

Teamsters get OK for Sea-Land strike

By STEVE SEPLOCHA
Daily News business editor

Teamsters Union Local 959 was told Monday it can resume its strike against Sea-Land Service Inc., the state's largest cargo carrier.

U.S. District Judge James Fitzgerald denied a motion by the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) for an injunction to halt the strike until an unfair labor practice charge could be heard. He thereby gave the union the court's permission to resume picketing.

Meanwhile, the union was silent on whether it would resume picketing. The Sea-

Land vessel, Galveston, arrived Monday morning and was to be unloaded through the night and sail today.

The next vessel is due Wednesday.

The ruling Monday was issued at the close of business in Anchorage and two hours past closing time in Seattle where NLRB and union lawyers have their offices.

Company officials here had no word on whether the NLRB planned any appeal but were fearful an appeal could not be heard in time to prevent a strike.

Jim Davis, Sea-Land's Alaska general manager, said

he knew of no contact between the company and union counsel, indicating that neither side had explored negotiating the dispute.

At issue is a union charge that the company had allowed its cargo to be handled by drivers getting less than union scale pay and benefits. This, the union said, violated an agreement the company made two years ago when it went out of the trucking business.

At that time the company reduced a 70-person trucking force to 15 employees for in-

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Longshoremen prepare to unload a Sea-Land cargo container at the Port of Anchorage Monday.

Anchorage Daily News/Tom Alvarez

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port driving and contracted its delivery service from the Port of Anchorage to local carriers.

Company truckers then got jobs with the contract car-

riers, preserving their work at that time.

Since then, however, one of the two so-called house carriers went out of business and the other cut back its operations, leaving those union

drivers without jobs.

Additionally, the union charged the company has secretly started allowing customers to begin making some of their own deliveries with drivers getting less than union scale.

It said the union struck to protect the pay levels and actual jobs.

Fitzgerald rejected company claims that it no longer had obligations to drivers who went to subcontractors.

The Anchorage Times, Tuesday, October 26, 1982

Teamster local resumes strike at Sea-Land

by Jeff Berliner
Times Writer

Alaska Teamsters Union Local 959 resumed its strike against Sea-Land Service Co. Monday night just hours after a federal judge gave the union the legal go-ahead.

Sea-Land management was forced to unload the 500-foot container vessel Galveston at the Port of Anchorage when the company's union workers failed to report to the job, according to Sea-Land's Alaska general manager Jim Davis.

A port spokesman said pickets went up at 9 p.m. Monday at the Port of Anchorage. Two of the port's seven gates have been set aside for Sea-Land's use and those gates are being picketed.

The vessel will return to Seattle this afternoon instead of this morning, said Davis, because the strike has set work back at the company.

Another ship arrives Wednesday—one of four Sea-Land vessels making regular runs between Seattle and Anchorage. There are three arrivals weekly and Sea-Land hauls more than half the state's consumer goods, including food.

A 30-man shift of workers failed to show up to unload the Galveston which arrived Monday, said Davis. Of Sea-Land's 140 Alaskan employees, about 120 are Teamster members. When the Teamsters first struck Sea-Land earlier this month, other unions in Anchorage and Seattle honored the Teamster picket line and stalled port traffic.

Teamsters say Sea-Land has violated a trucking agreement with the union.

Lawyers for the National Labor Relations Board and Sea-Land are plotting legal strategy to get the matter heard before the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals and have U.S. District Court Judge James Fitzgerald's decisions overruled. But that could take at least two weeks, said NLRB lawyer James Sand, and the NLRB general counsel in Washington D.C. may decide not to appeal, he added.

Meanwhile, new evidence has surfaced to lead the NLRB to investigate new charges by Sea-Land that the Teamster strike is

really aimed at forcing the cargo carrier to stop handling goods bound for Anchorage Cold Storage, according Sand.

Some 115 Teamsters struck Anchorage Cold Storage more than a year ago, and although Sea-Land at first honored the Teamster strike by refusing to handle Anchorage Cold Storage products, Sea-Land has since resumed carrying cargo for the strike-bound company.

The thrust of the new NLRB probe focuses on an exchange of letters Tuesday night, said Sand.

Sea-Land asked the union what it might do to stave off picketing and apparently made an offer to the union to prevent a full-blown strike which could tie up ports here and in Seattle. The Teamsters rejected the Sea-Land offer and went on strike.

The written exchange is being examined by NLRB lawyers.

Although Sea-Land has persisted in accusing the Teamsters of directing the union's dispute with Anchorage Cold Storage toward Sea-Land instead in an illegal secondary boycott, the Teamsters successfully convinced the NLRB that was not true.

At the same time, the NLRB found the Teamsters were engaging in a secondary boycott against Sea-Land because the union objected to trucking firms Sea-Land used to haul its freight.

Teamster lawyers convinced the federal court to overrule the NLRB. Union lawyers argued that their real target was Sea-Land because the cargo carrier failed to live up to agreements made with the union when Sea-Land phased out its trucking operation two years ago.

Freight which had been handled by Sea-Land's Teamster truckers has recently been offered to trucking firms which are not union and pay less than the prevailing union wage.

Convinced that this Teamster argument was the basis of the union strike, Fitzgerald ruled Friday that the strike was legal and followed that with Monday's ruling permitting the Teamsters to engage in strike activities.

The Anchorage Times, Thursday, October 28, 1982

Officials welcome Valdez dock

by Carl Gidlund
Times Writer

Even though the largest floating dock in the world now is in operation in Valdez, it will have no significant effect on Anchorage shipping, according to a Port of Anchorage official.

Chris Gates, the local port's marketing and development director, said Wednesday the eastern Prince William Sound port has neither the transportation network nor population base in its vicinity to pose a threat to Anchorage as Southcentral Alaska's principal maritime cargo handling facility.

The \$50 million, 700-foot by 100-foot dock received its first cargo Oct. 17, a load of material for the Arco oilfield operation at Prudhoe Bay. After being lifted off barges,

it was trucked from Valdez up the trans-Alaska pipeline haul road.

Gates said Anchorage port officials congratulate Valdez on its new facility but don't fear or begrudge the competition.

"We're envious of their closer proximity to Seattle by some 400 miles," he said, "and the fact that they have a beautiful deep-water harbor plus a fine tax base from the terminal operation to finance the facility. But, we don't see that it'll pose any threat to Anchorage's shipping."

He noted that, in 1980, 170,000 tons of general cargo were shipped through Valdez, while 1.3 million tons were handled in Anchorage.

"Only 10 percent of that was bound for the Interior," Gates explained, "and the rest remained in

Southcentral. Because of Valdez' lack of a railroad head and the Richardson Highway's rather insecure history, I don't think we'll lose too much of even that Interior business."

Jim Janson, president of Lynden Transport and Alaska Marine Lines which transported the first shipment through the new facility, agreed. "We're pleased with the dock, but intend to use Valdez pretty much as we've been doing; that is, for non-scheduled barge service. We don't see any diversions from Anchorage."

Lynden currently ships about 200 trailers a week through Anchorage, principally on Tote and Sealand vessels.

Janson explained that his firm has scheduled two additional oil-

field equipment shipments through Valdez within the next few months. "But," he said, "it won't amount to much in terms of tonnage. The equipment doesn't weigh much. It just takes up a lot of deck space."

However, the shipper said, the new facility may lessen North Slope oil operators' dependence on the current once-a-year barge flotilla from the Pacific Northwest. "Valdez has the potential now to be a year-round terminal for shipments to the Slope."

In addition its general cargo handling capabilities, the new dock eventually will have nine silos to store grain produced in the Delta region prior to shipment south.

Dedication ceremonies will be at 2 p.m. Saturday.

Anchorage Times 10/28/82

Judge to decide fate of pickets

by Ralph Nichols
Times Writer

U.S. District Court Judge James Fitzgerald could decide as early as this afternoon whether members of Teamsters Local 959 can continue their picketing of the Lutak Dock in Haines.

The picketing, which began Oct. 19, has stopped the unloading of all but perishable commodities destined for White Pass, Yukon Territory, from the container ship Frank H. Brown.

The action came in the wake of

the termination of all operations of the White Pass and Yukon Railroad on Oct. 8.

According to testimony during a hearing before Fitzgerald Wednesday, Teamsters are alleging the layoff of all railroad employees violated contract provisions for job security.

Picket signs have also claimed White Pass pays substandard wages and fringe benefits.

Attorneys James Robinson, representing plaintiffs White Pass Transportation Ltd. and the Pa-

cific and Arctic Navigation Co., and Madelon Blum for the Teamsters also differed over whether the case falls under the jurisdiction of federal Railway Labor Act, the National Labor Relations Act, or the Norris-LaGuardia Act.

Only if Fitzgerald determines the case falls under the Railway Labor Act will he have the authority to grant the company's request for a temporary restraining order barring further picketing.

The judge ordered both sides to submit written briefs in the case today, after which time he will issue a ruling.

Robinson told the court the Teamsters were using the pickets to apply economic pressure on the company to resume operation of the railroad and preserve jobs, in-

stead of following contractual grievance procedures to resolve the dispute as required by the Railway Labor Act and the U.S. Supreme Court in cases of this nature.

But, countered Blum, this is a legitimate picket by the union established to resolve long-standing problems between the White Pass and the union.

At one point, Fitzgerald said "I find the picketing not a bona fide labor standards picket line, but a subterfuge to carry on union objectives in other areas."

Nevertheless, the judge made it clear that his first concern in the case is whether he has authority under law to take action in the labor dispute.