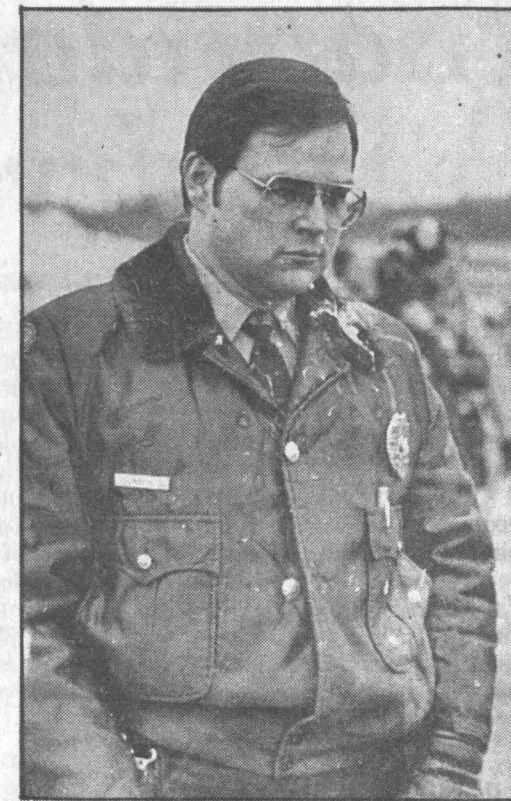
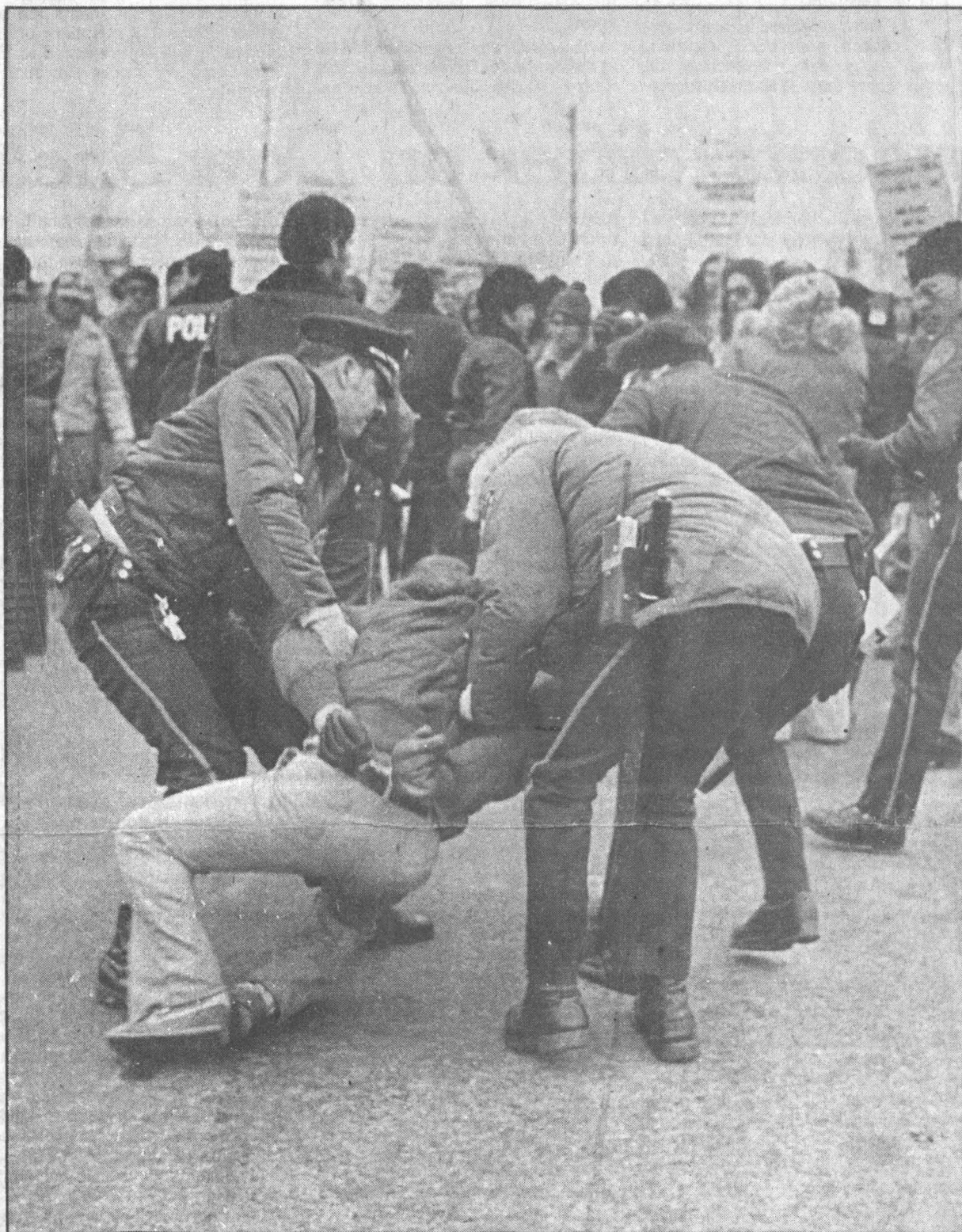




Police shove picketers out of the way, left, to allow Anchorage Cold Storage truck to leave the port docks Friday. Corporal Mark Marsh, right, was smacked with an egg during the dispute



Ludwig Loob of The Times



Ludwig Loob of The Times

Police haul away one of eight longshoremen arrested during scuffles with picketers at Port of Anchorage

Officers keep peace, stay out of labor beef

by Patti Epler
Times Writer

Trying to keep the peace on a violence-torn picket line in cold weather isn't a lot of fun.

On Friday, about 30 Anchorage police officers found themselves in that unenviable position.

When tempers flared and tension grew at the Port of Anchorage over the unloading of an Anchorage Cold Storage barge, police were called in to keep the public road open.

They found themselves facing about 60 angry members of Anchorage Independent Longshore Union Local 1. The longshoremen were picketing the barge because non-union Anchorage Cold Storage employees were unloading the barge. Teamsters Local 959, with which the longshore union is affiliated, is locked in a labor dispute with Anchorage Cold Storage.

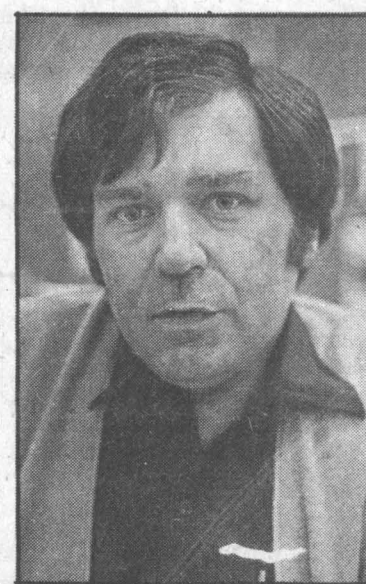
At one point Friday, before Teamster boss Jesse Carr stepped in to pull back some of the picketers, there were an estimated 60 officers at the port.

"It was pretty cold," said one police investigator, who came to work that morning in his usual three-piece suit. Not long after lunch, he was confronting the picketers, still dressed in his office clothes with only a police jacket and coveralls for warmth.

"I think our end was well-organized," said the officer, who asked that he not be identified and singled out from the rest of the men "who spent just as much time freezing down there as I did."

"The command officers at the scene were very much aware of the (tension) situation and in control of the officers. I think the police showed a great deal of restraint in effecting their job."

Lt. Warren Suddock, the on-scene commander for the department, agreed that the situation only got out of control a few times.



LT. WARREN SUDDOCK
"We had to take action"

"There was no problem at the start," said Suddock, who spent most of Thursday and Friday at the port. "The longshoremen were very reasonable toward the people who work here at the port."

But, Suddock said, when trucks belonging to Anchorage Cold Storage came through the picket line Friday afternoon, trouble began.

The failure of the company to obtain a court order limiting the number of pickets also added to the tension, Suddock said, and police began moving people out of the roadway.

"Our whole objective was to keep the public road open for anyone who wanted to use it in a lawful manner," Suddock said.

When the picketers began pushing the police line, followed by rock- and egg-throwing at officers as well as the Anchorage Cold Storage

trucks, a fire hose was turned on to separate the scuffling groups and clear the roadway, he said.

Suddock emphasized that police were not taking sides in the labor dispute but were there only to keep the road open and guard against damage to private property.

Suddock denied a request from one of the Cold Storage employees to have an officer escort the man out to bring back food for the employees and truck drivers in the office. "I'm sorry, I can't do that," he told the man. "I can't have my officers helping one side or the other."

Suddock also said police and port security guards provided extra parking for the picketers and opened up a closed lot for that purpose.

"We made all efforts to accommodate them," he said, "but when they began to damage private property, we had to take action."

"Most of the picketers did not get out of line and were pretty well-behaved," Suddock said. "I think that was evidenced by the fact that there were no injuries and minimal damage."

Most police officers left the port about 6 p.m. Friday after most of the picketers had gone home.

Many of the officers had to work overtime to maintain the numbers at the port.

Police administrators said patrol activities went on as usual with the normal number of officers patrolling the rest of the city. Those who pulled duty at the port were investigators, traffic officers and officers who were called in to work extra duty, officials said.

One officer said the only time he could remember being asked to control a demonstration was in 1971 when a crowd gathered in Anchorage to protest a nuclear test on Amchitka Island.

Arrested picketers say they were protecting jobs

by Sean Hanlon
Times Writer

James Armitstead is a 28-year-old longshoreman. He made \$111 last week.

Friday he was arrested with seven others after "mouthing off" in a violent clash between picketing longshoremen and Anchorage police during a strike by Teamsters Local 959 against Anchorage Cold Storage Company.

He was picketing, he said, to protect his job.

Dock work in the Port of Anchorage is parceled out according to a seniority roster and Armitstead is way down on the list. So when non-union workers began to unload cargo destined for Anchorage Cold Storage, target of a Teamsters strike honored by the longshoremen, Armitstead rushed from his Wasilla home to join the picket line.

"I was mouthing off. I was very vocal — they were trying to take my job away," Armitstead said.

Non-union longshoremen (from Louisiana, picketers said) are stealing union jobs, he said.

If Armitstead is angry with so-called "scab" labor, he is also upset with the police. He said union longshoremen helped police officers — who were once represented by the Teamsters themselves — when they were having labor difficulties.

"Now we pay taxes to pay their salaries so they can protect these guys who are stealing our jobs. It's disgusting."

Frank Bruner, a 23-year-old longshoreman also charged with disorderly conduct, said rocks started flying when police paved a way through the pickets for Cold Storage vans.

"The cops were leading the way for the trucks and had their clubs out. When they started to lead the vans through the picket lines, that's when the trouble started. The rocks were thrown at the trucks."

Armitstead said he didn't throw rocks and he didn't throw eggs.

Pickers throwing rocks were always in the background because they didn't want to be seen, Armitstead said.

"I didn't throw any rocks. I had two picket signs when they grabbed me. How can you throw rocks when you're carrying two signs?"

He saw some rocks but didn't see them thrown, he said.

"But I know there were some rocks thrown because there were some windshields broken on some of the scab rigs. And I saw a cop with a little egg on his face," Armitstead said.

The police then brought out a fire hose, which they used to disperse the pickets and pave a way for the vans.

"I just put on my rain gear. Longshoremen always keep their rain gear around," Armitstead said.

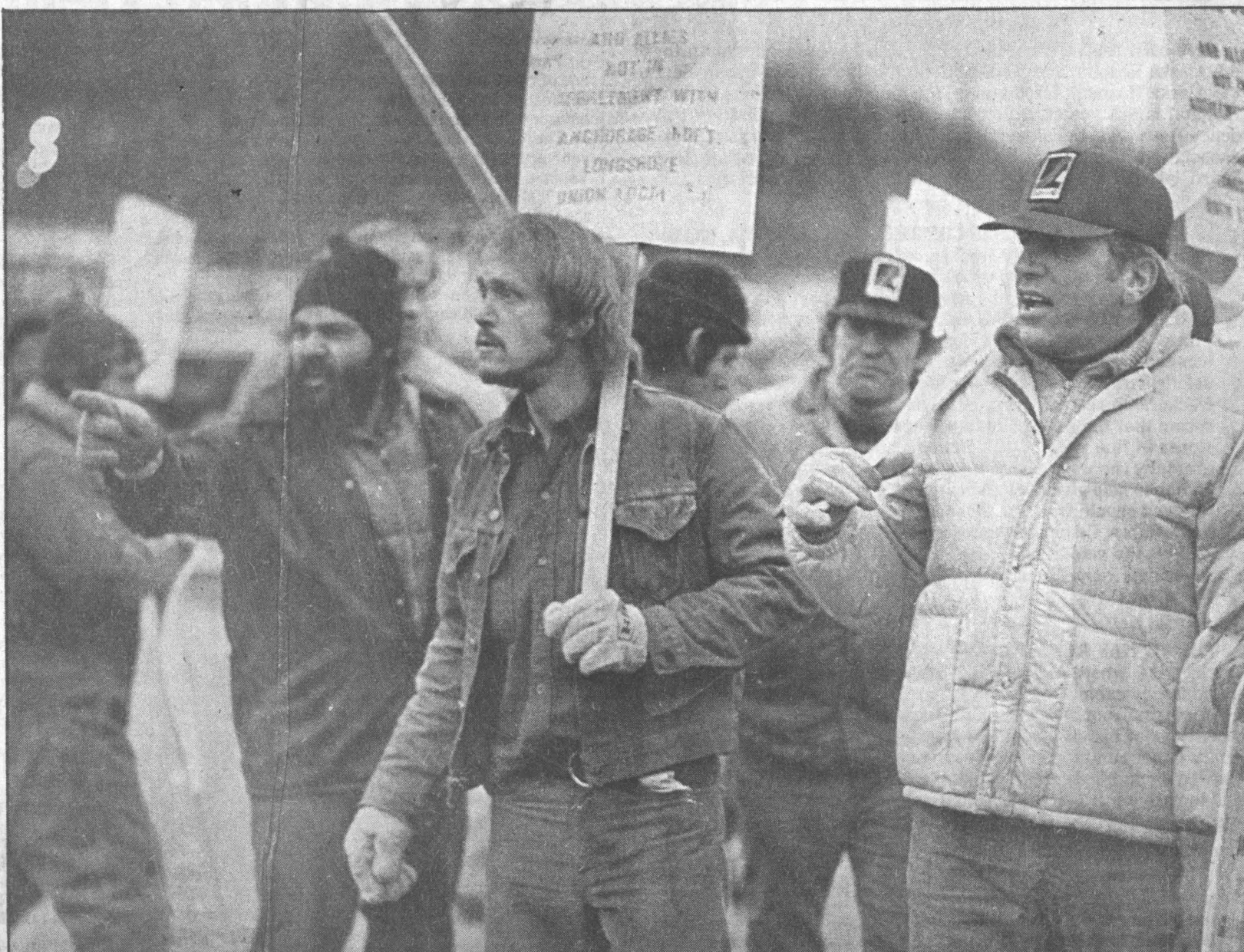
Armitstead insisted that the police arrested only the "vocal" pickets. However, Armitstead said Lyle Lewis and Miles Davic were more than vocal when one Anchorage police officer pulled out his gun.

The men rushed at the officer, Armitstead said. "Then he backed off and hollered 'Get them!' Then a bunch of cops took them to the ground."

The eight longshoremen were handcuffed and put in a police van, where they waited to be taken to court. Longshore union business manager Steve Kowalski said he hurt his shoulder when "three of (the police officers) slammed me down on the pavement. What hurt so bad is being handcuffed for two hours."

They were charged with disorderly conduct and barred from going north of Third Avenue until 6 p.m. today.

Armitstead was stranded Friday night. He was a long way from his Wasilla home and his van is north of Third Avenue.



Ludwig Loob of The Times

James Armitstead, picket over left shoulder, and Miles Davic, right, were among eight longshoremen arrested