

Police, longshoremen clash

by Ellis E. Conklin
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Times Writers

A heated confrontation between Anchorage longshoremen and police officers at the Port of Anchorage cooled late Friday when Teamster Union boss Jesse Carr appeared at longshoremen picket lines and told angry picketers to allow trucks carrying goods for Anchorage Cold Storage to pass.

The dispute, which erupted in a four-month old Teamster Local 959 strike against the cold storage company, flared on two fronts Friday — at a milling, sometimes violent picket line at the Port of Anchorage and in a quiet Superior Court room some two miles away.

Although observers counted some 60 picketers, Police Chief Brian Porter testified in court Friday that 200

For a view from both sides of the picket-line confrontation, see stories and photos, page B-2

picketers lined the port docks and waited in cars for the barges to be unloaded.

The picketers, members of the Anchorage Independent Longshore Union Local 1, said they were angry that Anchorage Cold Storage is using 10 to 15 non-union workers to unload a Cold Storage-leased barge containing 150 vans of food and beverage supplies. Picketers hurled obscenities, eggs and rocks at Cold Storage trucks hauling freight to warehouses. Rocks broke truck windows.

Cold Storage officials say it will be Sunday before crews working four 12-hour shifts fully unload the barge.

Picketers from the union, affiliated with Teamster Local 959, which is locked in a labor dispute with Anchorage Cold Storage, appeared at the dock at 6 a.m. Friday.

They taunted police officers, refusing to get off the roadway, but remained generally orderly until shortly about 4:15 p.m. when the first Anchorage Cold Storage truck attempted to pass.

Because picketers didn't disperse when ordered to, police sprayed them with water.

The longshoremen fired eggs and rocks at the police and screamed obscenities. One police officer was hit in the neck with an egg. Another was struck in the back with a rock. Several longshoremen were hit in the ribs by police clubs. Other were nearly knocked down by firehoses.

No injuries, however, were re-

ported by police or longshoremen.

Shortly after 4:15 p.m., Porter told municipal lawyers he was considering calling out the National Guard because he did not know if he could control the situation.

Carr arrived on the scene just before 6 p.m. Clad only in a suit, he stood in the middle of the picketers and told them to allow the trucks to pass in order to avoid a court order limiting the number of pickets.

"Fellers, let's head for the parking lot," he called. Grumbling picketers moved into a parking lot off the roadway. Carr, before jumping into his vehicle to go to another picket location, accused members of the news media of having aggravated the trouble and advised them to leave.

"Get the . . . out of here," he yelled at one photographer. "You

helped cause this whole thing."

Shortly after Carr left, the headlights of five barge-bound Cold Storage trucks appeared, causing jeers and shouts from the picketers. But no one moved into the roadway.

Eight picketers were arrested in the police-longshoremen melee, all charged with disorderly conduct. They were arraigned Friday evening and released on condition they stay away from the dock area until 6 p.m. today. They also were ordered to appear in court Nov. 9.

Arrested were: Frank Bruner, 22; Lyle Lewis, 52; longshoreman business agent Steve Kowalski, 26; Miles Davic, 51; Ed Rosario, 27; Danny Bryand, 31, and James Glenn, 36, all of Anchorage, and James Armitstead, 28, of Wasilla.

Police Lt. Warren Suddock said (See CLASH, page A-3)

longshoremen agreed to limit themselves to five picketers after talking with Carr. Teamsters earlier had six pickets at the scene.

The near-riot broke out shortly after Superior Court Judge Brian Shortell refused Cold Storage requests to limit the number of picketers but issued a temporary restraining order telling longshoremen to refrain from violence.

Cold Storage attorneys went back to court after the violence broke out, asking for a stronger order. They agreed, after an hour and a half of argument, to see the efforts of Carr and Porter to quell the problems were successful.

We are "nervously comfortable" with the status quo, Cold Storage attorney Doug Riggs told Shortell at 7:30 p.m. But municipal attorneys, who called the incident "not a labor dispute but a riot" said they were not at all comfortable with the lack of a stronger judicial order.

Attorneys for the Longshoremen claim that a "fix" between Anchorage Mayor George Sullivan and Cold Storage owner Milt Odom allowed the Cold Storage barges to dock at the city's port. They say permission to dock at the port was issued behind closed doors. Shortell, agreeing that

it might appear that way, said he was not prepared to make such a finding.

At 11 a.m., there were eight police cars and nearly 20 officers on the dock. Hours later, police ranks swelled to nearly 60 officers, or about 25 percent of the city's police department. Most of them carried billy clubs and some of them wore protective helmets.

Police officers had three K-9 police dogs. Picketers showed up with a doberman pinscher and a pit bull. They threatened to let their dogs loose if the police dogs came out.

The first four tractor-trailer trucks passed the picketers on the way into the loading area Friday morning were struck with wooden picket signs and spat upon by the longshoremen.

As the day grew longer, the mood of the longshoremen and police grew uglier.

At 2:35 p.m., a contingent of 12 officers began marching through the picket brigade, demanding that the longshoremen clear the roadway so the trucks could pass. Behind them, four Cold Storage trucks moved slowly through the lines. Cries of "Zieg Hiel" and "police state" filled the air.

The police, armed with night sticks moved into between the trucks and the longshoremen. ". . . you scab," many longshoremen yelled in unison. The trucks were pelted with rocks, eggs and picket signs.

Ten minutes later, the trucks ar-

rived at the Cold Storage warehouse on First and C Street. Said one obviously shaken driver: "It was scary. Look at the spit on my windshield."

Shortly before 4 p.m., the violence escalated. As one longshoreman attempted to break through police lines to strike a passing cargo truck, he was knocked down and dragged away by police.

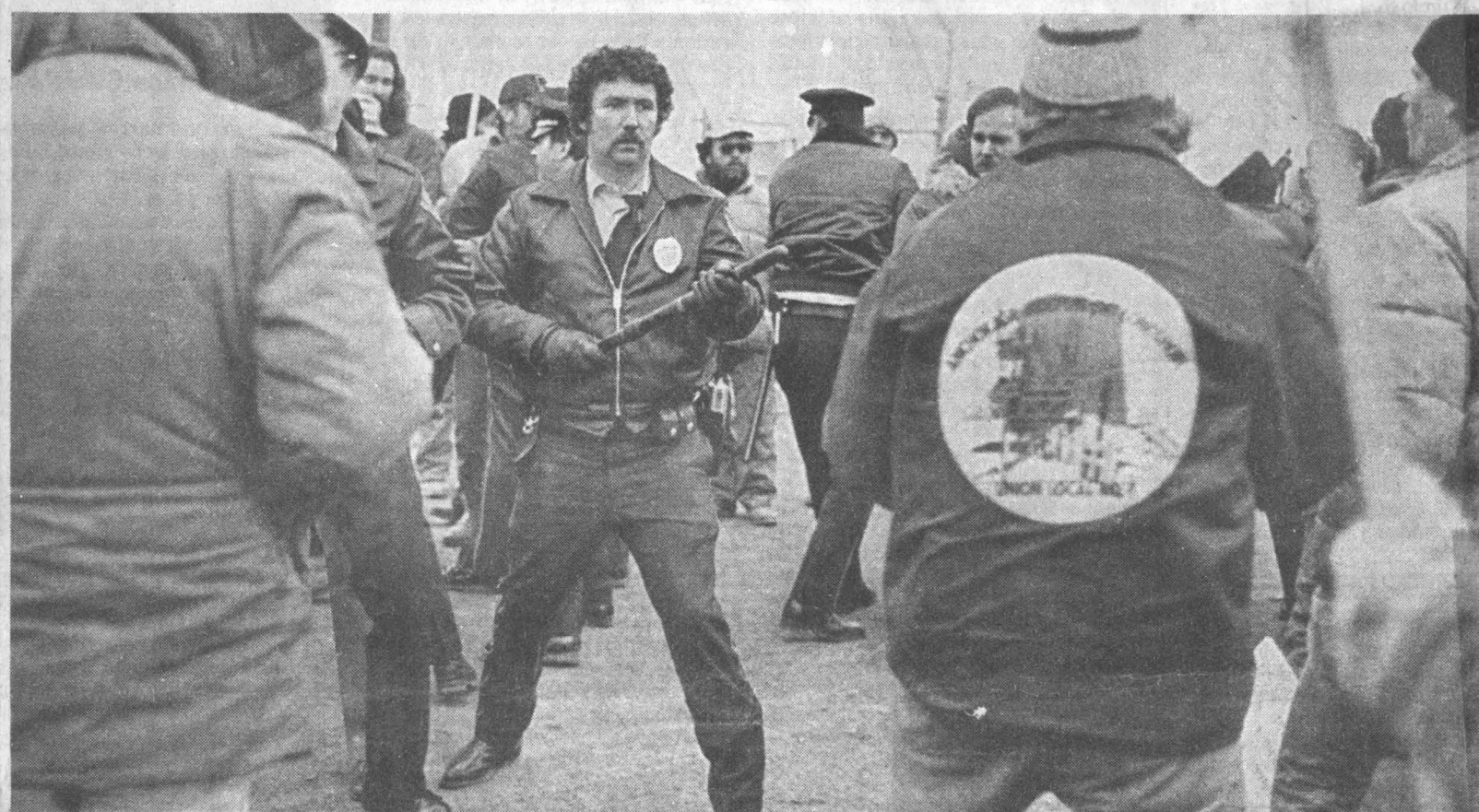
Police then brought firehoses to the scene and mounted them in front of the police line which stretched across the roadway. Two minutes later, two police officers turned the hose on the longshoremen, hoping to disperse the crowd and clear the roadway.

One longshoreman, struck with a stream of water, charged a police officer. Five officers immediately pounced on him and finally wrestled him to ground. He was struck several times in the ribs with night sticks. He was arrested.

"Scab pigs," the longshoremen yelled while banging on the passing trucks. Three arrests were made as longshoremen refused police demands to back off. Again, the hose was turned on the strikers as several longshoremen moved toward police.

"Hose them down, get 'em all," one officer screamed as several longshoremen moved toward him. Another longshoreman was arrested and then another.

". . . you pigs, . . . you pigs," one longshoreman bellowed, his face and hair dripping with water. Said another: "You expect us to stand still while these . . . scabs take our jobs."



POLICE, LONGSHOREMEN SQUARE OFF

Ludwig Loeb of The Times

Anchorage police officer Ron Smyth, in top picture, holds his nightstick and squares off against picketing longshoremen Friday during the first violent confrontation between authorities

and dock workers. In bottom picture, longshoremen are doused with a fire hose as police try to break up picketers to let cargo bound for Anchorage Cold Storage through the picket lines.

Barge

(Continued from page A-1)

The barge, leased by Milton Odom, the owner of Anchorage Cold Storage, pulled into port at about 4:30 a.m. and was secured shortly after 7 a.m.

The longshoremen were by and large peaceful, though embittered that "scab laborers" are doing the job they rightfully feel is theirs.

"The city has turned against the people who've lived here all their lives," said one longshoreman, alluding to the city's decision to issue Cold Storage a permit for the barge to enter the port.

The only potentially violent altercation occurred when a blue Chevrolet attempted to pass through the picket brigade. The vehicle was thought to be carrying several men hired by Odom to help unload the cargo.

"Hey, you . . . scabs," yelled one longshoreman. Within moments, the car was surrounded by nearly a dozen pickets. Several began to beat on the car with wooden picket signs. Another man attempted to open the passenger door while a longshoreman on the opposite side of the car reached through the driver's window and slapped the driver.

A police officer moved quickly to the car demanding that the longshoremen disperse. The car then sped away, heading straight to the barge as several longshoremen shouted, "Scabs go home."

Later in the morning, a Lt. Tom Walker walked over to the picketers and said, "You'll have to back off the roadway."

"Bull . . .," a longshoreman replied.

"We're not asking you, we're telling you," Walker said.

"This is public property," another picketer responded. Again, Walker

asked them to clear the road.

"No, this is a picket line and a legal one," said the longshoreman.

Many of the longshoremen believe most of the workers unloading Odom's freight were brought in from Idaho, Montana and as far away as Tennessee.

"Look at that scab," cried a longshoreman after spotting a non-union worker on a crane handling freight aboard the barge. "He can't do that. That's against safety regulations. If he fell, the city would be liable. If OSHA was here, they'd all be busted."

Several other longshoremen said Odom's firm was violating such safety regulations as allowing its men to smoke and park their vehicles on the dock.

John Odom, general manager of Anchorage Cold Storage and the son of Milton Odom, could not be reached for comment. He was down at the barge which reporters were denied access to.

There are also reports that Odom plans to seek a restraining order against the longshoremen's union today in Superior Court, according to Bud Kowalski, a business agent for the longshoremen.

Warren Jackson, president of the Anchorage Independent Longshoremen's Union, said the picket line was legal and that he didn't expect any violence when the Odom-leased trucks containing the supplies began to roll. Jackson, however, said he had no guarantees that individual longshoremen would remain peaceful.

The Teamsters Union and Anchorage Cold Storage were ordered Thursday by a Superior Court judge not to engage in violence when the barge arrived. Judge Brian Shortell issued the order in response to charges by the union that the crew aboard a tugboat pulling the barge was heavily armed. Cold Storage officials deny this claim.

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Calm replaces waterfront strife

by Patti Epler
Times Writer

All was quiet on the Anchorage waterfront Saturday following an outbreak of violence Friday night between longshoremen and Anchorage police. A few pickets continued their protest against Anchorage Cold Storage while even fewer police officers kept an eye out for trouble.

With temperatures in the mid-20s, men and women of the Anchorage Independent Longshore Union Local 1 braved the cold and the wind by carrying picket signs condemning Cold Storage for unfair labor practices.

Uniformed Anchorage police officers kept their position on the seaward side of the picket line, sitting in patrol cars or strolling about.

The scene at the Port of Anchorage, where trucks and drivers worked through the day to unload an Anchorage Cold Storage barge, was decidedly different than on Friday

when pickets and police clashed in brief moments of violence. About 60 pickets were protesting the employment of non-union workers hired by Anchorage Cold Storage to unload the barge.

When rocks and eggs started flying, police moved in with fire hoses and sprayed the pickets in an attempt to clear the public road.

On Saturday, only 11 pickets and eight police officers remained at the scene. The union members said police had forced them to keep their ranks to five longshoremen and six Teamsters. But a police spokesman denied that statement and said union officials had set that limit themselves in order to avoid the issuance of a court order that might limit the number of pickets.

A longshoremen's union spokesman at the port said pickets would remain at their posts until all the cargo from the Anchorage Cold Storage barge had been removed.

A police command officer said police would remain on the scene until the barge left, probably some time today.

Another barge belonging to Sea-

Land was due at the same berthing spot late Saturday or early today. The union spokesman said the Sea-Land operation did not enter into the (See STRIKE, page A-2)

dispute against Anchorage Cold Storage.

Eight pickets were arrested Friday on charges of disorderly conduct when they apparently refused to clear a space for the Cold Storage trucks to pass.

While picketers and police went at it on the dock, Cold Storage officials and representatives from the municipality went to court to ask that the number of pickets be limited to avoid further violence.

But Superior Court Judge Brian Shortell stopped short of placing a limit on the picketers. He did, however, order that the picketers refrain from violence.

The situation at the dock eased about 5:30 p.m. when Teamster boss Jesse Carr arrived and asked the picketers to move into a nearby parking lot and let the trucks through. Carr apparently made that decision to avoid further violence and a potential court order limiting the number of pickets.