Employment

The number of young people on the unemployment benefit has dropped by 70% since April 1999.

Unemployment when National was last in Government, unemployment was on average at 7.8% a year.

Under Labour it has fallen to 3.9% and has averaged 4.8%.

So under National we can expect another 3% of the labour force (60,000 people) to be unemployed.

Holidays

The Labour-led Government has brought back time and a half for work on public holidays, and introduced four weeks annual leave to come in by 2007.

Also the pay rate for those off sick must be at the normal rate of pay including regular bonuses.

But National has said that any worker on 2% above the minimum wage can be put on a contract with only 3 weeks leave.

National are trying to mislead everyone by saying they will keep 4 weeks leave.

Paid Parental Leave

The Government introduced 12 weeks paid parental leave in its 1999–2002 term.

Since then it has increased to 13 weeks and will go up to 14 weeks in December 2005.

Also from mid-2006, more than 2000 self-employed workers a year will get PPL. So far, 45,000 workers have taken paid parental leave (under the Government scheme) since 2002.

Health and Safety

The previous National Government took the pressure off employers on health and safety.

The result has been a steady increase in workplace deaths and accidents. But the Labour-led Government amended the Health and Safety Act in 2002 to ensure that elected and trained health and safety representatives can operate effectively.

The law was extended to rail and maritime, made mandatory the provision of protective clothing and equipment and increased fines for employers who blatantly ignore the safety of workers.

Accident Compensation

The Government rescued the accident compensation scheme from private insurers.

One of the companies setting up, HIH Insurance, went bust in Australia owing millions.

ACC was restored to state ownership. Also, the Government has restored lump-sum accident compensation.

This had been wiped out by the previous National Government which did not believe workers who lost a limb should get a lump sum compensation.

This Government has rewarded employers for injury prevention through voluntary workplace safety management practices and provided options for self-employed earners, so they can tailor their cover to meet their needs, improved access to casual and seasonal workers and developed an ACC Code of Claimants rights.

Money for Low Income Families

There was an increase in Family Support of \$25 per week (up from \$47 to \$72) for a first child and \$15 (up from \$32 to \$47) for each subsequent child from April 2005.

From April 2006, there is a new In-Work Payment of up to \$60 per week per family and up to an extra \$15 per child per week for fourth and each subsequent child.

This will go to two-parent families working at least 30 hours and sole parents working at least 20 hours.

From April 2007 Family Support will increase by another \$10 per child. Rates and thresholds for Family Support will now be regularly adjusted for inflation.

The Government estimates that by 2007, 61% of families will benefit from the package.

The average increase is \$66 per week. For those households between \$25,000 and \$45,000, the average increase is \$100 per week.

Apprenticeships and Training

The Labour-led Government has more than doubled industry training funding.

They also brought back a modern apprenticeship scheme for young workers. In 1999 there were 49,577 trainees. But under this Government that increased to 83,456 by 2002 and 107,324 by early 2005. In the last year there were 139,000 participating in industry training.

In addition, 1,000 trainees have now completed the Modern Apprenticeships programme and, as at the end of March, 7,760 were in training.

Housing

State housing rentals have been reduced for low-income tenants. In addition, there has been a major programme to build more state houses, to refurbish houses and in cases of overcrowding extend the size of the house.

Also workers in KiwiSave will be able to get another \$5000 in the future to assist with a deposit on their first home.

It can all Disappear – Quickly

When National was elected to replace Labour in 1990 important protections – e.g. Pay Equity – were gone within days.

Brash likes the saying “gone by lunchtime”. They would do another notorious mini-Budget as they did in December 1990.

They introduced the Employment Contracts Act on 18 December that year and submissions on this radical law closed by 11 February leaving only a few weeks for submitters.

National and Brash are on the record as removing personal grievance rights every time you start a new job, opposing the minimum wage, supporting cuts in benefits and public services, privatising ACC, and “reviewing” time and a half for public holiday work.

If National is elected – expect the worst – and soon.

Get off time to vote

It's your right to vote.

Employees who have to work on election day (Saturday 17 September) may have the right to paid time off to vote.

The Electoral Act says:

- If a worker has not had reasonable opportunity to vote before starting work, the employer must let the worker leave work no later than 3pm, for the rest of the day, on pay.
- If it is essential for a worker to be at work after 3pm, the employer must let the worker off work, on pay, for a reasonable time of up to two hours so the worker can go and vote.

An employer who refuses to let this happen is liable to a fine of up to \$1000.

On Election Day, polling places will open from 9am.

If you have to be at work before that, or you think you can't get to work on time if you wait until 9am, you have a right to finish work at 3pm so you can vote – it's the law and your boss must respect that.



Tax cuts benefit rich - but rip off workers

National's tax cuts would end up in cuts to essential services, says CTU secretary Carol Beaumont.

The cuts, aimed mainly at those on high incomes, would cost nearly \$4 billion a year.

This figure pays for over 6,400 teachers, nurses, doctors, social workers and police. That is:

- 1,990 primary school teachers
- 1,575 secondary teachers
- 618 police
- 1,687 nurses
- 446 doctors
- 97 social workers

“How can you take the pay packets of 6,400 vital state sector workers out of government revenue and say that you would not cut public services? It doesn't add up,” Carol Beaumont says.

“At the very least this means that the additional jobs required in health, education and other public services, as the population rises, would not be there under National.”

“A more likely scenario would be actual cuts in staff.”

Port Roundup: Bluff



by Ray Fife

We are fast approaching the upcoming election and as with other ports our Branch will be actively

involved in giving support to the Labour Party to ensure that they are returned for a third term.

If not returned we as a union will see most of the gains from the past six years swiftly swept out the door and laws similar to the Employment Contracts Act put in their place to send the union movement on a downward spiral.

A national conference call has asked that all Branches give financial and physical support to the Labour Party and other centre left parties, and it is essential that we vote for a Labour led coalition.

As one spokesperson said on our conference call "forget about personalities, I will be voting for Labour just on their industrial legislation alone."

Log Vessels

The export of logs is due to recommence through the port after a two year absence and it is very pleasing to see that Southland Stevedoring Services will be loading the first vessel therefore giving our members more work opportunities.

Vessels will call every six weeks for small parcels of logs, but this could eventually increase as the log market firms up.

The most satisfying aspect to this is that Mainland Stevedoring missed out and I would like to think that our continual pickets against them has something to do with it.

Negotiations

Talks with Southland Stevedoring Services have commenced to renew the Collective Agreement and to date not much progress has been made which is frustrating particularly when you see other ports settling for an increase.

Obituary

The Branch recently mourned the sudden death of one of our longer serving casual members Adrian Padget.

Adrian was a regular attendee at our union meetings and was one person who you could rely on when we needed support for any type of action required for the union cause.

He was a good mate and will be sorely missed.

Port Roundup: Auckland Seafarers



by Garry Parsloe

CTU/Election campaign

In line with the Council of Trade Unions call for

Unions to leaflet in support of a Labour-led Government, the day after the Election date was announced, members of the Auckland Seafarers Branch of the Maritime Union assembled at 7am on 26 July 2005 at the Ferry Buildings, Quay Street.

We felt that the Ferry Buildings would be the best place to hand out the CTU Election Leaflets as we would catch workers coming into Auckland on the Fullers Ferry Boats from Auckland's North Shore and Waiheke Island.

Between 7am and 9am Maritime Union members handed out in excess of 600 Leaflets before joining in with the New Zealand Nurses Organisation delegates who were covering the Britomart area and assisting those delegates not only at the bus stops but also the train station.

It was a productive morning with commuters showing an interest in the leaflets and some even stopping and discussing election issues with our delegates.

CTU/Meet the Ministers

On Friday the 29 July 2005 the Auckland CTU Local Affiliates Council organized a meet the Ministers evening starting at 5pm.

The two main speakers were Mark Gosche for Labour and Sue Bradford for the Greens.

Both speakers spoke about the danger of not supporting a Labour-led Government with Sue adding that it must be a Labour/Green Government.

Both speakers also stated that if there was a change of Government all the good work such as the deduction of Union Fees and Union access, would be gone over-night.

After the speeches Mark and Sue along with Lyn Pillay (Labour) and Keith Locke (Greens) fielded questions from what was a very large turn-out of union officials and delegates.

After the questions we opened the bar, put some food on and had an hour or two sitting around with the Ministers discussing Union related issues.

It was a very productive evening and we will be continuing with this type of get together on a more regular basis.

Port Roundup: New Plymouth



by Shane Parker

The Port has been very busy recently with a new product, palm kernels, being one of the more unusual.

It's not a nice product to deal with as it's very dusty and dirty, and very rain sensitive so not very good in the Taranaki winter.

We have quite a few men off work at the moment, some on long holidays in warmer climates and some with minor injuries.

This meant for the first time in a long time out of Port men from Tauranga.

We are also in the process of training two of our long term casuals to become permanents.

Wiremu Ratana is still off work but is home and making good progress.

We recently had two visits from both Trevor Hanson and Mike Williams mainly to discuss up coming offshore drilling programs, but it was a good opportunity for both Watersiders and Seafarers to air their views with the union officials.

With the downturn in Methanol production, the port company is in the process of trying to attract new businesses, everything from coal to timber logs and a ferry service to Nelson – all good for us if it comes off.

Port Roundup: Lyttelton Local 43



by Les Wells

Lyttelton is in the final process of the Toll agreement, with Pacifica and Lyttelton Stevedoring Services still outstanding and due for completion in the next 2-3 months.

There are some concerns about the new Toll ferry and whether it will be carrying cargo, and the effects of this on local members.

A few of the local seafarers have been short of work but this looks set to improve with the offshore coming on line in the next few months.

We are encouraging our local members to make sure they vote and vote Labour.

Port Roundup: Port Chalmers Local 10



by Phil Adams

Down in the winterless South work has slowed up, particularly in the container terminal.

Since the end of May a dramatic drop in cargo volumes in the terminal has seen less third shifts (which is not all bad) and quiet times which has given us a great opportunity for training in machines and long overdue maintenance.

Changes around the port

The proposed takeover of P & O Nedlloyd by Maersk has made us nervous as to the outcome of this situation.

However we have faced these problems in the past and have battled through, and we remain confident of the future of the port.

The new crane for the port company is nearing completion and a group of tradesmen from the port will be travelling to China to familiarize themselves with the crane before it arrives in our port in early 2006.

The favourable weather so far this winter has meant we have not encountered the conditions we endured last winter.

A certain member left for 2 weeks of sun in Rarotonga recently and all he got was rain, while those of us still here soaked ourselves in winter sunshine.

While this certain member was in Rarotonga, another member nicknamed Todd was seen outside the tally hut doing a rain dance every day.

Not a pretty sight but effective.

Port Chalmers Cargo Service

The Port Chalmers Cargo Service members have been busy with phosphate, fish, logs, cement and out of port travel.

We have just negotiated a new agreement on their behalf that will see most of what they currently enjoy intact, and the casuals given a wage increase which should see them contented in the meantime.

Longstanding member Noel Currie who represents them does an excellent job and although considering handing this job to others, we hope will carry on in his current position of delegate given his experience.

Amalgamation

As all will be aware, the proposed amalgamation is off for now which will have disappointed many in our Union.

But given the impasse between both parties it was sensible to back off and look at ways of breaking the impasse for the good of members of both Unions involved – particularly in our port where we have many dual members who looked forward to amalgamation.

Time will tell whether it was the right decision but given that, we must look at ourselves now and plan a structure that can take us into the future with confidence.

For this we require the membership to be willing to put the effort into making us the most influential and strong Union on the waterfront and at sea.

New Branch Executive

It is pleasing to see the new executive members showing a lot of interest in representing the members which augurs well for the future.

As someone who has been representing the members for a number of years it is great to see the keen interest shown by the new members of the executive.

For the Maritime Union to remain strong we must keep our collective spirit and a strong executive is a vital aspect of a strong Union.

Delegate training

The branch is sending two members to Christchurch for advanced delegate training on 29 August.

B-grader Scott Davis and Andrew Jennings will represent the branch and it is hoped the skills that they will learn from trainer Fred Salelea will put them in a good position to represent their fellow workers.

All our lads who have gone through the delegate training have found Fred to be a good trainer and very informative. I believe the fact that Fred comes from our industry is vitally important.

Holiday Unit

The Holiday Unit in Queenstown continues to be popular and those wanting information should contact either Phil Adams (phone 03 4728 052) or Ian Quarrell (phone 03 4727 216).

B-Graders

David Dick and I attended a meeting of our "B"'s who are guaranteed 3 days a week work, and with it being relatively quiet at the moment that is all they are getting.

The meeting was good in that they conveyed their concerns to us and we were able to speak to management on their behalf.

As a result those who want, have the ability to work elsewhere on the days they are not required by the Port Company.

The message we gave these members is that they are no different to any other member we represent, and we will strive to represent them to the best of our ability.

Super Fund

Our branch has invited Susan Leuchars from the Super Fund to visit us to speak to members and deferred members.

We expect a good crowd as Susan's visits are interesting and certainly create good debate.

The date is still to be set – hopefully it will be in September.



Presidential lineup: John Davis, Phil Adams, Ray Sinclair, Dave Dick, Bruce Malcolm, and Arthur Morris, all past or present Presidential officeholders of the Port Chalmers Branch

ITF

Recently Adam Law and I attended a vessel on behalf of the ITF, and although it was not on an ITF agreement, we managed to convince the Master to give relative information to the ITF in Wellington.

I believe it was a good experience for Adam who recently returned from an ITF training course in Newcastle, Australia.

Older Peoples Club

Recently I had the opportunity to speak on behalf of the Union to a group of older citizens of Port Chalmers about the Union.

Being local people they could relate to the stories I told them of years gone by on the waterfront.

There was a good reaction with the audience satisfied with hearing about a subject they could relate to, it was a very enlightening experience and one that was thoroughly enjoyed by all.

Drug Testing

Recently we had a member involved in a minor accident with a straddle.

The reaction of the Port Company was to send him for a drug and alcohol test, which the Union objected to given that individuals involved in different incidents had not been subjected to this.

What we have taken from this experience is that anytime such a test is suggested after a similar incident, the individual member should contact the Union immediately and not be tested until an official is on the scene to assess the situation.

It is worth remembering as a general rule that the law is on the side of the employer and any traces of drugs in an employee can mean instant dismissal.

Horse

Phil Adams and John Davis' horse Ohoka Jasper continues to cause headaches.

He is set to start soon in a new campaign and it is hoped the new season will see him show the form expected of him.



Ben Johnson, Ray Sinclair and Peter Broere at their recent farewell function, Port Chalmers

Otherwise he may change sports and become part of greyhound racing (feeding them.)

Our other horse Shanghai Sam with an interest from David Dick and Dick Markham (and perhaps one day the General Secretary) continues to work towards qualifying, when we hope all hell will break loose.

Watch this space.

Elections

This edition of the Maritimes will be out before the General Election on Saturday 17 September.

I hope all members will think long and hard about who they are going to vote for.

If they want an extra week's holiday, time and a half on stat days, paid parental leave, and good strong health and safety laws, they will vote for the parties who will continue to support these policies.

A vote for the parties of the Right such as National will return us to the days of the Employment Contracts Act and would destroy the gains listed above.

We all must vote, don't sit at home and not vote, show some interest and support the good things we have.

There is talk about tax cuts, so I remind you that the tax cuts will come out of your and your families' health and education, and the benefits of the tax cuts always go to those who have the most money.

Just in case you wondered these people are not the workers.

Local member Victor Billot is standing for the Dunedin North seat and with his strong links to the Union it is hoped he will be supported in his campaign. Good luck Victor.

That is the Port Chalmers contribution this time.

I hope in our next issue we will be able to celebrate a Government that will continue to support and show some sympathy with the working people of New Zealand.

Port Roundup: Timaru



by Kevin Forde

Shipping is a bit light in the port at the moment.

At our recent AGM for the Timaru Branch, the

following executive was elected: Kevin Forde (President), Tony Townsend (Secretary), Peter O'Driscoll (Executive) and Wayne Hanson (Executive.)

A special function for Old Timers and past members of the branch will be held on 19 November at 3pm at the Hibernian Hotel, Latta Street, Timaru.

Those who wish to attend should let the President or Secretary know – phone numbers Kevin Forde (mobile 021 299 1091, home 03 684 9473) and Tony Townsend (mobile 0274 420 883, home 03 6886 006).



Alby Kane and Chris Mooney did a good job as Chief Cooks and carvers at the the Napier farewell function (photo by Bill Connelly)



Kenny Knowles with the General Secretary at the Napier farewell function admiring the "Golden Shackle" (photo by Bill Connelly)

Port Roundup: Auckland Local 13



by Russell Mayn

Local 13 is involved with negotiations between the union and New Zealand Stevedores (formerly P&O) for a new Collective Employment Agreement.

This will involve the same old argument about the optimum number of fulltime stevedores and permanent guaranteed wage earners.

The important focus of a wage rise for both categories of stevedores should not be lost in the debate of numbers and ship calls and what is sustainable.

The cost of living increases are no different for a stevedore than for a director of a company.

If we look at the percentage increase over the last four years for a company director and what the average worker has received I think the difference is around 10% in favour of the director.

Elections

This leads us into the debate over the coming election and where unions should be focusing.

The option for the working person is a National-led coalition or a Labour-led coalition.

For the Maritime industry it is vital that we have effective industrial laws to maintain and improve our working conditions, more importantly we must maintain a safe workplace for all our membership at sea and on land.

The future under the Nats would be a return to legislation that drives down wages, removes worker protection clauses from the Employment Relations Act and policies that are introduced with the sole purpose to destroy organized labour.

The carrot being dangled by the National party is tax cuts, the problem with this is what will have to suffer for the tax cuts.

The Health sector is only just starting to recover and ACC is back in public control, so these and many other social services would disappear overnight.

Individual Contracts would be reinvented and to sum it all up a return to the Employment Contracts Act and the entire anti worker legislation surrounding it. On top of all this Nuclear power "yeah right".

What is needed for our industry is stronger legislation and a return to Cabotage on the coast and the Pool

system for labour engagement on the waterfront.

These may not be in the form as we knew them pre-1989 but there is a place for Cabotage and permanent fulltime jobs within the Maritime Industry.

Accident prosecution

On a different track the recent case in Auckland where a stevedore was fined for being involved in an accident causing injury means that we must look more carefully at how we manage Health and Safety and Hazards in the workplace.

This issue highlights that the operator is responsible for the machine he is driving and has to take all steps possible to avoid a possible accident, in this case the court has ruled that taking evasive action was not acceptable.

The driver should have stopped the tug and trailer unit while pedestrians were on the ramp.

The operator was not solely responsible as the company was fined for its part in the accident.

The lesson is that the companies and the union must have in place sound Health and Safety policies and adhere to them at all times.

Interport 2006

The Interport sports tournament is at Mt Maunganui on 12-16 February 2006.

Information flyers should be in all the mess rooms or you can give the union office a call for assistance.

This is an excellent week's entertainment and should not be missed.

To help the organizers of this event the sooner entries are received the easier it is for them to plan the tournament.

"Touch one Touch all"

Port Roundup: Gisborne



by Dein Ferris

More ships but less volume sums up the activity at Port Gisborne during the 2004/2005 year.

A total of 82 ships called at the port in the year.

Volumes were down due to the drop in log and plywood exports, but were boosted by squash exports, fertilizer imports and a return to kiwifruit shipments which had been lost for a few years to Tauranga.

The first kiwifruit of the season were shipped out of Gisborne, which is three weeks earlier to market than other ports.

Port Roundup: Mt Maunganui Tauranga



by Phil Spanswick

The combined Unions of MUNZ, the Engineers and Aviation and Marine have settled the

Ballance Agri-Nutrients Composite Collective Agreement.

Currently MUNZ and the National Distribution Union are negotiating the P&O Ports Collective Agreement.

MUNZ is in mediation with Owens Cargo Company on the 7 September 2005 over their insistence on banking and deletion of hours worked, and on 14 September 2005 over the forced redundancies in November 2004.

We anticipate that the above two cases with Owens Cargo Company will end up in arbitration as this seems to be the way Owens Cargo Company tries to solve workplace issues.

The Toll/Owens CEO Mark Cairns is to take over from Jon Mayson as the CEO of the Port of Tauranga.

It will be interesting to see who will replace him as CEO of Toll/Owens.

We have been working closely with the Labour Party candidate, Sally Barrett, in an attempt to ensure Labour continues its proud record of winning Tauranga's Party vote.

The Interport Sports Committee is working towards a successful Interport Sports Tournament in 2006.

Port Roundup: Wellington Waterfront



by John Whiting

Shipping Downturn

The last couple of months has seen a marked downturn in work available to our members – of course impacting as always on earning levels.

Several factors are contributing to the downturn including the loss (temporary we hope) of the ANL Tranz-Tasman service, the loss of South Island steel and container cargo previously worked in Wellington off Tasman Orient ships, and a general (part seasonal) slowdown in container volumes.

The reduction in Tasman Orient cargo impacts particularly harshly on Pacifica's Wellington/Lyttelton service and on our members working for Pacifica.

Amalgamation with RMTU

Members will note elsewhere in this issue a report on the recent majority decision by the National Executive to shelve any further progress on the amalgamation at this time.

The policy of the Wellington Waterfront Branch over a lengthy period was to support this amalgamation and we believe this shelving should not be the last word on the matter.

No obstacle should be too big to overcome and the history of workers in our industry shows that the objective of having one union representing all in the waterfront/maritime area should not be abandoned but revisited as soon as possible.

Port Roundup: Napier



by Bill Connelly

Around and about

The port is unusually quiet at the moment with all the seasonal exports finished for another year.

Ohope Beach Accommodation in New Zealand

Members should be aware that the holiday accommodation at Ohope Beach is now at a premium, because we now only have the one unit available for rental.

Vacancies are still available commencing each Sunday, on a weekly basis.

Bookings can be made through the Napier Branch, by contacting the Secretary either at the Union Office, his home or on his mobile telephone number.

Gold Coast Accommodation in Australia

Please note that the confirmation period for bookings is now SIX MONTHS, which put quite simply means that members nationally can now book six months in advance.

The next vacancies are two-week periods commencing Saturday:

3 December to 17 December 2005

14 January 2006 to 28 January 2006

28 January to 11 February 2006

25 February to 11 March 2006

Negotiations

Hawkes Bay Stevedoring Services Limited negotiations have been completed and our members have a new collective agreement in place for the next two and half years, with an immediate increase of 4.56%, backdated until 1 February 2005 and a further increase of 3% on 1 August 2006.

Members, employed on a casual basis, have retained relativity with their permanent counterparts, in that they have also received the same percentage increases for the term of the Agreement.

The Branch is still in negotiations with TollOwens, whose Agreement expired on the 24 April 2004.

Code of Practice for Health and Safety in Port Operations

I reported in the last issue of the Maritimes on the one-day seminar on "Maritime Worker Fatigue", run by the Maritime Safety Authority (MSA), and stated that I had written to them expressing my concerns over the inclusion of shore based personnel in any future safety legislation.

Still no word from the MSA.

I did request that should something of relevance in relation to stress and fatigue, come out of any future meetings, that the MSA give serious consideration to it being included in the "Code of Practice for Health and Safety in Port Operations".

I wait with baited breath.

Hawkes Bay Stevedoring Services Limited

Recently the membership of this company farewelled three long standing members of the Napier Branch, with a function and barbecue, which went down extremely well.

A good time was had by all.

We say goodbye to Graham Armstrong, Trevor Aldous and Ray Gunn and wish them well in their future endeavours.

Also saying goodbye, but still keeping in touch was Kenny Knowles, who was employed as a foreman and a member of the RMTU.

Kenny has now been employed by Bulk Cargo Services to maintain and service their phosphate grabs around the country, so he should be a familiar face to watch for at ports that are involved with the discharging and loading of fertiliser.



Napier Maritime Union members and friends at the recent farewell function (photo by Bill Connelly)

Port Roundup: Wellington Seafarers



by Mike Williams

Since the new Cook Strait Ferry 'The Challenger' has arrived a number of job opportunities have

become available in the region on Union Policy Service.

The Challenger has fitted in to an existing agreement with Toll and the Branch has initiated bargaining on one agreement for all three vessels, Arahura, Aratere and Challenger.

The Aratere is currently dry docking in Brisbane, Australia and will be out of service for six weeks.

Offshore the Union is negotiating a multi employer agreement with employers and the work in the industry will commence in late October with the arrival of Rigs, Supply Vessel, Seismic Vessel and FPSO.

Members should contact the Wellington Secretary to register interest in offshore work.

Strait Shipping negotiations are underway for the renewal of the expired agreement.

The claims are for wage increase, superannuation, increased annual leave, allowances and increments.

The NIWA agreement was signed last week 5% increase on wage and increments and airfares for every member.

In a recent victory, justice prevails for Havi Tararo with his reinstatement and monetary payment for loss of income and dignity, after being wrongfully dismissed twelve months ago from the Aratere.

The Union is thankful for the membership support and Peter Cranney's hard work on this drawn out case.

With the upcoming election, members have been encouraged to be active in re-electing a Labour-led/Greens government.

The Branch has donated \$2000 towards industrial campaign material to the CTU Fighting Fund.

The Branch is also producing a pamphlet for the election as well as an advertisement in a local newspaper outlining Brush's real right wing agenda.

Obituary: Norman 'Norm' Quinlan

by Krysti Wetton

War veteran and former waterfront leader Norman (Norm) Quinlan died on a return visit to Italy to celebrate the 60th anniversary of the end of World War 2.

The New Plymouth man had joined 130 veterans and supporters who travelled to Trieste with the Our Heroes Charitable Trust.

He had a heart attack after arriving in Italy, and died on Thursday 2 June.

He was 83.

Mr Quinlan's daughter Pam Smith said family members had been in contact with him before his death, thanks to help from New Zealand consulate officials in Milan.

She said her father had been looking forward to the trip to Trieste because he had happy memories of his time there.

He had served with the New Zealand Army as a gunner.

Mr Quinlan returned to Monte Cassino for the 50th and 60th anniversaries of the battle.

He told the Taranaki Daily News before his trip to Cassino last year that he would remember all the faces of the young men who were left behind.

Mrs Smith said the visits had meant a lot to him.

Mr Quinlan was involved in the 1951 national wharf lockout that involved 180 New Plymouth wharfies.

He remained a proud unionist during his 34 years on the wharf, becoming local president from 1955 to 1982, and vice-president of the national union from 1958 to 1982.

Mrs Smith said Mr Quinlan who was a member of the Paritutu Bowling Club was a wonderful man who would be sadly missed.

He is survived by his wife Mabel, his daughters Pam and Marie, four grandchildren and four great-grandchildren.

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THE BACK PAGE



Stu Neill, Don Hill and Jeff Duncan at the farewell function at the Portside, Port Chalmers, July 2005



Brad Latimer, Bill Shrimpton, and George Baker at a recent Maritime Union training course



Garry Parsloe with Labour MP Mark Gosche and Green MP Sue Bradford at the CTU election meeting in Auckland



Maritime Union of New Zealand Vice President Joe Fleetwood presents Green Party co-leader Rod Donald with a campaign contribution, August 2005



Garry Richards and Rod Williams at farewell function, Port of Napier (photo by Bill Connolly)



Loading hay, New Plymouth (photo by Shane Parker)