

Violence erupts at port



Police officers subdue and arrest a Teamster picket Friday night at the Port of Anchorage while a truck, its side battered by other pickets, rolls on unmolested.

□ This story was written by Don Hunter, based on reporting by Ann Cony, John Lindback, Steve Lindbeck, Jim Lavrakas and Monte Paulsen.
□ A full page of photos, Page A-11.

Police wielding a fire hose clashed with angry pickets at the Anchorage port Friday and arrested eight who refused to move or threw rocks at tractor trailers bound for Anchorage Cold Storage.

Windshields, side windows and headlights of some of the trucks were smashed out, according to police and other observers, but there were no injuries in scuffles between police officers and the wet, furious pickets. The encounter lasted only a few minutes. No injuries were reported.

The showdown came about 4:30 p.m., shortly after police officers warned an estimated 60 to 80 pickets they would be hosed down if they refused to make way for four container-laden trailers. An earlier convoy of trucks had been escorted through the wall of sign-shaking, epithet-shouting pickets by a double phalanx of police officers.

A private security guard rode in each of the trucks, and police cars were stationed along the route between the port and the Cold Storage warehouse, where the trucks were met by smaller lines of pickets.

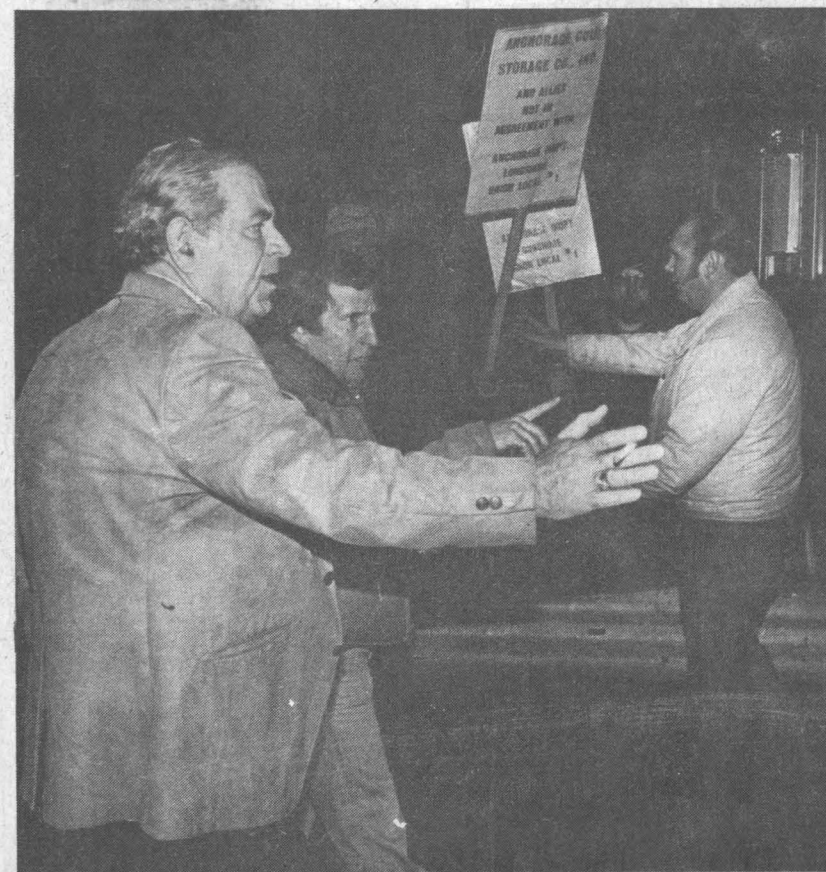
Three police dog teams were on the scene, and two pit bulls leashed by pickets lunged at the trucks as they passed through the lines.

One observer reported seeing a picketer shuffle a pistol from one pocket to another. But police officers at the scene said neither the pickets nor the non-union dock workers and drivers were armed.

Tempers cooled after the arrests, and one of the pickets returned a wristwatch lost by a police officer in a scuffle.

The arrests — all on misdemeanor disorderly conduct charges — came near the end of a long, cold day of confrontation between pickets representing the Anchorage Independent Longshore-

See Back Page, UNION



Local Teamster union chief Jesse Carr arrived at the port shortly before 6 p.m. and spent about 30 minutes trying to calm the situation.

Unions extend offer to cut number of pickets at port

By ANN CONY
Daily News reporter

Attorneys for Anchorage longshoremen and Teamsters Local 959 told a Superior Court judge Friday evening that the unions would drastically cut back picket lines today at the Port of Anchorage in an effort to prevent more violence there.

John Bradbury and Ron Bliss, representing the unions, told Judge Brian Shortell during a court hearing that longshoremen would limit their pickets to five and that Teamsters would limit their pickets to six.

The voluntary cutback applied only to the port area and not to Anchorage Cold Storage warehouses where vans are being delivered.

Shortell called the parties together after attorneys for Anchorage Cold Storage notified the judge at 4:30 p.m. of a violent outburst at the port, where between 60 and 80 angry pickets protesting the unloading of freight destined for the

strike-bound company clashed with police and broke truck windshields.

Doug Riggs and Mike Dundee, the attorneys representing the company, reiterated requests made earlier in the day that Shortell order a limit on the number of pickets in an attempt to prevent violence.

Although Shortell had twice previously refused to set any limit, Riggs and Dundee asked that no union members be allowed to picket, or that the number of pickets be limited to two.

After 2½ hours of discussion, which included testimony from a private security guard who rode Anchorage Cold Storage trucks into and out of the port three times Friday, the meeting ended with no court order but with the pledge to limit the number of pickets.

"If it works, we're satisfied with it," Dundee said of the voluntary arrangement. "If there's violence, we'll be back (in court)."

Shortell said he would be on call during the weekend.

Earlier in the day, Police Chief Brian Porter testified in support of a motion by Anchorage Cold Storage to limit the number of pickets to five.

Claims were made at the hearing that some Teamsters expressed intentions to defy union officials' orders to not carry weapons on the picket line.

Porter related reports that three pickets were seen concealing pieces of scrap metal in their clothing, that pickets were obstructing traffic and that a pit bulldog and a Doberman pinscher were in the crowd of pickets at the port.

Under cross-examination by union attorneys — who argued that union members have a right to picket under federal law — Porter admitted the reports were hearsay and that there were no first-hand accounts of property damage or

threats of violence.

Bradbury, representing the longshoremen, said he is waiting for Shortell to decide whether he will reconsider a request for an injunction preventing the municipality from letting Anchorage Cold Storage perform longshore operations at the port.

Shortell denied that request Thursday after hearing extensive arguments by attorneys for the unions, Anchorage Cold Storage and the municipality.

Bradbury's motion challenges the manner in which the municipality issued a dock use permit to Anchorage Cold Storage.

"The procedures followed by the city of Anchorage in granting this permit were rife with irregularities," Bradbury said in court papers submitted Thursday.

"The Odom Corp. (parent company of Anchorage Cold Storage) did not follow the standard application process. Rather, it took steps to keep its permit request a secret," he said. "The municipality cooperated to the fullest extent in securing the permit for the Odom Corp. without any opportunity for public comment or scrutiny."

Under normal practices, a dock use application is filed with the port director, who reviews it and makes a recommendation to port commissioners for approval or denial. The matter is then put on the agenda of the next commissioner's meeting and is open for public discussion.

Bradbury submitted records indicating that Anchorage Cold Storage applied for a dock permit in late September. The application was approved and a permit was signed Oct. 2 by Municipal Manager John Valensi without authorization from port commissioners.

The permit matter was not listed on the agenda for the port commissioners' regular meeting of Oct. 21. Instead, the matter was brought up at the "items not on agenda" portion of the meeting.

"The Port Commission then approved issuance of the already executed permit and the public lost another round in the fight against backroom closed-door politics," Bradbury said in court papers.

Deleted from the permit issued Anchorage Cold Storage was a "work conditions; labor contracts" section normally included in any standard dock use permit, Bradbury said.

"The provision was apparently deleted because Odom Corp. is a non-union employer," he argued in court.

Bradbury said Anchorage Cold Storage's permit was invalid because it was not issued in accordance with established practices.

Shortell denied the motion for an injunction on the grounds that Bradbury had not shown that the longshoremen's union would suffer irreparable injury without an injunction.

Bradbury on Friday filed a motion for reconsideration, arguing the longshoremen were deprived of a constitutional right and that such denial amounts to irreparable injury.

Longshoremen are angry about the permit matter.

In a moment of frustration on the port picket line Friday, longshoremen business agent Bud Kowalski charged that Milt Odom, owner of Anchorage Cold Storage, "bought this city lock, stock and barrel from (Mayor George) Sullivan on down."



Alice Puster of The Times



PEACEFUL PICKETS

After a brief skirmish Friday between longshoremen and police, all was quiet on the docks at the Port of Anchorage Saturday. Above, longshoremen pickets proclaim the dock Port of Odom, after Milt Odom, owner of Teamster-struck Anchorage Cold Storage. However, the pickets had little effect on the truck, which was hauling cargo away from the dock to a Cold Storage warehouse. At left, a police officer at a barricade checks the identification of a driver whose window sticker leaves no question about which side of the dispute he is on.