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Doctor of Philosophy
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LABOUR AND INDUSTRIAL AUTHORITY:
Social and Industrial Relations in the Australian Stevedoring Industry 1800 – 1935

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A Thesis submitted in fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in the Department of Government, at the University of Queensland
July 1997
I declare that this thesis is the result of original research in which all books, articles, original documents and other sources of information have been acknowledged and referenced. This thesis has not been submitted, either in whole or in part, for any other degree.

signed: _______________________

David E. Morgan
Abstract

This thesis examines the Australian stevedoring industry during the period in which modern work systems emerged, from last decades of the nineteenth century to the 1930s Depression. It is a single-case embedded case-study – that is, a case-study analysis employs multiple units of analysis directed at building an explanation. Using this method, the study also traces key components of the British maritime industry and their influence in nineteenth century colonial Australia. The central question is; what was the relationship between the shape of work organisation and the production process and industrial relations in the Australian stevedoring industry?

The thesis falls broadly into a labour process perspective. It develops a theoretical framework concerned with the nature of organisation (of the production process and company unit, workplace, labour market and production market), the practices of organising (in the workplace, community, unionisation) and the exercise of power and authority (in the workplace, managerial and industrial relations systems, and social norms). It is a study of an industry characterised by unskilled work. The analysis looks at the emergence of stevedoring as a 'modern industry' and its technical, organisational and industrial connections with shipping.

The findings indicate that the technology and methods employed in the stevedoring labour process became increasingly inconsistent with the organisation and demands of shipping companies and the shipping production process after the widespread introduction of steam shipping in the 1880s. While technological change reconstructed the water transport production process and the shipping labour process, work organisation on the waterfront remained largely unchanged over the period from 1880 to the 1930s depression. Thus the labour process conditions for the informal labour and workplace practice on the waterfront remained, but clashed with the organisational demands of shipping. Shipping moved from a dispersed and discontinuous organisational form centred on individual vessels, to a coordinated organisational form in its early period of industrialisation based on the capitalist company from the 1860s, and finally to an integrated organisational form of the modern firm after the 1890s.

The conditions needed for authority relations in a formal system of industrial relations were arrested to varying degrees. Management systems and union structures remained undeveloped, union strategy was inconsistent, product markets were small, informal workplace relations and action persisted, and the formal arbitration system was unable to overcome the resultant problems. Thus the industry was characterised by industrial disputation and conflict, with the superior capacity of employers to coordinate their labour policy resulting in a cycle of defeat for waterside workers.
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## Abbreviations

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<td>ACAC</td>
<td>Australian Conciliation and Arbitration Court</td>
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<td>ACTU</td>
<td>Australian Council of Trade Unions</td>
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<td>AFSA</td>
<td>Australian Foremen Stvedores Association</td>
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<td>AOTA</td>
<td>Australian Oversea Transport Association</td>
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<td>APPs</td>
<td>Australian Parliamentary Papers</td>
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<td>ANU/NBA</td>
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<td>ASO</td>
<td>Associated Steamship Owners</td>
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<td>ASOA</td>
<td>Australasian Steamship Owners Association</td>
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<td>ASOF</td>
<td>Australian Steamship Owners' Federation</td>
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<td>ASWWA</td>
<td>Australian Ship and Waterside Workers Association</td>
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<td>AUSNCo</td>
<td>Australian United Steam Navigation Company</td>
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<td>AWU</td>
<td>Australian Workers' Union</td>
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<td>BEWL</td>
<td>Brisbane Employers' of Waterside Labour (see also JCWE)</td>
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<td>BPPs</td>
<td>British Parliamentary Papers</td>
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<td>BOR</td>
<td>Board of Reference</td>
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<td>CAA</td>
<td>Conciliation and Arbitration Act (Commonwealth)</td>
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<td>COM</td>
<td>Committee of Management of WWF(also Federal Council)</td>
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<td>Commonwealth Bureau of Census and Statistics</td>
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<td>Commonwealth Steamship Owners Association</td>
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<td>BEACo</td>
<td>British East India Company</td>
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<td>FCDU</td>
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<td>FWLU</td>
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<td>ICC</td>
<td>Interstate Central Committee</td>
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<td>IUP</td>
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<td>International Longshoremen's and Warehousemen's Union (USA)</td>
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<td>JCWE</td>
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<td>pounds, shilling and pence</td>
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<td>NCTFU</td>
<td>Newcastle Coal Trimmers' Federal Union</td>
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<td>NCTPU</td>
<td>Newcastle Coal Trimmers' Provident Union</td>
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<td>NDLS</td>
<td>National Dock Labour Scheme (UK)</td>
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<td>NHRSSCo</td>
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<td>NSB</td>
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<td>NSWCSOA</td>
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<td>NSWPPs</td>
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<td>NWLU</td>
<td>Newcastle Wharf Labourers' Union (also General Wharf Labourers')</td>
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<td>Oversea Steamshipowners Representative Association</td>
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<td>Permanent and Casual Wharf Labourers Union</td>
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<td>Port Pirie Workingmens' Association</td>
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<td>Acronym</td>
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<tr>
<td>QFSA</td>
<td>Queensland Foremen Stevedores Association, Union of Employees</td>
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<td>RC</td>
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<td>SR</td>
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<td>TLC</td>
<td>Trades and Labour Council</td>
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<td>Transport Workers' Industrial Union of Australia</td>
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<td>VO</td>
<td>Vigilance Officer</td>
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<td>Victorian State Gas and Coal Company</td>
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<td>WEC</td>
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<td>WWF</td>
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Glossary

**Apron**
that part of the wharf that is nearest the water and extending to the transit sheds being worked

**Beams**
wood or metal supports for the hatch covers which cover the hold when ship is at sea

**Bollards**
large, usually metal, posts to which ropes are secured in mooring a ship

**Charter-party**
a civil law contract specifying the terms under which cargo is carried, delivery place and time, freight due and penalties for breach of these terms

**Coamings**
the edges of the hatch opening at the top of the hold

**Coastal**
intracolonial or intra-state trades served by small vessels, often feeder services from outports to larger ports and/or carrying general cargo and passengers.

**Coasting**
see coastal

**Consignee**
the party to which cargo has been consigned and transported to by the shipping company

**Consignor**
the party which consigns cargo to another and is transported by the shipping company

**Conventional ship**
cargo ship fitted with masts and derricks or ships cranes that load and/or discharge cargo

**Deadweight ton**
‘dwt’ the weight of the cargo, fuel, stores stowed aboard to bring a ship down to her fully loaded marks

**Drogher**
a shallow draught steam-power boat that worked river cargoes in New South Wales

**Fall**
the vertical line and distance that the cargo hook falls to put down cargo – single fall when one tackle or derrick is used, married fall on coupled derricks (union purchase)

**Floor**
the bottom of a hold

**Freight**
sum agreed or payable for the hire of a ship or carriage of goods

**General stevedoring**
loading and/or discharging non-container cargo from a conventional ship with the use of ship's gear or wharf crane

**Gross Tonnage**
a measure of volume, not weight (100 cub.ft.= 1 ton gross) A measure of its enclosed space. It is the most commonly used measure for merchant ships, except tankers and bulk carriers.

**Halyard**
rope and tackle for the raising and lowering of a sail or yard

**Hatch**
the opening at the top of the hold

**Hawser**
the large rope used to tie a ship to the wharf when berthed

**Hook**
the hook at the end of a ship's crane or winch or shore crane onto which the lines of the sling or around the cargo are placed in the loading and discharging of cargo onto or from a vessel

**Homeward**
that section of a ship's journey in which it returns to the home port. In relation to the Australian trade homeward normally refers to the journey away from Australia back to Britain

**Listing**
when a ship leans to one side the greater the list the greater the chance of capsizing

**Load factor**
proportion of the time a ship is loaded while in transit

**Manifest**
list of ship's cargo with destinations

**Net tonnage**
a measure of volume calculated in the same way as gross tonnage, but measuring only the cargo space. A common measure in the early part of the century and before.

**Outward**
that section of a ship's journey in which it leaves the home port. In relation to the Australian trade outward normally refers to the journey to Australia from Britain

**Sailers**
sailing ship

**Square**
the area the size of the hatch opening immediately below the hatch in the hold

**Stage**
area immediately below the fall of the hook on the wharf. Staging is the use of equipment (ramp, framing, etc) on the stage to load or discharge particular cargo

**Staith**
coal loading chute on an elevated staging
in Australia, either (1) a worker employed to work exclusively on board ship, on
deck or in the hold, often termed a shipworker or shiplabourer before 1900, or (2)
an employer undertaking stevedoring contracts for the loading and discharging of
vessels

person in a merchant ship handling sales etc. of the cargo

refers to a long ton (1016 kg or 2240 lbs)

a group of shipping companies and vessels that operate on particular routes and/or
handle particular cargoes. It encompasses the watside workers who stevedore
these vessels - also section of a port

sheds that are used to hold or store cargo immediately adjacent to a berth at a
wharf, pier or dock. The sheds may be fully enclosed, open on one or more sides,
or consist only of a roof cover.

four or six wheeled platforms approximately 1.8m x 1.3m (6ft x 4ft) used to move
cargo to and from the wharf and shed. Sometimes on rail tracks. Used by 2 men in
ordinary usage.

two-wheeled hand-pushed implement to move cargo in sheds and on the wharf
and between the two. L-shaped, standing about 1.7m (5 ft) high with metal forks
at the bottom to slip under the cargo and carry the weight. Used by only one man.

commence work (after engagement at the pick-up), or recommence work after a
break

machine for hauling or hoisting using a wheel and axle principle, with a horizontal
axle (from windle = to wind, and ass = pole)

area of the hold under the deck, that is the remaining area of the hold not in the
square

the performance of stevedoring functions by waterside workers directly associated
with the ship

cylindrical spar tapering at each end which is slung horizontally or slantwise across
a mast to support a sail or sails
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Part 1

The Stevedoring Industry and Employment: Nature and Issues

The historical transition to 'modern' work organisation and corporate structure is a central object of analysis of many disciplines. Changes in technology, skill, work control, management and company organisation are identified as major elements in a transition from pre-industrial to industrial society or competitive to monopoly capitalism. The key period of this transition is identified as the decades around the turn of the twentieth century – from 1880 to 1920. This thesis examines the experience of the Australian stevedoring industry as a case-study to critically address these arguments. The study covers a much longer period to provide a more comprehensive perspective of the changes which occurred. Many of the changes vary markedly from other industries and point to the need for continuing research and theoretical development to understand structural change.

The stevedoring industry is often portrayed as unique, both by those who work in the industry – whether workers or management – and by outsiders. Structural features of the industry have proved to be barriers to 'modernisation' and may be seen as unique. These features engendered organisational patterns, social practices and personal attitudes which served both to adapt and ameliorate these structures for workers and employers alike. Indeed the industrial structures and the social relations of work are closely interdependent. Thus the extent to which either the structures or the social relations which developed around and through them were barriers to change is an empirical question that provides the core of this thesis.

The relation between structure and action is a key consideration in the analysis of social and industrial change across many disciplines. The framework developed in Part One of the thesis falls broadly within the labour process perspective. Key criticisms of the labour process approach have focused on its emphasis on structural features and the one-dimensional view of work methods and role of technology. Conversely, the approach has neglected the role of resistance and consciousness, workplace organisation and unionism in terms of action, and the conditions underpinning work methods and organisation, market structures and the regulatory role of the state. The framework developed below seeks to extend the perspective through drawing on two notions; first, industrial authority – its form, organisation and change – a key concern of industrial relations and sociology, and second, institutional form derived from business history.
In part, the strength of the labour process approach is the importance it places on structures and in particular the structures at work. But structures are the effects of the multiplicity of patterned social relations. Therefore, a consideration of the practical organisation of employment and work necessarily must address issues such as authority, norms and moral codes and institutions. Such issues span the boundary between work and non-work and thus relations at work are tied to broader social relations outside it.

In this Part of the dissertation, I first set out, in Chapter One, the questions to be addressed in the thesis, outline the analysis and review the literature on the industry in Australia and overseas. In Chapter Two I outline the concepts to be used to amplify the themes in the thesis and develop a theoretical framework. The framework is then applied to an empirical analysis of the Australian stevedoring industry which makes up the bulk of thesis contained in Parts Two to Four. Part Five draws the analysis together in a concluding chapter.
Chapter 1
Introduction:
The Stevedoring Industry

I. Introduction

Wharfie aristocrats

WANTED: Semi-skilled male for 35-hour week. Wide range of allowances and perks. Full amenities provided. Travelling allowance paid. No work in the rain. One week off in seven. Average weekly earnings - about $1000. Prospects of increases to $1900 a week for 41-hour week. Applicants preferably should be related to existing workforce.

Courier Mail

The image of an occupational group or a class can have as much of an impact on the understanding, policy and management of a social group as its actions, attitudes or organisation. The quotation cited above builds on and reinforces an image of 'wharfies' as lazy and inefficient, gaining undeserved wages and conditions through bloody-mindedness and confrontation. It is a symbol of outcasts of society. This aspect of the marginalisation process so pronounced in Victorian Britain was evident in Australia although in a weaker form. Waterside workers today are seen as central to the working class - displaying spirit in the face of deplorable conditions and industrial odds - but still marginal to mainstream society.

This thesis is concerned with work on the waterfront, workers and companies, from which the above image has emerged. It is also concerned with the role of economic and social forces in changes in work and workers under different organisational conditions. The image may have changed little over the last hundred years but the nature and conditions of work have. In the past the work was casual, hard, dirty, and dangerous where men laboured with little more than their bare hands and strong backs often stretched for more than twenty-four hours at a time. Thousands of men endured these conditions well into this century.

At its height, in the 1950s, almost thirty thousand men were employed on the Australian waterfront. By the 1990s only a few thousand remain – less than a century earlier. They now handle many times the volume of cargo, work shorter hours, enjoy better conditions and higher pay. Although the work remains manual, the physically hard work and dangerous conditions have been greatly reduced. Few employers remain and smaller ports have closed. These changes emerged after 1950 in a context of technological change, containerisation, state regulation and union activism. This thesis is concerned with the period before World War Two, when waterside workers were labelled as 'strike prone', or 'traditional proletarians', before improvements in wages and conditions.
The changes outlined have occurred in an industry seen as unskilled in Australia, whereas many stevedoring skills were recognised in several countries overseas. Thus unlike many studies concerned with the decline of skill, or control (or both), of workers, this study focuses on unskilled work and the nature of control. Accordingly, the questions posed cannot simply depend on an imputed equivalence between skilled work and the decline of 'craft' control. The study must ask questions which focus on the conditions that make control over work possible, the rules which may underlie it and the factors involved in change.

II. Outline of the Study

The stevedoring industry is a part of a larger transport industry. It links land (road or rail) and water transport. Water transport is here confined to ocean shipping covering three sections or trades, overseas, interstate, and intrastate shipping. The great majority of stevedoring examined in this study was done in the overseas and interstate trades. River and canal transport have been little developed in Australia. The early river work was a feeder service to the other three trades. The use of lighters in outport rivers, and in larger ports will be discussed where relevant.

The research examines one of the central functions of the industry, the loading and unloading of ships. In the majority of cases cargo was moved across a wharf, pier or dock with the vessel moored alongside. Cargo was also handled over the side onto or from lighters or small vessels, usually for transhipment. The specific nature of the labour process, the labour market and the employment relation will be outlined in chapter two. The work is predominantly concerned with handling cargo on board ship, on the wharf and in storage sheds on or near the wharf.

1. The Focus of the Study and Limitations

The central problem to be addressed in this study, is how to understand the emergence of the pattern of work organisation, employment and industrial relations in the Australian stevedoring industry. This problem can be posed more specifically as: what was the relationship between the shape of work organisation and the production process and industrial relations in the Australian stevedoring industry? In posing this question I will focus on three objects of analysis.

First, I will examine the nature and changes in work organisation seen as a dynamic process where practical organisation of production results from the interaction of inertia, conflict and change. It includes work methods, processes and layout, technology and worker competencies. These are linked to industrial and market structures. The second issue focuses on the nature of economic organisation underpinned by social and political conditions. The third focus is on power, or control, between workers and employers conceptualised as authority relations in production. What is the nature of industrial authority between workers and employers in stevedoring and how and why do they change? Authority is a key factor in shaping the pattern of industrial relations in the industry. Indeed this study addresses the issue of the genesis of industrial relations as a separate arena of practice as part of a larger pattern of social change centred on the authority issue. The theoretical issues covered and the concepts employed for the analysis are discussed in chapter two.

The period covered by this study, 1800 to 1935 is chosen for three reasons. First, to provide a comprehensive analysis of the conditions and processes of an unskilled industry in the period of transition to 'modern' work forms, identified as 1880s–1920s in the literature. Second, the period ends after the depths of the depression. In 1934, the federal government's institutionalisation of
labour regulation under the Transport Workers' Act was completed. The depression also began an
other epoch in the development of the industry – the rise of communist leadership of the Waterside
Workers' Federation (WWF), with the election of Jim Healy as General Secretary in 1937. Under
his leadership, combined with direct state regulation through the Stevedoring Industry Commission
(and successors) established in 1942 significant changes in wages, conditions and methods
associated with modern work occurred. Third, no sustained comprehensive research on the
Australian stevedoring industry has been undertaken for the period covered.

The study is limited to waterside workers. Stevedoring is a complex industry and the
numerous smaller groups of workers fall outside the focus of this study. The pull of local practices
and customs was strong, as I will demonstrate, and waterside work encompassed a wide range of
specialist groups – interstate and overseas men, wool men, freezer gangs, coal lumpers, timber
workers, coal trimmers, wharf storemen – many of whom were waterside workers, know as wharf
labourers of lumpers in the last century. Union organisation of all of these groups cannot however
be examined in this work, but these and other associated workers are discussed where relevant.
Finally, the thesis is limited to stevedoring on non-liquid cargo, and to an extent non-bulk cargo.
Since these trades were much smaller than today, this is not a significant limitation.

2. Outline of the Analysis

I will argue that change in the Australian stevedoring industry centred on the pattern of
industrial authority reflected in the structure of the labour process, the labour market, and the
employment relation. Until the last quarter of the nineteenth century industrial authority was
generated within the diverse production process – termed a discontinuous organisation of
production – in shipping as an organic process. As Price argues for building, a pattern of 'unformal
industrial relations' were maintained by an informal nature of local customs, workgroup solidarity
and social relations of autonomous regulation. A central component of industrial authority is the
legitimation of relations of domination and command. The informalist pattern of authority drew
heavily on the moral norms of social rank or status – built on a British historical legacy of trade
organisation – which influenced the general pattern of colonial labour relations. Disputes centred
largely on divergences from customs or established authority rather than work methods. The
discontinuity in production arose from the loose coupling of diverse labour processes, where each
generated endogenous practices and work control. Informalism was well suited to the experience
and competencies required for the contingencies of the stevedoring labour process.

The deepening of capitalist economic relations and organisational imperatives in shipping –
broadly described as industrialisation – emerged from the 1860s. With new steam technology, new
cost pressures and market competition, shipowners sought closer co-ordination between shipping
and stevedoring – through a co-ordinated organisation of shipping production. The process of
'industrialisation' itself was uneven and inconsistent, simultaneously generating and undermining
informalism on the waterfront. Worker authority initially expanded but then was challenged by
employers, mediated by developing mechanisms of 'conferences', negotiation and bargaining over
the terms of casual employment and the control of work. The mechanism of bargaining over
employment and industrial rules lies at the heart of the modern system of industrial relations. By
1900 the formal process of rule-making and arbitration superseded the diffuse genesis and
customary legitimation of rules typical of informalism. However the transition to formal industrial relations was slow, halting and subject to fundamental tensions.

The functional position of the stevedoring labour process, labour market conditions, freight market organisation and employer policy generated and maintained tensions in the industry for the period examined here. Steam technology brought changes to the labour process in a number of ways. The market collusion of shipping companies lead to an absence of technological transformation of stevedoring. Little investment in lifting equipment or materials handling technology meant few changes in work methods. Instead employers opted for the use of formal industrial relations mechanisms to shape and control existing work methods, informal workplace relations, and casual employment in a manner favourable to their economic imperatives.

As capitalist economic imperatives deepened into the twentieth century — towards an integrated organisation of production — employers remained wedded to labour intensive work methods. Hence informalism was converted from a component part of a larger pattern of moral authority and work regulation to a 'sectional' resource for resistance, militancy and radicalism. The foundation components of informalism — local solidarity and moral authority — were thus inserted into a different configuration of societal and industrial conditions. The moral basis of informalism was thereby opened to politicisation based on divergent assumptions and perspectives. In this manner, local action — often identified with 'attitudes' — could be conservative and insular or militant and progressive depending on the issue and context. Additionally the strengths of local and sectional action increasingly impeded the development of cohesive and effective national union organisation.

For industrial relations the tension between the locally based informalism and the formal industrial relations system, initially collective bargaining then arbitration, remained unresolved through the period covered by this thesis. Instability became entrenched, as each protagonist sought any advantage to shape the conditions of casualism and secure work control. The politicisation of the moral basis of labour resulted in competing ideological positions over the shape of union strategies.

Arbitration merely reflected fundamental tensions. Moreover, state intervention outside arbitration during the 1928 strike and its aftermath could not secure industrial relations stability. It merely reinforced the position of employers. The 1928 defeat did not eradicate local workplace action but did greatly weaken it, and the union. It also precipitated the spread and influence of communism from 1930, leading to a new epoch under communist union leadership from 1937. National union reorganisation and consolidation and the influences of WWII soon prompted direct regulatory intervention in 1942. This phase lies outside the scope of this study.

3. The Implications

The theoretical consequences of this argument are four-fold. First, that the extension of capitalist imperatives into a particular economic sphere does not necessarily entail the technological reconstruction of the labour process. Informalism associated with occupational identity, familial recruitment, community ties, personalised command and discipline and so on, common on the waterfront in the nineteenth century, was subsumed under the framework of a wider capitalist production process. However, their subsumption altered the manner of operation and role of informal relations in the new pattern of industrial authority. Second, early collective bargaining and
arbitration proved ill-equipped to deal with the problems associated with the re-construction of industrial authority in stevedoring. The centrifugal dynamics of local informalist forces undermined the centralising tendencies associated with bargained rules associated with formal industrial relations.

Third, the nature of collective organisation of labour must change to secure authority and control effects under new organisational conditions and authority relations. The efficacy of labour action is a function of the context of a particular labour process. Control over work is embedded in a pattern of industrial authority constructed and made possible by a mode of social, economic and political domination and legitimation. The conceptualisation of 'control' cannot be limited to the labour process nor as a series of wins and losses.

Finally, there is the more general point that the patterns of social relations cannot be viewed apart from the processes by which they are generated. Such patterns, or structures are, of course, the object of social analysis. The focus on structure blankets the veracity of the processes of social relations. Therefore structure should not be seen apart from their generative processes. One blends into the other to the extent that where one ends and the other starts is an empirical question.

4. Methodology

This thesis uses an historical case-study method to address the central question. Case-study analysis is an appropriate method where the research is concerned with 'how' and 'why' issues of social phenomena. While the research does not address contemporary events, the questions posed are shaped by contemporary theoretical concerns. The study may be seen as Yin's Type 2 study, that is a single-case embedded case-study. That is it focuses on a single case (the Australian stevedoring industry) and the embedded (ie covers multiple units of analysis) conditions underpinning social and industrial organisation. The study is directed at explanation building. It uses aggregate and immediate unit data, that is occupational data, historical sources, government reports and union and employer documents, to detail structural conditions and draw inferences of action and values. While case-study research draws intimately on nominalist assumptions, this study adopts a model of causality in which action is seen as generated through a reflexive relation to structure. Action is simultaneously enabled and constrained by structure where the latter is actualised in action.

III. Review of the Literature

The stevedoring industry has been the subject of numerous investigations in Australia and in other countries. In this section I outline the scope of these studies and explore key themes.

1. Scope of Research

The problems of casual labour and the labour market, hiring, implementing and monitoring decasualisation schemes, workplace organisation and conditions, waterfront workers and community, the decline in community traditions, industrial conflict, patterns of industrial relations, major strikes, the introduction or effects of technology, permanent employment, industry restructuring and unionisation have all been areas of research. In addition to specific studies of unionisation the latter has been a key area in most studies. A number of specific studies of port unions in Australia, WWF branches and periods of the industry and a
recent commissioned history of the WWF appear in the literature. Beasley's work provides a
descriptive and episodic account of the emergence and key campaigns and struggles of the WWF. No research such as that undertaken by Wilson or Phillips and Whiteside on the British industry has been reported.

2. Casualism and Attitudes

The bulk of studies fall into the areas identified. These studies and those which have taken a
broader view, place significant emphasis on the attitudes of the main protagonists in the industry. Indeed, the two broad studies just mentioned assert that attitudes have been entrenched to the extent that intervention by the state in the industry, has been unable to assert any major impact on the industry in Britain. Casualism is taken as the basic datum of research on the labour market and will be explored more closely in the next chapter. In broad terms, the waterfront labour market was stratified and segmented by specialisation, (relative) employment security, status, locality and ethnicity. This created a mosaic of overstocked sub-markets all subject to the vagaries of irregular demand, albeit in different ways. Most of the few ports decasualised (that is regulated labour supply and allocation) before WWII were in Europe.

Casual employment is identified as the key institutional context of casual attitudes. Two lines of arguments have been pursued; either workers with a pre-existing or inherent characteristic of intransigence were attracted to the industry or the creation of casual attitudes in casual work has a key causal role for industry outcomes. Two early academic studies of the Australian industry reflect the former view. Walker claimed that the WWF was "nurtured in a tradition of quick stoppages, ... which flourished naturally among the type of men attracted to an unskilled, casual occupation", with a "high proportion of less stable and less desirable types of men." More starkly Perlman wrote, "The important point is that the 'wharffies' have a grudge, and that this industrial distemper has a tendency to manifest itself whenever the economic situation so permits."

More broadly, Miller links casualism with the waterfront subculture in listing docker attributes such as solidarity, suspicion, militancy, and the "casual frame of mind." The Liverpool University Dock Worker study notes the interaction of casaulism and hostile attitudes, but does so inconsistently. While rejecting the 'dockworker' stereotype, the study still asserts that 'floaters' (men unattached to gangs) were the dominant group for they (and fringe 'drifters') were the majority of workers and displayed those very stereotypical attitudes. Moreover these men invariably aimed to undermine the permanent gang structure. Indeed some 'drifters', were "temperamentally suited to casual employment, [who] place little value on security and are not prepared to submit to the discipline required by permanent association with foremen or with colleagues." The study maintains that docker solidarity, expressed in antagonism to employers, was a guilt driven psychological reaction (through the "mechanism of projection") to the enforced competition between men for work. The social and psychological satisfactions of an undefined 'traditional unionism' were absent in formal industrial relations procedures, further isolating and alienating the rank-and-file dockworker.

Others assert that the "rejects of industry and society" drifted to the waterfront including the "unstable element in society." Moreover, the drive for control over work springs from "deep-seated aspirations for improvement" in work life. Kerr and Siegel draw the same conclusion -
"tough, inconstant, combative, and virile [workers are]... inclined to strike". They also filter into physically hard, unskilled and casual work through a process of self-selection.41

More recently, Sheridan's study of the post-WWII Australian waterfront relies on equating casual employment and casual attitudes. Workers with a 'preference' for casual work, a 'tendency' to physical confrontation, indiscipline or excessive drinking combined to create a masculine culture on the waterfront. For Sheridan the culture bred rank and file 'assertiveness' and 'independence' from union direction, illustrated by an 'early' demonstration via a rank-and-file strike in 1943.42 In a similar manner Beasley asserts that the 'bull' system in casual employment generated worker competition and "favoured compliant and docile workers" and a "certain criminal element" over the militant and troublesome. Yet in contradiction, these very same men became "a hostile membership" who claimed "freedom", dispatched "a rank and file deputation to Canberra", organised a "huge rank and file meeting" of 3,000 and struck for sixteen days in protest against its demise in April 1943.43

Phillips and Whiteside concluded their analysis of ninety years of the British docks by placing heavy emphasis on the "mentalities associated with [dock labour]" which led to conservatism and a resistance to change.44 For these writers the antagonistic attitudes were an integral part of dock employment. They undermined the best laid plans of government reformers and union leaders for a century. After almost a decade of decasualisation on the UK docks, under the National Dock Labour Scheme (NDLS), Simey maintained emotion rather than rationality drove dockers' attitudes, leading to a 'deadlock' in the industry.45 Forty years later Phillips and Whiteside assert that the "lasting influence of attitudes and traditions" doomed decasualisation. It was "limited by the inherited assumptions and beliefs of employers, trade union leaders, and civil servants about what it entailed".46 The "solidity of ... conservatism", "inflexible attitudes", "ingrained hostilities and suspicions," the "casual state of mind" are said to impede progress - a conclusion shared by other UK and Australian studies.47

Survey or ethnographic research confirms the empirical existence of such attitudes, however the interpretation of these results is crucial. Writing in the 1960s Miller contends that such attitudes were general only during a particular period of industrial development and could be expected to fade.48 Second, the content of the attitudes may not differ appreciably from those of workers in similar occupations or by members of the working class in general.49 It is therefore difficult to assign specific causal weight to attitudes unless such they are part of a wider analysis of their formation. Third, the direction of causality is not established; are they pre- (self-selection) or post-entry (endogenously generated)? Some writers see casual attitudes as created by the character and demands of the work.

Despite these objections, the view that attitudes associated with casualism were the main stumbling block of reform congealed around discussions of permanent employment after WWII. Logically the elimination of casual work would see the demise of hostile and poor attitudes - a view held by reformers such as Beveridge forty years earlier.50 Writing in the early 1950s in Australia, Clayton advocated permanent company-based employment to improve attitudes, since efficiency was dependent upon labour. The "militancy, bitterness and unreasonableness ...[were] the dominant features of wharf labourers," thus re-education away from support for communist union leadership.
3. Permanent Employment and Attitudes

Research after the introduction of permanent employment continued to identify the role of attitudes in the industry. Government initiatives in Britain and Australia—the Devlin and Woodward Reports respectively—resulted in strong support for permanency and both believed that attitudes would change. Mixed results have been seen in Britain. Mellish's review of the early experience of the Devlin modernisation program concluded that attitudinal change had occurred although some employers made "radical alterations" in manning and allocation which suggested otherwise. The dockers maintained demands for fair allocation of jobs, additional payments and participation before accepting responsibility for productivity. Consequently conflict was not eliminated. Wilson explained that continuous technological change under permanency merely replaced the insecurity of casualism with the insecurity of continual job losses. The result, noted Wilson, was that the "behaviour rooted in the insecurities of casualism ... flourish[ed] just as easily in the insecurities of declining job opportunity," a point also emphasised by others.

Permanent employment in Australia, according to Deery, found no change in the "attitudes or behaviour of waterfront employees." He concluded that the Report of National Stevedoring Industry Conference, "underestimated the depth of hostility, distrust and ill-feeling that had characterised waterfront industrial relations for well over seventy years". He also identified insecurity from technological change as primarily responsible for the continued antagonism. This behaviour and accompanying 'attitudes' are also a focus of criticism in recent work on the stevedoring industry.

4. Issues and Approaches

Insecurity in one way or another is part of the employment conditions of much of the labour force, especially in casualised industries. Therefore the questions that need to be addressed are, what conditions peculiar to stevedoring created this 'attitude', what does the attitude represent and how is it maintained? One approach, offered by Kerr and Siegel, sees waterfront workers (along with miners and others) as an 'isolated mass', separated from the mainstream of society. This generated internal community homogeneity which in turn saw waterfront workers react with resentment to outsiders and antagonism to employers. This view underlies the Liverpool study mentioned previously. The problem then is to explain why apparently independent-minded, combative workers would also form homogeneous, solidaristic groups? In other words, what are the connections between the conditions of individual action and collective action? This is especially the case since early writers found strike action on the waterfront surprising, "the most uncompromising field [of men] for any attempt at organised action", it was "incredible that 'degraded dockers' would ever be capable of united action." Notwithstanding the criticisms of the isolated worker thesis, later writers rely on psychological explanations. The Liverpool study also identified guilt engendered by worker competition and resentment against outsiders as a basis of solidarity. Connolly saw it as "psychological comfort" during periods of unemployment or distress.

Alternatively, the social norms of traditional proletarianism generated solidarity, or job specialisation developed "something of the stratification of a caste system" which limited
competition between insiders and excluded outsiders. In a study of differences in collective action of American east and west coast ports, Kimeldorf identified the "characteristics of the dockside labour force" strongly based on psychological factors as the key explanatory factor. East coast longshoremen were "[w]eighed down by conservative baggage", ethnic rivalry, and poor labour market conditions. In contrast, the west coast men were "predisposed" and "open to radicalism", from past experiences of casualism in marine transport and logging. Weir falls back onto spontaneity of workplace informal relations as the basis of solidarity.

Research adopting a labour process perspective, focuses largely on control at work rather than the attitudes of workers. Indeed, antagonistic attitudes are seen as positive evidence of resistance to capitalist domination. Most authors using this approach focus on the period from 1950 and emphasise the dilution of worker authority and autonomy in the labour process and job losses flowing from mechanisation. Looking at the American Pacific coast, Mills, Mills and Wellmen, Betcherman and Rebne, Foster and Weir all see the workers' control achieved through the control over the 'hiring hall' decline as a result of technological change in the 'mechanisation and modernisation' program of the 1960s. The process allowed employers to regain much of the control lost to the longshoremen's union when it took over the 'hiring hall' after the 1934 strike. However since the 1940s longshoremen have lost traditional skills, production process knowledge, control over work organisation and allocation, community ties and even the fraternal ethos.

By comparison Foster contends that computerisation accelerated scientific management on the Canadian and US east coast where 'modernisation' occurred exclusively under management authority. Similarly Hull points to the strategic use of technological change by employers on the Australian waterfront. In short, these adverse changes for workers resulted from the continual capital thrust for control. A study of New York by DiFazio adopts the contrary position and argues that discretionary control over time and job choice was increased by idle time payments created by modernisation. However this analysis centres on an examination of labour market structure rather than workplace organisation and failed to consider the peculiar (and limited) conditions which underpinned the opportunity for this type of control.

Babcock, Green and Mills and Wellman focus on the pre-1950 period stretching back to the 1890s. They come to different conclusions. In a study of the eastern Canadian port of St. John, 1890 to the 1920s, Babcock reports the capital–labour battle centreing on hiring and not performance per se, since the latter depended on job hiring and allocation. The employers did not seek to restructure production through mechanisation. After the collapse of early forays into bargaining in the 1880s, the post-1900 period saw the 'bureaucratisation', or collective bargaining, of labour–management relations. Union affiliation with the US–based International Longshoremen's Association (ILA) in 1911 strengthened union rules over labour allocation and work during WWI. However, this union–based decasualisation collapsed after the war with rising unemployment and a concerted employer offensive. Modernisation and labour market control by workers only
returned in the 1940s. In contrast Green points to the importance of control over work performance on the New Zealand waterfront. She maintains that widespread rank–and–file informal control – through 'spelling' (unauthorised breaks), 'gliding away' (early finishes), go–slow and slung–load limitations – was the key factor in securing industrial gains and a government operated labour bureau.70 Mills and Wellman71 point to the 1934 strike as the key to workers' control on the US West Coast. They maintain that formal industrial relations that resulted effectively amounted to workers' control in San Francisco. Both studies identify workplace industrial action as a key support of worker control. However Green is unable to explain why informal control did not engender support for formal workers' control. Mills and Wellman point to the loss of control in the mechanisation agreements of the 1960s, examined by Mills in research cited above.

The labour process writers rely on a definition of control centred on quasi–craft work and zero–sum outcomes. This conceptualisation cannot adequately explain either the losses and gains for workers or the nature of the work rules contested. To overcome these problems Finlay divorces industrial strength/work control from skill and rejects the 'simple' employer strategy (ie labour process control) perspective. He argues that after 1960 union control over labour and contract enforcement shifted away from the workplace (the traditional site of workers' control) to the industry level. This improved the wages and conditions of workers, since management effectively purchased uninterrupted, efficient production and workplace change. A fusion of workers' control with control over workers occurred, that is, worker influence over job design rose within a wider frame of management control.72

Industrial relations writers and practitioners closer to the West Coast modernisation process in the 1960s identified union bargaining strength as critical in the transformation of stevedoring. Writers used various terms – a movement from the secondary to the primary labour market, a "new mode of accommodation", or a "new look"73 – to describe the institutional development of bargained rule–making involving trade–offs. After 1948 the union strategy turned from job control to bargaining for change, given the decline of shipping in the general freight market.74 Even community ties were maintained, albeit in a dispersed suburban form.75 Research into the US West Coast reports the growth of a practical, coast–wide industrial relations system increasingly focused on rule bargaining. The results were efficacious for management and the union alike, despite some rank and file dissension on the docks. This is the hallmark of formalist industrial relations.

5. **Industry Structure and Organising**

The US west coast research also sees union coverage and organisational capacities – termed sovereignty and security – as critical.76 A single and united union, the International Longshoremen's and Warehousemen's Union (ILWU) covered all ports.77 Recent work by Turnbull, Sapsford and colleagues in Britain reports that a marked decline in dockers' bargaining power in the 1980s resulted from uneven union density, inconsistent union support, inappropriate strategy and selective regulatory arrangements (with non-NDLS ports). Consequently registered men were unable to stop the Thatcher government's abolition of the NDLS in 1989. They point to critical long–term industry changes – concentration of employers, more inter–port competition, greater worker commitment to companies – after permanency. Power shifted to employers, especially when the commitment to dockers by the Transport and General Workers Union appeared to wane. Moreover, the dockers' ability to maintain an 'occupational community' as an
organisational resource diminished. Finally the loss of the statutory definition of 'dock work', completed a process of defacto recasualisation of dockwork which had begun in non-scheme ports.

This research points to the institutional and organisational context of the labour process as key factors which shaped the development of the industry. Research into the industrial characteristics in of the 1850–1900 period report very similar characteristics - geographical dispersion of different size and types of ports and a complex industrial structures. Ownership and functional roles of the large number of employers, both small and large, differed in and around ports. Correspondingly labour was divided as mentioned earlier - by specialisation, employment security, status and locality (and ethnicity in several cases) - in overstocked and divided labour markets. Sectional groups governed by a web of local rules and regulations resulted.

In other words, labour was organised by a diversity of sources - by section, social norms, rules, regulations and local solidarity - which flourished on the waterfront and nearby communities. Moreover union organisation was almost universal after 1900 - only in some ports and periods where employers successful in excluding it. Thus the key questions relate to the principles underlying unionate and social action on the waterfront. I will consider each briefly.

First, research indicates that the diversity of casualism made the birth of stable and continuous waterfront unionisation difficult. Collective organisation emerged from the mid-1800s in small, specialist or sectional groups. They lacked organisational continuity and focused on sectional concerns. Where collective organisation became more systematic and coordinated, after 1880, nascent collective bargaining emerged. It suffered a severe setback in the 1890s by employer offensives, but by the decade 1910–20 continuous inter-port unionisation was established in the UK, Canada, Australia and New Zealand and the 1930s in the US. Mitchell concludes that only after 1916, when politicians under the leadership of Billy Hughes ended, did the WWF develop genuine organisational maturity. Beasley concludes that after 1916 a "new and more legitimate form of leadership" based on the rank and file emerged.

Since they cover unskilled workers, waterfront unions have attracted theoretical interest as 'new unionism'. This question will be considered in more detail in chapter two. Suffice to say here that waterfront unionism was affected by the industry structure. Hobsbawm argues that the growing concentration of employers in the UK after 1870 lead workers to see the waterfront as a broadly defined 'industry' that needed "new tactics" of general or national organisation. This view was reinforced by the employers national organisation. And although the stevedoring labour process was not mechanised steam shipping changed the demands on dockwork. Jones points to structural changes in freight trades and warehousing exacerbated by steam technology which lead to changes in the labour market and employment. Lovell recognises that the "organisational dilemmas" this created lead to new unionism. In contrast Pollard dismisses new unionism, but does grant a certain weight to the "psychological element .... [in] the heave of the collective enthusiasm" found in all unions, craft or otherwise in the late 1880s.

A further consideration is the type of collective or unionate organisation on the waterfront. Union growth is usually conceptualised as cumulative and qualitatively undifferentiated. Early small, local, sectional unions where seen as merely weak precursors of modern unionism. Thus the type of collective association remains unexamined despite the recognition of differences. For
Britain, writers describe early collective – or unionate – organisation as based on the "habit of association"; as "closer to the spirit of ancient fellowships of porters ... than modern trade unions" or as "half-way between a trade union and a philanthropic society"; the coal-heavers even shunned unionism in favour of continued state regulation as their "organisation, aims and mentality date[d] ... from the eighteenth century, if not ... earlier."86 Similarly in the US early waterfront organisation was seen as "mutual aid, protection and support and for the promotion of social intercourse"– or benevolent societies which were granted charters (ie Certificates of Incorporation) by state legislation.87 In the 1870s five such societies existed in New York, although Barnes points out they also functioned as "labor unions as [found]... today". In short, early forms are seen as either anachronistic or as weak versions of modern unionism.88

The second area of concern, that is social action, extends across the work and social spheres. Arguments based on attitudes span both spheres and not surprisingly account for them in essentially psychological terms as outlined above as an independent causal variable. Yet the direction of causality may be questioned leaving the role of attitudes – more recently conceptualised as subjectivity89 – unclear in work relations. Several writers attribute attitudes to work experience. Rechter points to work conditions which "bred militancy and the desire for strong and independent unions, amongst those who followed the industry", also "bred in the workers a willingness to undergo extreme privations for the sake of what they believed to be a just cause" and "built independence of character and self-reliance". The "tendency to independence from union leadership" was in turn the result of such a psychological disposition.90 Barnes concurs with a New York government report that "casual demand for labor brings into existence the casual worker."91 A half century later Devlin wrote that "casual labour produces a casual attitude."92

However, closer analysis of casualism and workplace practice points to the rational/calculative basis of action. Pointedly waterfront communities displayed norms of reciprocity as a collective response to economic insecurity. Hiring rules in the labour market (ie. permanent employment with degrees of casualism) sought to balance the control over uncertainty for regular workers and efficiency for employers. Green93 describes a range of exclusionary rules which operated on the Liverpool docks in the 1880s. Philpott's94 qualitative study of a ILWU-controlled hiring hall in Vancouver demonstrates that longshoremen pursued divergent ends – whether better earnings, status, sociability, authority, or lower effort – within the ranked allocation board system of hiring. Anna Green's95 study of informal workplace control in New Zealand identifies limitation of effort, pursuance of industrial demands, higher earnings and safety as key instrumental goals of the rank-and-file. Action was pursued against employers and union leaders. Lindop reports similar practices in London's Royal Group of Docks after WWII.96

These customary practices involve organising principles of social (and industrial) relations, not an emotive or irrational traditionalism. Bean's analysis of job regulation in Liverpool, points to the role of custom in the transition to a formal industrial relations system after 1910. Market pressures and the use of mechanical equipment pushed employers towards more efficient work methods and included the removal of blockages arising from customary practice. The transition featured port-wide employer coordination, in order to convert diverse customary rules into general standards applicable to all. Continuing tensions between such general rules, and "understandings" of them, by different firms and unions provide evidence of the difficulties involved.97
6. Summary and Conclusions

Not surprisingly research on stevedoring prior to permanent employment in the 1960s examined the problems of casualism. The emphasis on psychologically based attitudes in explaining the pattern of social relations, industrial relations outcomes and reform failures underestimates the impact of institutional and organisational conditions in stevedoring and casualism. Where explanations of the genesis of attitudes point to workers' social milieu – such as the social isolation or traditional worker approaches – they also rest on psychological assumptions. The influence of attitudes in research on industrial relations after permanent employment also looms large.

In contrast, research from the labour process perspective points to changes in control on the waterfront. However the preoccupation with work skills and mechanisation forces most of this research to concentrate on the period after 1950. When applied to the pre-1950 period it lapses into an untenable rank-and-fileism, such as A. Green, or the untheorised institutionalism of Babcock. Both strands rest on an incorporationist thesis. This research points to the need for consideration of industry structure and organisation to enhance the understanding of the dynamics of social and industrial relations in the Australian stevedoring industry. Work on the nature of unionism and types of job regulation provide some direction for this task. Both are concerned with control. This is conceptualised in chapter two as the conditions for, and formation of, patterns of industrial authority. The organisational shape of production is a key condition.

IV. Structure of the Thesis

The research reviewed above provides insights from a range of disciplines – sociology, industrial relations, history, labour economics and others. In order to address the complexity of the issues and the existing research, this thesis draws upon several disciplines in the analysis of the Australian stevedoring. While the main theoretical concerns focus on the period 1880s to the 1920s the initial conduct of the research (observation of work on the wharves and several interviews, not reported here) pointed to the great importance of history and context in understanding this industry. Thus the analysis investigates key organisational and normative factors extending to the early nineteenth century. They both resonate through the period and are subject to significant change. Such factors are examined in greater or lesser detail according to their role and type of evidence. The presentation is largely chronological, with chapters on organisational and contextual factors appearing first in Parts 2 and 3 and separated from industrial relations issues. The context of Part 4 (1914–1935) is covered by extending chapters 7 and 8 (in Part 3).

The thesis is divided into five Parts covering thirteen chapters The remainder of Part 1 (Chapter Two) explores key theoretical issues and outlines the theoretical framework for the empirical analysis. Chapter Two also includes a description of the labour process and a model of the nature of casualism. The scope of the labour process framework is broadened by consideration of organisational conditions of capital and the nature of industrial authority and industrial relations. Changes to these key features of the analysis are set out in various places through the thesis.

Parts 2, 3 and 4 cover three broad chronological periods from the early nineteenth century to the mid-1930s. The periods are; the first two-thirds of the nineteenth century, the last third of the century to the lead up to WWI and finally, 1910 to 1935. The periodisation identified is primarily
used for analytical purposes and includes a degree of overlap. An important strength of the labour process perspective is the analysis of the contradictory nature of social and work relations generating change. The concurrent existence of different modes of organising is to be expected. Each of the Parts focuses on the organisation of work and production, the conditions of production and authority relations.

Part 2 covers chapters Three to Six. Chapter Three briefly outlines the British historical legacy of shipping organisation and waterfront work, to provide a model of 'traditional' organisation which resonated through the nineteenth century and beyond. Chapters Four to Six examine the emergence of stevedoring in colonial Australia. Chapter Four examines early stevedoring and necessarily relies on a wide range of evidence given few resources on waterfront work. Chapter Five focuses on key features of change and continuity in the form of ownership, organisational and production arrangements of the traditional model. Chapter Six examines labour and the pattern of industrial relations from mid-century to 1890.

Part 3 includes chapters Seven to Nine examines deepening industrialisation of water transport – a halting and uneven process, as earlier identified, which was a transitional period in the restructuring of the nature of industrial authority and the birth of 'modern', formal industrial relations. Chapters Seven and Eight centre on organisational issues (and cover the period up to the 1930s) and Nine on industrial relations matters. Part 4 includes chapters Ten to Twelve and charts the shape of the industry, its context and pattern of industrial relations which emerged after the turn of the century. In particular the role of market relations and pressures for the integration of shipping production are examined and the links to compulsory arbitration. Part 5 draws together the analysis in the concluding chapter Thirteen.

V. Summary

Stevedoring provides an interesting industry study of long term change in the form of employment in capitalist societies. Although there are dangers of broad generalisations, stevedoring illustrates some aspects of long run tendencies. The ancient activity of loading and unloading ships underwent reorganisation from 1800 – in shore organisation, the economic role of transport, ship technology, cargo handling and the management of work. In this unique industry, a critical component was the change in the mode of organising and the constitution of social and industrial authority spanning economics, politics and norms. The legitimation of social and industrial authority as an essential component of capitalist economic practice.

In a broader context, the period 1800 to 1935 represents a period of disjunction between pre-capitalist forms of social power and authority in industry, as those opened by the industrial revolution. Wharf labouring in Britain obtained corporate identity before 1800 if not craft status. The state constituted Fellowship organisation provided a social position for this low status, unskilled labour. The loss of this identity during the nineteenth century threw workers back onto informal organisation and employment patterns, and expanded the ranks of the casual fringe on the waterfront.

This thesis will explore this broad period of disjunction, in which stevedoring lacked any specific state institutional or any other regulation. Clearly the time of guild type organisation had passed, but the strong British traditions in colonial Australia triggered informal mechanisms to forge a social and occupational identity. Wharf workers were however unable to surmount the low status
and poor image at the end of the century. State regulation of employment – via frameworks of modern systems of industrial relations – and the industry regulation of decasualisation schemes eventually lead to permanent employment in the 1960s. Collective organisation of workers and employers is central to these changes. This thesis concentrates on one period of this process.


4. Men were often required to work continually until a job was done, often over 24 hours. In Sydney the 'standard' week of constant men [the few men employed on a weekly wage] was 58 hours at AUSN Co. in 1890, evidence of John Doyle, wharfinger for AUSN Co., Government of New South Wales, *Report of the Royal Commission on Strikes*, [hereafter, *RC on Strikes* (1891)], Minutes of Evidence, (Sydney, 1891) Q.2886, Q.2887, p.103; in Newcastle, the Newcastle and Hunter River Steamship Co. employed men on the basis of 40/- for unrestricted hours, changing this to 42/- for 60 hours (and 1/- p.h overtime) in 1900 following industrial action, *New South Wales Industrial Arbitration Reports*, [hereafter *NSW AIR*] Vol 1, 1902, pp.4-5. Similar hours were worked by casual carters and draymen on and around the Sydney waterfront at the time, see M. Bray and M. Rimmer, *Delivering the Goods: A History of the Transport Workers' Union in New South Wales 1888-1986*, (Allen and Unwin, Sydney, 1987) pp.9–10,51–2

5. Precise number are difficult to specify for a century ago. Union members the end of 1902 (the formation of the Waterside Workers' Federation, [WWF]) totalled 6250 more than the 1992 figure of 4000, see J. Healy, *Brief History of the Australian Waterfront and the Waterside Workers' Unions*, (unpublished ms. dated 1948, [c. 1952])


8. Eg interstate and overseas men (and intra-state men) were identifiable in larger ports, and in Melbourne formed separate unions and later WWF branches; coal workers (or coal yard men) formed separate unions or were sections or branches of the WWF at various times in Sydney, Brisbane, Newcastle, Melbourne, Fremantle, Albany and Hobart; Melbourne timber workers were a separate section and later broke away to form their own; wharf storemen were Federated Storemen and Packer Union (FSPU) members in Brisbane, other Queensland and Australian ports; tow motor drivers formed separate sections in Sydney and other ports and many men followed only certain, eg wool, freezers, steel and so on. Local practices predominated in this pattern of development.


Chapter One


Margo Beasley, *Wharfies: The History of the Waterside Workers' Federation*, (Halstead, Sydney, 1996);


Walker, *Australian Industrial Relations Systems*, pp.370–71,377 [emphasis added]; see also *idem, Industrial Relations in Australia*, pp.277,289.
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34 M. Perlman, Judges In Industry: A Study of Labour Arbitration in Australia, (Melbourne University Press, Melbourne, 1954) ch.5, quote at p.127 [emphasis added]. The sentence immediately before the one quoted is also instructive. He writes, "Whether this universal turbulence prevails because stevedoring is an occupation with the twin evils of casual employment and hard physical labour, or because there is little craft pride in the nature of the work, is of no particular importance" [emphasis added] or again, p.158, "The important feature evident in this industry is the difference in social outlook between the union and other parties"; and idem "An Industrial Problem: Australia's Longshoremen" where Perlman also criticizes the attitudes and organisation of management; for Britain, see Wilson, The Dockers and Phillips and Whiteside, Casual Labour, pp.269-301

35 Miller, "The Dockworker Subculture and Some Problems", pp.305-311 [emphasis added]

36 Liverpool University, The Dock Worker pp.50,79-80

37 Liverpool University, The Dock Worker pp.51,67,80, quote p.78 [emphasis added]; in New York the 'shenangies' and other fringe sections were similar, Barnes, The Longshoremen, pp.14-16.

38 Liverpool University, The Dock Worker, pp.115-143

39 Larrowe, Shape-Up and Hiring Hall, pp.49-50 [emphasis added]

40 Weir, "Informal workers control: the west coast longshoreman," p.52


42 Followed by similar action over several decades, Sheridan, "Australian Wharflies 1943-1967", pp.261-267,270,273

43 Beasley, Wharfies, pp.19,116-117 [emphasis added]. (The same strike pointed to by Sheridan).

44 Phillips and Whiteside, Casual Labour, pp.274,239 [emphasis added]


46 Phillips and Whiteside, Casual Labour, p.5

47 Phillips and Whiteside, Casual Labour, p.5; Liverpool University, The Dock Worker, p.78, Fadem, "The Case of the Australian Waterfront" pp.30-31; Miller, "The Dockworker Subculture and Some Problems" p.308; Jensen, Decasualization and Modernization of Dock Work, pp.1-2.


49 J. H. Kerr Inkson and Bob Gidlow, "Waterfront Workers as Traditional Proletarians: A New Zealand Study", pp.10-20; Hill, The Dockers, p.194, in research at approximately the same time questions the existence of any marked difference between dockers attitudes and those found more generally in the working class and the usefulness of the categorisation of the 'traditional' docker itself. The New Zealand research was conducted in small ports using conventional methods whereas Hill's reported results from London after containerisation had made large inroads into the industry. The results may therefore reflect different structural conditions in London - where informalism or traditionalism had already withered; similarly for Allen, "Class Imagery of Traditional Proletarians". For ethnographic work see, Pilcher, The Portland Longshoremen, and Weir "Informal workers control: the west coast longshoreman".

50 Phillips and Whiteside, Casual Labour, pp.76-84


53 Mellish, The Docks After Devlin, pp.137-138


56 Deery, The National Stevedoring Industry Conference, p.192

57 see Inter-State Commission, Waterfront Investigation: Preliminary Findings, 5 Vols, (AGPS, Canberra, 1988) and idem, Final Report, 2 Vols, (AGPS, Canberra, 1989)

58 Smith and Nash, The Story of the Dockers' Strike, (1889) p.27; Lascelles and Bullock, Dock Labour and Decasualisation, (1924) p.65


60 Connolly, "Social Repercussions of Cargo Handling Methods," p.547

61 Inkson and Gidlow, "Waterfront Workers as Traditional Proletarian".

62 Lovell, Stevedores and Dockers, pp.34-35

63 Kimeldorf, Reds or Rackets, pp.19-50 [emphasis added]

64 Weir, "Informal workers' control," pp.57-58


67 Hull, "Queensland Sugar Ports: Labour and Technological Change," pp.70–73 and more generally idem, The Impact of Major Technological Change.

68 DiFazio, Longshoremen: Community and Resistance on the Brooklyn Waterfront


70 Green, ""Spelling, Go-slow, Sliding away and Theft: Informal Control over Work" pp.106–113

71 Mills and Wellman, "Contractually Sanctioned Job Action and Worker's Control", pp.175–190

72 Finlay, "Workers' control and control of workers", p.61; idem, Work on the Waterfront, 1988; idem, "One occupation, two labor markets",pp.313–314


74 Kossoris, "Working Rules in West Coast Longshoring", p.3; Schneider and Siegal, Industrial Relations in the Pacific Longshore Industry, pp.74–75

75 Pilcher, The Portland Longshoremen

76 Schneider and Siegal, Industrial Relations in the Pacific Coast Longshore Industry, pp.28–31

77 Only three small ports in Washington state remained with the International Longshoremens' Association, but cooperation on industrial matters between the ILWU and the ILA was close.


81 Mitchell, Wharf Labourers: their Unionism and Leadership, pp.466–471; Beasley, Wharfties, p.44

82 He stated "virtually no mechanical equipment at all" (p.207),-E. J. Hobbsbawn, "National Unions on the Waterside" in idem, Labouring Men: Studies in the History of Labour (Basic Books, New York, 1964) pp.204–221

83 Jones, Outcast London, pp.115–124, also changes in London trades which created a large casual labour pool, p.125


85 For Australia see Lockwood, Ship to Shore; Mitchell, Wharf Labourers, their Unionism and Leadership, chs.1–3


88 see also Larrowe, Shape–Up and Hiring Hall, pp.4–9,87–89

90 Rechter, *The Strike of Waterside Workers*, pp.112–113,241 [emphasis added]

91 Barnes, *The Longshoremen*, p.172


94 Philpot, "The union hiring hall", pp.25–28 (examines the hiring hall of only Local 501)

95 Green, "Spelling, Go-Slows, Gliding Away and Theft" pp.106–113

96 Lindop, "Unofficial Militancy in the Royal Group" pp.24–28

97 Bean, "Custom, Job Regulation and Dock Labour" pp.282–284

98 More so in Britain and US ports, but also in colonial Australia. As will be shown modern casualism, was as much the result of employer policy as the nature of the work. The decision of major docking companies, (particularly London & St. Katherine Co. and East & West India Co.) to raise the casual labour wage, at the expense of permanent men, in late 1872 proved fateful. (Other companies were Millwall Dock Co., Surrey Commercial Co.) Pattison notes the India Co. "opted for casual labour with high rates of pay and low earnings rather then permanent or preferable [worker with guaranteed preference of hiring] labour with low rates and high earnings.... The result was inefficient and discontented labour". The decision immediately increased wage costs, which remained thereafter, contributing to the 1889 strike, Pattison, "Nineteenth century dock labour", p.274. Moreover it became received wisdom that only casual labour was efficient and appropriate for the industry, eg. writing in the 1960s, "These conditions [casualism] were unavoidable,. No system other then casual labour was economic to meet such emergency [referring to variable labour demand] working", Oram, "The Great Strike of 1889", p.533
Chapter 2

The Labour Process, Industrial Authority and Employment

I. Introduction

This chapter places the review of the literature on the stevedoring industry into a theoretical framework. The approach developed below begins with the labour process, adapting it to overcome limitations of key conceptualisations indicated by research and criticisms of the framework.

Of concern here are two key areas of conceptualisation, viz., the capitalist enterprise and labour action. These areas pull together a number of strands of concern which straddle both Marxian and non-Marxian research and theory. Both areas are linked to the organisational dimension of economic and industrial relations as conditioned by social relations more generally.

The framework developed below builds on the foundations of Marx and Braverman in a number of ways. The development and pattern of capitalist organisation, the product market and control in the workplace, all have important effects on the shape of work and industrial relations. They form the structural dynamic of capitalist society. The responses of owners or managers to production, market and other pressures are influenced by existing structural possibilities as well as practices, norms and beliefs. Variation in organisational configuration result. Business history provides useful tools to understand the development of these variations.

In addition, norms, meanings and ideologies at work and outside it influence the calculation and formulation of action through a dialogic process. While the focus on the point of production is critical, it is not sufficient for an adequate explanation of either the pattern of workplace relations or the shape of industrial relations in general. The common theme is that organisation and organising are formed, sustained or changed through the coincidence of structural enablement/constraint and social action. The latter in turn is embedded in practice and shaped by social norms and meanings.

The next section reviews the main features of the Marxian formulation of the labour process, its conceptual strengths and its shortcomings. Sections III to IV address the issues of, the nature of the firm and inter-firm relations, authority and power, and labour action and industrial relations respectively. Section VI outlines the nature of the stevedoring labour process, labour market and employment relation. The final section briefly summarises the chapter.

II. The Labour Process Framework

The publication of Braverman's *Labor and Monopoly Capital* in 1974 sparked interest in the labour process and its links with broad changes in social structure. The approach has significantly
influenced a range of disciplines and generated considerable research. This section returns to the work of Marx and Braverman, and consider later developments of the framework to develop a number of concepts useful for the analysis of work organisation and production. These will be used in the analysis of stevedoring in the following chapters.

1. Marx and Method

Marx's view of the labour process is intimately linked to the historical materialist theory and method. A brief outline of these is instructive as it provides a key to the dynamic component of Marx's analysis. Societal change as "a process of natural history", where material and relational aspects of social existence underpinned the historical materialist perspective. In latter emphasised "the natural laws of ... movement" of societies and the critical analysis of concepts. In his conceptual analysis of political economy Marx focused on the relation between labour and value, or a combination of the forces of production and the relations of social agents in the production of values or the relations of production centred on ownership. Although the labour process was central, competition was critical in the structural antagonism of classes and regulatory systems.

Marx's referred to his analytical method as a movement from the abstract to the concrete, where abstract categories are used to grasp essential characteristics of an evolving concrete object(s). This process is continuous, although circumscribed by the historical development of society and theory.

...even the most abstract categories, [in this case labour] despite their validity ... are nevertheless, in the specific character of this abstraction, themselves likewise a product of historic relations, and possess their full validity only for and within these relations.

Thus theoretical ideas and material relations require specific conditions of existence. The method seeks to uncover the form of determination of observed empirical phenomenon and analyse the complexity and appearance of historical phenomena resulting from the tension between form and content. Thus theory indicates tendencies not fixed causality, since the form–content tension is dynamic, and the effects of causal relations may alter with changing conditions of existence - "effects become causes in their turn" to use Marx's term. In short, ostensibly the same variables may have different causal effects under different circumstances.

In sum, three key points emerge, the importance of the relational conditions of social phenomena, the complexity of analytical conceptual categories and the historical specificity (thus variability) of casual connections. Two concepts are used here to capture these facets: first, the conditions of existence are defined as the form of relations necessary for given phenomena to exist and be reproduced. Second, enabling conditions refers to conditions which qualitatively effect the structure of causality or the nature of a given pattern of social relations.

2. Marx and the Labour Process

For Marx, the labour theory of value identified the expenditure of human effort in the labour process as the source of value. The relation of labour to nature is mediated by the instruments, or means of production, and the relation of labour to the means of production, is mediated by ownership, or the relations of production. Taken together these relations defines each mode of production. Capitalist entrepreneurs dominate ownership of the means of production, leaving labour only their capacity to work (or labour–power) for sale since it is excluded from the means of production and subsistence. Capital own the product (value) of labour including surplus value.
The labour process is thus simultaneously a valorisation process. But wage-labour creates a problem for capital, namely, the conversion of elastic and variable labour-power into actual labour to produce surplus value. Capital attempts to maximise surplus labour time over necessary labour time.

Marx identifies three stages in the development of the capitalist labour process – simple cooperation, manufacture and modern industry. Simple cooperation is an historical universal for social production. The capitalist form arises from, firstly, the dominant role of valorisation in planning the labour process – "in form it is purely despotic." Secondly, the cooperation of sufficient workers to support the capitalist. This is fundamental to all capitalist labour and marked the birth of capitalism as such. Initially, production methods differed from handicraft production only in terms of its condition as an element of capital. Given this, the labour process has only two stages or forms,

Productive capital, or the mode of production corresponding to capital, can be present in only two forms: manufacture and large-scale industry. In the former, the division of labour is predominant; in the second the combination of labour powers (with a regular mode of work) and the employment of scientific power...

These two stages provide the kernel of Marx's view of the labour process.

Marx defined manufacture as mass production for external markets based on developed overland and maritime commerce. Emerging from the combination of different crafts (as in coachmaking) or from the specialisation in one (paper making, type and needle production) in small scale 'workshop' production, it defined capitalism. Sceptical of the terms putting-out and domestic industry, Marx saw merchants' use of rural and non-guild handicraft labour (as for textiles) as a strategy to avoid craft labour or exploit rural labour. Through these arrangements capital was mediated through their products rather than wage-labour. Merchants, rather than existing crafts, predominated in early manufacture for, firstly, they could better unify discrete labour processes (into a planned production process), secondly, displayed greater concern for purely economic efficiency and thirdly, linked production and circulation in which the capitalist dynamic was deepened in the labour process and expanded in market exchange, especially the labour market. This dual process occurred from the sixteenth to the eighteenth centuries.

The unification of disparate handicrafts was however only formal, with little change to their techniques or methods and surplus-value was extracted predominantly by the extension of the working day – or absolute surplus-value. As the ranks of wage-workers and the working day expanded more surplus value was generated. Workers were 'regrouped' around one employer and became more dependent on capital (for wages or the product), and the scale of production grew.

Workshop production gave way to "manufacture" – a centralised workshop or 'proto-factory' – in which co-operation based on planned arrangement of work processes now yielded economies of scale and facilitated capitalist command, as workers fell "under overseers, regimentation, greater discipline, regularity and the posited dependence in production itself on capital." With the labour process "in one spot under its [capital] command, ... no longer leaves them [labour] in the mode of production found already in existence, ... but creates a mode of production corresponding to itself." Simple machinery, specialisation, and the detailed division of
labour developed, albeit in an organic rather than heterogeneous form. Although relative surplus-value emerged, capital remained dependent on labour competencies and so absolute surplus-value was predominant. Manufacture represented formal subsumption of labour.

At the industry level, Marx argued that mass production was generally unsuited to local, guild based production, citing glass factories, paper mills and iron works. Other industries were however "naturally oriented towards exchange value - ie. manufactures directly connected with shipping, shipbuilding etc" and more suited to mass production. In other words, capital transformed old industries into a mass form - more readily in some - or created new industries.

In its final stage - large-scale or modern industry - capital relied on complex and integrated machinery based on scientific principles. Machinery became "an automatic system" or "a complex system of machinery" - that is, multi-functioned, automated and continuous-flow production. This deepened the detailed division of labour and machinery became fixed capital, characterised by a rising capital-labour ratio. The emergence of a specialised machine tool industry was critical for the complex machinery required. Productivity became a function of technology rather than labour capacities. Modern industry emerged around the 1790s and marked the real subsumption of the labour process under capital and the predominance of relative surplus value. Yet only in the mid-nineteenth century did "Cyclopean machines" appear in the production of large capital goods, and even "the factory system was still comparatively little developed" in the 1830s.

A number of key points can be made; first, formal subsumption refers to structural conditions of existence of workshop production. The change in form of production restructured ownership and labour allocation across industries and subsumed individuals under these specific relations of production involving the elimination of "legal and extra-economic impediments" on capital. But command over production was still general, with no "fixed" relations of "supremacy and subordination" and stood apart from the particular character of 'control' in the workplace.

Second, Marx's method traces the tension of form and content in production, uncovering a deepening tendency to direct control. Accumulation needed greater integration and continuity in and between establishments. Within units, standardisation of work times, labour input and materials created "a continuity, a uniformity, a regularity, an order, and even an intensity of labour, quite different from independent handicraft or even simple co-operation." Moreover, the spontaneous work fragmentation of co-operation became more sustained, methodical and quantitative. Although pressure for a "fixed mathematical relation or ratio" for labour input grew, in practice the lack of technical knowledge limited progress. The specialised worker and a hierarchy of 'skilled' and 'unskilled' labour (and wage levels) based on decomposed handicraft skills emerged.

Command over social production created a tendency for direct control over any particular labour process, which was limited by a continuing dependence on labour. Specialisation stripped labour of its hold over task content, but not its basis in manual labour. Work "retain[ed] the character of a handicraft, and ... therefore dependent on the strength, skill, quickness and sureness with which the individual worker manipulates his tools." Craft autonomy gave way to a hierarchy of authority, through the overseer, which internally divided the nascent working class.
Third, the relation between absolute and relative surplus value is dynamic. While relative surplus value becomes *predominant* in modern industry it is simultaneously *limited* by technological diffusion as diminishing returns affect initial gains machinery in backward industries. In turn market pressures force employers to then extend the working day or constantly innovate to raise the rate of surplus value. Paradoxically the pressure for absolute surplus value is greatest when new technology is first introduced, due to costs associated with the higher capital–labour ratio. Critically, systemic pressure *remains* for absolute surplus value via the extension of the physical and social limits on the working day (which emerged in state regulation\(^5\)). With working hours limited, raising the rate of surplus value becomes a function of more productive technology, and/or labour intensification.\(^5\) Technological change constantly generates the conditions for *both* types of surplus value appropriation. Moreover, rapid innovation in technology in one or other industry or sector, renders other subordinate industries *more* dependent upon absolute surplus value.

The fourth and final analytical point is that direct control in the labour process – or real subsumption – requires constant regeneration. First seen in modern industry, from about the 1780s, it requires appropriate forms of the detailed division of labour and cooperation as well as automated continuous–flow machinery and scientific knowledge. Real subordination represents the *structural pressure* to revolutionise technology, job design, work methods and impose direct control rather than any achieved 'total' control.\(^5\)

Marx's formulation of real subsumption centres on structural conditions of modern industry rather than merely workplace control. He assumed that labour displacement (from its unifying role in the labour process) was a sufficient condition for managerial control, as the general law of capitalist accumulation took root.\(^5\) By this stage, all-round handicraft skills had long been eliminated as the remaining skill distinctions relied on convention, power/powerlessness of workers, or even chance\(^6\) to survive as the 'collective' worker emerged.

Summarising the discussion so far, I have argued that, Marx's analysis of the labour process details the dynamics of generative structures of production under the capitalist form of labour and value, which

reveals the innermost secret, the hidden basis of the entire social structure, ... This does not prevent the same economic basis – the same from the *standpoint of its main conditions* – due to innumerable different empirical circumstances, natural environment, racial relations, external historical influences, etc., from showing infinite variations and gradations in appearance, which can be ascertained only by analysis of the empirically given circumstances.\(^6\)

Marx's work suggests four key conclusions; first, that the structural basis of societal divisions – the capital–labour divide – created a particular form of dominance. Second, the three stages/types of the labour process provide both a explanatory model of historical transition\(^6\) and a typology of the components of the labour process. Third, the model encompasses a linkage between the types and the role of market competition. Fourth, the demands on labour in particular labour processes are the result of the historical pattern of development and linkage between each of the types.

From the first conclusion the term form of domination will be used. It refers to the societal patterning of domination and subordination incorporating the capacity to rule (govern, administer,
regulate, order) as general authority, and command (direct, manage, control, supervise) as the particular exercise of authority. In capitalism, property ownership is a key foundation of domination. From the second conclusion I shall draw a distinction between the production process as whole and the labour process as the concrete expression of production. Thus the production process forms a phase in the cycle of capitalist accumulation, dominated by the capital valorisation and dependent upon societal conditions of existence. The labour process is a material process at the point of formation/creation of value in production which includes three aspects, work organisation and methods, work performance or labour effort and instruments or technology.

Marx's formulation is limited. First, he saw the enterprise as more or less a derivative form of organisation – the 'hidden abode' of production – where class and exploitation played out the dynamics of valorisation. His general model of factory despotism, assumed that the mechanisms of control – new supervisory personnel, management functions and the use of 'factory codes' relied on the capacity of technology to break all resistance by the isolated worker. This is inadequate.

Second, Marx grounds epochs on the industry level or 'branches of production'. His discussion of textiles, glass, paper industries and others, demonstrated a wider influences on industries and state regulation of them. In short, Marx does not systematically address the 'empirically given circumstances' which determined the concrete pattern of change. The significant variation between processes, industries and markets, imply that the transition from formal to real subsumption can only be seen as an abstract and notional tendency.

Finally, the third and fourth conclusions listed above, rest on the formulation of the relation between the necessary and surplus labour ignoring the active role of managerial policies and labour activism. The 'capital logic' argument has attracted support and significant criticism. The analysis of the specific organisational and social processes of the labour process at the institutional and workplace levels remains undeveloped.

Braverman's attempt to reinvigorate the Marxian analysis turned to these issues. While Braverman has been subject to criticism, his work continues to mould the development of theory and research on these issues.

3. Braverman and the Labour Process

Braverman's contribution to labour process analysis centres on the nature of work and the enterprise after 1900. He opposed reformist and "ideologically destructive" Marxism and sought to correct perceived errors concerning the rationalisation of work using Marx's labour process analysis of Capital, volume one. He aimed to show that the very structure of capitalist work is intrinsically incompatible with socialism. Accordingly Braverman conceptualises historical processes as, first, a relation between technology and social relations where the means of production are primary and second, human labour as indeterminate and variable. Technology is formulated as machinery, and social relations at work as a control dynamic between coercive management and recalcitrant labour.

Braverman's contribution to labour process theory is three-fold; identifying the emergence of "the monopolistic organization of industry" or monopoly capitalism as "a substantially different structure" or "new stage of capitalist development", second, presenting scientific management as
the basis of control and, third, the scientific–technical revolution casts science "as capitalist property at the very centre of production" in monopoly capitalism. All emerged between 1870 and 1890, with monopoly capitalism resting on the second and third phenomena. I shall consider these first.

For Braverman Taylor's scientific management involves two complementary dimensions – a technical method for work design and an organisational theory of the control of labour. Both are part of the "comprehensive formulation of management theory" around turn of the twentieth century. It is important to distinguish the novelty of Taylorism for Braverman, from Taylor's own statements of existing practice.

Braverman argues that work study was not new – the detailed division of labour, work fragmentation, labour cheapening through the Babbage principle were all intrinsic to capital. However, until about the 1870s workers handled these processes, or they were mediated through internal contractors and subcontractors and thus work organisation and methods were not directly controlled by management. Taylor's work design methods (systematic work study and codification) were expressly designed to uncover, appropriate and monopolise workers' knowledge of production. Thus Taylor's principles; the dissociation of the labour process from workers' skills, the separation of mental and manual labour (or conception and execution), the centralisation and monopoly of knowledge and the planning of work processes, amounted to "a far greater revolution in the division of labor than any that had gone before." It resulted in deskilling and loss of craft control, as knowledge/mastery of materials and process, autonomous planning and use of manual dexterity were stripped from workers.

For Braverman capitalist management inherently seeks control. At its origins in sixteenth century mercantile capitalism, management only co-ordinated separate labour processes. Later despotic control emerged in factories, supported by social control. However the basis of labour control – mastery over production skills – remained with workers. Only when management control was extended to all production and work decisions – particularly task specification and work performance – did capital break the hold of skill and raise control to an "entirely new plane."

Accordingly he saw Taylorism as more than the stop watch and speed up 'commonly associated' this work, but a general theory of organisation. It is neither a technology nor science, but rather an "explicit verbalization" of capital – that is, a conscious theory and cognitive orientation. The control imperative generates an administrative labour process – planning, monitoring and so on – replicating the physical labour process in 'symbolic form'. Administration too falls victim to Taylorist methods which deskills managerial and clerical work. Key elements of Taylorism are work study and design by engineers on behalf of management, and detailed task specification and performance standards for control by management. Both define the kernel of the new phase of capital. The successors of Taylor are found in industrial engineering (work design) and top management (organisational control).

Both rely on a systematic methodology diffused by the scientific–technical revolution via a new phenomenon – the commodification of science. Science becomes an adjunct of capital, organised and controlled as a productive force for accumulation and revolutionises all aspects of production. Labour is thereby definitively displaced as the subjective element in production.
Automated machinery advanced the management goal of "grasping the [labour] process as a whole and controlling every element of it". Also new institutions of scientific and technical education, research and company laboratories emerge as part of the new structures of monopoly capital.

The third contribution by Braverman centres on the organisational structure of capital. He adopts a Chandlerian view that the modern corporation is an institutional form of the firm based on the division of ownership and operational control which replaced the personal form. For Braverman both functions are nevertheless aspects of capital as a class. Specialised professional management assumes operational control in different function based on a broad corporate functional differentiation. The imperative for control over production drives vertical integration, although inexplicably horizontal integration appears to be product driven. The increasing complexity of 'accounting for value' drives the Taylorisation of mental work. and, following Chandler, Braverman asserts that divisionalisation emerged to overcome growing corporate structural complexity.

In other words Taylorist organisation of managerial labour lead to functional divisions (including line and staff) albeit within an planned integrated structure of production based on task hierarchies. Other organisational patterns – initially trusts, cartels, and other combinations, later transnational corporations, the international division of labour, global capital mobility and so on – also emerged. Here Braverman does not adequately distinguish production and inter-firm relations.

Braverman's work suggests, first, that capitalist command of production was founded initially on co-ordination of separate workshops, where control over work remained with direct producers. Second, command engendered control over the labour process only as an external feature. Under formal subsumption all round craft skills were retained, or at least sufficient manual skills were retained by the detailed machine worker to control the tempo of work. Third, in contrast to Marx, real subsumption only emerged with Taylorist techniques of detailed work design and performance monitoring. Both depend on the centralisation of knowledge, especially scientific knowledge which enables management to achieve technical control over labour. This occurred around 1880–1900. Fourth, the administrative labour process of the "control function" was also based on centralised planning and monitoring within an integrated organisational structure.

Clearly a major theme for Braverman is deskilling. Although characteristic of capital in general, under monopoly its "novelty...lies...in...the rigor which they [conception and execution] are divided from one another, and then increasingly subdivided". The constant goal is the centralisation of 'conception', or knowledge, within ever tighter circles of management. Key developments such as the "conceptual apparatus and trained personnel" institutionalises systematisation and control, but also requires significant investment in appropriate systems – planning department, work study, codification, monitoring and so forth. Braverman's theory of capitalist development centres on the social production and distribution of knowledge and its effects, despite the attention to deskilling which has developed.

These conclusions shed light on the organisational processes of capital and several points arise. Control from general command over production will be distinguished from the control system or systems possible under a given organisational structure. I shall use the term control-system to refer to the organisational pattern or system for planning, implementation, monitoring, evaluation and adjustment needed in all production. Second, the detailed control over work, or
work control, refers to the immediate control over work methods, organisation, and the performance of work and must be distinguished from control–system(s). Third, systems of control are embedded in the organisation of production units, such as factories, firms and corporate structures.

Like Marx, Braverman restricted his analysis to the structural features of the development of the labour process. While his contributions provide more detail on the organisational conditions of the labour process, several shortcomings remain. The neglect of the active role of workers in shaping the workplace and managerial methods of dealing with this remain paramount. The next section turns to later developments in the labour process framework.

4. Developing the Labour Process

As noted earlier, Braverman's work cast the labour process agenda. Initial labour process studies tended to confirm Braverman's argument. However discussion of theory were considerably less sanguine and four theoretical shortcomings emerged. First, the 'objective' analysis ignored the active role of labour in shaping work organisation and resistance to capital. Questions concerning workplace cooperation and forms of resistance to management control were raised. Second, the centrality of deskilling was criticised as theoretically inadequate and empirically inaccurate. Third, the theory of management control was inadequate. Management strategies has become a major stream of analysis and has developed an understanding of different patterns of management and their impact on workers' experiences. Fourth, writers question the focus on the point of production for an adequate understanding of management strategies and control, conceptualisation of work or worker's capacities for resistance.

These four themes have been central to debates and research in the labour process framework from the mid-1980s. Concepts from other theoretical approaches have been incorporated into the approach and non-Marxian versions of labour process theory proposed. The next section deals with key issues linked to the third and fourth of these themes.

III. The Firm: Development, Markets and Institutional Mode

In questioning the exclusive focus on the labour process several issues arise. First, the priorities and conditions for management decision-making, second, its inability to adequately capture the necessary conditions for labour control, which include the effects of the regulatory framework and wider class relations and, third, the effect of product and labour markets.

Kelly's 'full circuit of capital' approach covers these criticisms. He rejects the assumption that the dynamics in production determine the shape of control. The 'control' view initially derived from Marx's location of the origin of surplus value in the labour process, and was later reinforced by Braverman's linear deskilling argument. Kelly advocates an analysis which includes supply factors – particularly the labour market – and the realisation of value, or product markets. The critical consideration is the "degrees [sic] of disarticulation between the different moments in the circuit of capital" – specifically between labour markets, the labour process and product markets. These shape management's options for job design and work organisation. Whilst admitting a role for Taylorist techniques, Kelly stresses that options chosen necessarily affect the nature of control over work performance and the employment relation. Moreover the interaction between product
markets and production facilitates generally improves economic calculation to aid plant rationalisation in corporate structure. In other words, these factors emphasise market and firm structures as key determinants of work, employment and industrial relations. Gospel's non-Marxist typology of these relations is used to analyse British employers' labour management strategies. In his view British employers have depended on external labour markets to provide work skills, employment regulation and bargaining structures. In contrast American employers have been more willing to develop internal or firm-based management labour strategies in terms of work, employment and industrial relations. Jacoby also sees US employers' labour strategy centred on the bureaucratisation of employment. However Gospel's market based model provides no systematic theory to explain the patterns described. Wright's recent application of this typology is similarly used as device to classify Australian employer strategies from the 1870 to the 1990s. But in this case the three periods identified reflect general patterns of employer strategies across the three areas – simple control (1870–1930s), bureaucracy (1940s–1970s) and experimentation (1980s and 1990s) – as a result of the political and economic environment. This formulations proceeds from two theoretical assumptions, the Braverman inspired view that employers seek to "maximise their control over labour cost and application", and the strategic choice view that strategies may fall into misalignment with their environment. As noted earlier, the validity of any simple labour control thesis is questionable, and from this, the proposed periodisation. Second, the effects of the 'environment' vary by industry and company and the strategies pursued by some constitute the environment for others. Wright's account provides no theory to link the two nor assess what 'misalignment' means. Third, as I will demonstrate the era of employers' 'simple control' up to the 1930s masks a myriad of work, social and industrial relations. The classification does not capture the fundamental changes that occurred in this period. For example, 'modern' industrial relations only emerged around 1900 and thus the appropriateness of the descriptive typology must be questioned.

In sum, the role of management is not confined to the complexities and problems of the labour process. The focus on production overlooks policies of other managerial functions and non-Taylorist labour policies. Second, management options for the structuring firm are informed by a wider range of conditions than the Braverman model permits. The remainder of this section considers implications of these conclusions with reference to relevant business history literature.

1. The Formation of the Firm

The development of large complex firms, identified with monopoly capitalism by Braverman, has been investigated by writers from several disciplines. Braverman and others suggest that the separation of ownership and control signals a new economic form. Coarse questions the rigid boundaries of the firm, assumed by conventional economic analysis and see the market and management administration as two forms of co-ordination structuring economic activity. Entrepreneurs move between each pole guided by comparative costs. From this view expansion of the firm results from switching from market to administrative coordination by internalising functions. With greater functional differentiation and size comes 'hierarchical decomposition' that is, the growth of management to provide organisational coordination and integration.
Business historian Alfred Chandler identifies the multi-unit form and management hierarchies as the two key organisational features of the modern business firm. First emerging about the 1850s and 60s in US railway companies, the features signalled the birth of managerial capitalism. Industrial firms followed as volume throughput made investments in advanced technology, mass distribution and management hierarchies economic. These three factors were critical for expanding 'organizational capabilities' and market competitiveness. While new technologies surmounted the size limits of traditional 'pre-factory' production, the other factors maximised the 'scale and scope' returns for technology. Chandler's formulation also points to the role of management in organisational coordination and development, mass distribution and product diversity in creating market and sectoral differences in organisational growth. He however overlooks work reorganisation and labour policy, assuming new technology determined job design and so management control. The remainder of this section will more closely examine the latter and the next section, the market.

Critically, railways closely linked production coordination and job design at the operational level. As two British railway historians emphasise, railway "operations [were] so wide-ranging and multifarious, a precise, carefully defined, and strictly maintained structure was vital", and rulebooks *inter alia*, "expounded in minute detail the duties of every grade in the service." In a similar manner, a top-down military type departmental structure was adopted in Australian railways to ensure co-ordination, work performance and discipline. In short, management necessarily spanned job design and production coordination. As I will demonstrate in later chapters, the shipping and stevedoring industries developed in quite a different manner. Coordination between functions relied more heavily on market relations and traditional authority in the labour process, based on existing structures and practices.

The manufacturing firm combined disparate trades and functions under a single firm structure. But this was haphazard, resulting in 'organisational uncoupling', or the absence of coordination and integration. It was partially overcome by greater functional integration, better cost accounting and production coordination associated with early systematic management. But these changes threw the problems of traditional work processes into greater relief, and opened the way for scientific management to emerge. As I have argued above, Braverman's analysis of scientific management emphasised design of work methods as well as organisational control.

By providing design and control techniques Taylorism extended control over actual work via standardisation which also significantly advanced organisational integration. This spelled the demise of internal contracting, or delegated 'shop management' system. As Littler points out for the US, the contractor and traditional work control were blockages to the integration of work methods into systematic organisational procedures. Taylorist techniques boosted top management's information on costs as well as work organisation and technology. All of which improved profits, enhanced financial control–systems, and increased the income and prestige of managers.

In short, management initially contributed coordination in terms of organisational systems building. Later, it significantly advanced integration by explicit systemisation and standardisation of work organisation and control. In this process Taylorism was effectively an extension of
systematic management, into work organisation and job design/performance standards. I will demonstrate in later chapters differences in the maritime industry.

In conclusion several points may be made. Initial capitalist command of production took the form of coordination of discrete processes into, what is here termed a discontinuous organisational structure. Thus production consisted of a series of relatively discrete production units, each with internal work control over its labour process, where coordination was external and accomplished through discontinuous control-systems. The latter included market transactions between units or extra-economic regulation of units (by law, quasi-legal or custom), or a combination of the two. The discrete production processes are usually characterised by a task continuous status structure in which functional and hierarchical differentiation coincide, grounded in the type of organic control found in Braverman's craft model.

With the combination of production units into a single entity a coordinated organisational structure emerged. The latter permitted the calculation of performance of the production process as a whole although work control of the labour process remained external. However the production unit may consist of several labour process which are relatively 'decoupled', or the coordinated in a manner which component labour processes were open to economic calculation of their relative contribution to production as a whole. Thus a coordinated control-system imposes specific demands on the economic terms of work, rather than its organisation and methods. Finally an integrated organisational structure sees the introduction of organisational techniques which permit the analysis and specification of all aspects of the production process including work organisation and job design. An integrated control-system has the potential and techniques to reconstruct work methods. In short, management provided the organisational mechanism which 'coupled' production components and balanced the articulation between production and product markets.

Management thus operated as an integrative and strategic element in the development of the firm.

2. Markets and Institutional Mode

However the practical methods used to balance the articulation of production and the market (or other contextual factors) were not straightforward. Marx assumed that market competition unproblematically transmitted systemic production pressures to raise surplus value to all managerial policy. Braverman adds the emergence of oligopolistic competition to this view. In contrast, Chandler's comparative analysis of managerial capitalism identifies three national patterns of institutional development – competitive in the US, personal in Britain and cooperative in Germany – where market structure and management preferences shaped firm structures and distribution systems. Moreover state policy, legal and cultural factors in each country affect these patterns.

Chandler points to differences in the size, ownership and inter-organisational relations of firms between the US and Britain. British firms operated in small local and/or diverse, dispersed global markets, thus sustaining smaller, family owned or influenced firms, with smaller management structures. Limited vertical integration took place. Moreover, mergers adopted the loose holding companies structure with weak central organisations which did not overcome the preference of member firms for relatively independent operations. Large hierarchies developed in the 1920s and divisionalisation after WWII. German firms faced a larger Continental market which saw larger, and technologically advanced firms emerge, but management secured more inter-firm
cooperation than US firms in the face of market diversity. The large and less diverse US market allowed American firms to exploit scale and scope returns from the type of large integrated managerial firms outlined in the previous section.

Other conditions reinforced these market driven patterns. British and German law permitted "horizontal combination," such as cartels, which stabilised markets and minimised competition. Moreover, Hannah explains that British firms could coordinate their activities by using business and distribution services already available, without creating new mass distribution systems or managerial hierarchies. That is, existing market mechanisms and/or negotiated inter-firm cooperation were more efficient in the UK similarly large German firms opted for inter-firm cooperation. US firms kept product range narrow (Ford's black Model T as the exemplar) and invested in large distribution systems and thereby created standardised mass markets. Further, in Britain smaller family firms sustained a cultural preference for closer personal relations in day-to-day management practices. Such cultural preferences had a wider echo in areas such as education, management training and the role of the state.

Finally, Daems points out that the comparative costs of each coordination type were far more difficult to calculate than the transaction costs criterion admits. This indeterminacy meant that firms entered a myriad of ownership, contractual and cooperative relations that fell between spot markets and internal hierarchies. Indeed the mode of coordination chosen could shape the operation of the contextual factors on which the choice was nominally based. Thus Daems sees the choice of mode of coordination as an instance of competition in institutional forms.

Following Daems, the term institutional mode will refer to the nature of the arrangements between firms. Daems identifies three types – the market, hierarchy and federation modes. Markets rely on external contracts between firms, hierarchies on internal authority, and federations on negotiated agreements. The latter include cartels, trade associations, business interest groups and loose forms of industrial combines (such as holding companies), and are based on managed inter-firm activities and markets. In short, management may attenuate the effects of competitive pressures assumed by Marx, Braverman and conventional economic analysis.

IV. The Social Conditions of Industrial Authority

This section address the issue of the active role of workers in the labour process. Three aspects are considered, first, the role of the subjective dimension in production in general, second, the workplace and authority and finally, the shape of labour organisation in general. A number of concepts will be developed.

1. Labour Activism in Marx and Braverman

Braverman's formulation is unable to provide an adequate understanding of the active role of labour. The tension between the humanism of workers, as the key measure of work degradation, and the objectivism of capital is central to Braverman's work. However, given management's control imperative, this philosophical anthropology of labour confines the active role of labour to a control–resistance dynamic. Consequently he is unable to adequately link his critique of work to any radical societal transformation. Resistance is linked to either (unstated) favourable 'employment conditions', or the assumed capacity of work degradation to generate social
Yet workers are routinely habituated to capitalist work through workplace manipulation and social supports. Thus Braverman offers no tenable conceptualisation of the active role of labour.

In contrast, Marx points to several avenues of opposition logically generated by capitalism. Labour is seen as a capital resource governed by physiological and social norms, where the length of the working day varies between physical and moral limits. Legislative limitation from 1802 was dictated by diminishing economic returns (due to fatigue and health costs), worker resistance, social costs and immanent moral contradictions. For example, by the 1830s, child labour was clearly at odds with the contractual notion of legal responsibility which prompted "allies in ...[other] social layers" to assist the working class struggle. State protective legislation, particularly after the 1833 Factory Act, reinforced politics as a key arena of class antagonism.

Marx noted that the use of unskilled workers, women and children in the manufacturing period was "largely defeated by the habits and resistance of the male workers", apprenticeships (of seven years) remained "in full force" and capital lacked an "objective framework" outside labour to counter "insubordination". Even in 1830s and 40s apprenticeships continued, workers retained traditional distinctions of skill (apart from its content), "passive [resistance], though inflexible and unceasing" remained, and the 'civil war' between classes continued. What explains this?

First, the customary basis of work control – both as resistance and active skill distinctions – continued to have significant force. Second, technical control only broke the resistance of the isolated worker, but the rise of the collective worker simultaneously increases the organisational capacities of workers. As "the number of ... cooperating workers increase, so too does their resistance" which precipitates greater concern over control by capital. In general advanced machinery is limited by "its capitalist form ... [and] the old division of labour with its ossified particularities". In short, social norms permeate skill distinctions, work design and so on, which shapes and limits capital.

Third, the length of the working day, labour intensification and cheapening all contribute to the relative immiseration of workers, which politicises production and raises class consciousness and action. Finally, Marx notes that theoretically, the logic of constantly minimising necessary over surplus labour time by technological change, undermines the basis of capitalist value and wage forms. The immanent tendencies of capital thus undermines its own structure, since the contribution of direct labour in production becomes increasingly difficult to measure. By implication social norms and politics increasingly enter wage setting.

In sum, the tendency towards technical control over workers identified by both writers is tempered by counter processes in Marx but not Braverman. This points to the need to consider social norms, political structures and authority, or the social and political conditions of existence of capital accumulation. The remainder of this section addresses these factors.

2. Industrial Authority: Politics, Custom and Closure in the Craft Form

The benchmark of work control for Braverman is craft control based predominantly on skill. This section argues that Braverman's romanticised ideal type of craft ignores the critical role of politics and legitimisation in pre-industrial production and beyond.
Feudalism depended on a pattern of social obligation where the rights to economic revenue derived from surplus labour, relied on extra-economic compulsion. Thus social dominance and economic appropriation were not defined directly by the economic function nor did control over the labour process secure social autonomy. The conflict over economic surplus was politicised by taxation, lead to the relative isolation of towns and other factors. Control over production was devolved to corporate groups – such as guilds – by political fiat. Such control curbed local (and thus larger) markets, which was a key mechanism protecting the position of local dominant groups.

Indeed the functions of urban guilds, livery companies and similar institutions were often extensive. Their control included; monopoly rights over products and markets, regulation of the numbers and size of producers, training and skills, limitation of apprentices (usually no more than two per craftsmen), sources of supply, sharing of materials, type of enforcement (Courts, trade committees etc) and others. In short, feudal political structures enabled craft guilds to both define production and exclude others. Skill provided leverage in the struggle with dominant groups over claims for status, autonomy and "free fellowship." The institutionalisation of skill – distinct from its objective content – was one of several mechanisms of social closure and status for crafts peculiar to feudalism.

In agriculture, work practices (and skill) were tied more closely to custom. Marx and Engels long ago noted that an immediate tactic for rural workers in possession of handicraft skill, was to escape to towns as skill was a particularly mobile property. Edwards stresses the importance of custom as a tactical mechanism to set the terms of feudal social antagonism. Turner noted similar function in later trade union growth and Mill in market relations. Peasant revolts invariably revolved around demands for a Charter which represented the same political impulse to limit work obligations as the guilds did for craftsmen.

In short, the political apparatus sanctioned the corporate form of regulation, from which flowed discretion over 'craftsmanship', industrial authority and status position – in what Weber termed decentralised patronialism. In practice the system varied by locality and was diluted by nascent capitalism even by the seventeenth century. Nevertheless societal enabling conditions allowed craft work of this type to be sustained without claims based on Braverman's notion of skill.

Moreover Unwin's work indicates four key points; first, guilds were not a uniform nor homogeneous. Conflict between the trade and production functions, large and small masters, between crafts (even in one industry) and between locales were endemic. Masters organised guilds in their own interests. The status differences within groups generated conflict with journeyman/yeomen and the emergence of small masters from the fourteenth century. Thus conflict between and within crafts shaped production and 'craftsmanship', not inherent skill. As markets, raw materials sources, and so on changed over time crafts were undermined, taken over, or amalgamated by economic circumstance or political fiat.

Second, politics was critical in securing charters, ordinances, monopolies and regulation for corporate groups of all types based on exclusionary vested interests, or 'closed' relationships.
Such regulation buttressed the municipal and national economy, through mercantilism, which was not abandoned with the rise of laissez-faire doctrine in 1848. Third, corporate control was concerned with securing economic stability "and the preservation of the status of the master craftsman." Accordingly, guilds/companies were associations of masters rather than workers and were not unambiguously the forerunner of trade unions. Craft skill did not pass over automatically and exclusively to the worker in the nineteenth century.

The argument here demonstrates that guild organisation secured significant scope for autonomy over methods, rhythm and outcome of work for the craft. It exemplified the social closure or institutionalisation of 'craftsmanship', social status and custom which underpinned a form of local industrial authority, independence and separateness in social life. In short, craft organisation depended on political structures and status norms which in their ideal form, supported authority and claims for autonomy. Status and custom also underpinned similar claims by non-craft workers. The review of literature in Chapter One indicated the strength of custom on the waterfront, and Chapter Three will demonstrate its historical legacy. A more general consideration of power is needed first.

3. Industrial Authority: Power and Legitimation

Domination has been defined earlier as the societal patterning of power and subordination incorporating the capacity to rule and command. It provides a framework and conduit for the exercise of authority. For, as Max Weber long ago stressed, power as direct force and coercion, is highly unstable.

At the general level, a form of domination entails a capacity to rule which following Weber is termed a legitimate order - that is where action rests on normative compliance of a valid system of rules subject to different forms of enforcement. For Weber, the form of legitimacy was accompanied by institutional arrangements consistent with the legitimation and type of authority on which it was based. Thus logically, authority is a combination of legitimation as belief and actual practice.

According to Weber, customary action is based on voluntary compliance to rules established by long standing practice. Although guild ordinances were procedurally formulated and (potentially) enforced through administrative systems of law, they were based on traditional legitimation and enforcement. Rules and/or authoritative position are based on long traditions which entail ethical standards and orient economic action to substantive ends. Enforcement is based largely on convention, defined by Weber as the "relatively general and practically significant reaction of disapproval of the group", where ethically normative beliefs orient action even without "any external guarantee." The term customary will be used here to denote the moral authority of custom engendering voluntary compliance and group enforcement based on convention. The role of the 'moral economy' in regulating market prices illustrates its effects.

Thus authority (as practice embedded in a system of action and belief) is separated from power in that the latter is the exercise of force beyond legitimate social action. Where contestation occurs within the ambit of authority it is not reduced to power where accepted as legitimate. In contrast, the exercise of power takes place beyond legitimation which alters the 'field' of action and has effects on the status of legitimation. Thus control is a form of contested power
over action which seeks to alter, circumvent or overthrow established authority relations and systems.\textsuperscript{169} It encompasses social control at work.\textsuperscript{170}

Control–systems (design and implementation of rules) exist within a legitimated pattern of authority, although in practice, the parameters and exercise of control–system rules are subject to contested definition and negotiation. That is, control–systems and control are in dynamic relation and involve negotiation in practice to respond to the dynamics of economic relations. Workplace relations result from the accommodation of local and structural conditions. Thus discipline too flows both from industrial authority and relations of domination. Discipline is an intervention to affect action through certain established procedures, whether informal or formal.\textsuperscript{171} Disciplinary systems strike at the heart of control and thereby stands at the ‘frontier of control’. In addition 'disciplinary effects'\textsuperscript{172} are produced by structural conditions of domination. Thus labour market 'discipline' is felt by workers in the market and workplace. As I will show later this is more cogently felt by stevedoring workers than others.

Further, disciplinary effects through the manipulation of routine practice have been explored by recent labour process literature. Burawoy focuses on the political and ideological conditions of existence of production under monopoly capital. He demonstrates that labour actively engages in its own subordination via participation in shopfloor 'games.' By pursuing informally determined piece-rate bonuses workers defined and confined their activities and understandings (over work effort, wages, work speed and methods) to an arena set by management. This effectively shaped worker activities and consciousness to immediate interests. Participation in games 'obscures and secures' surplus value for capital, while reducing the deprivations of labour.\textsuperscript{173}

Games 'manufacture consent', through the isomorphism of industrial authority and routine practice. The latter generates affinity between formal rules and informal norms and action it secures legitimation. Although consent signifies only pragmatic acceptance with an absence of commitment, (or belief in Weber's terms\textsuperscript{174}) a regime of rule–based procedures and appeals also circumscribed protest by individualising dissent. According to Burawoy such hegemonic systems have replaced the direct control characteristic of nineteenth century capitalism. The latter model may be questioned. Nevertheless, Burawoy does link factory politics to the state, or 'global' politics and sees relations in production as inseparable from the political and ideological elements of social life.\textsuperscript{175}

Other labour process writers, influenced by Foucault, have linked disciplinary effects more closely to the formation of subjective identities. Social imperatives (career, security, and so on) fashion individual identity by prescribing and proscribing action – the 'normalising' effect. A 'capillary form' of power is in social practices and forms a "self–disciplining subjectivity"\textsuperscript{176} resulting in the subjugation of labour in production,\textsuperscript{177} characteristic of modern formal employment systems. However resistance is also in power, tied to the "recalcitrance of the will and the intransigence of freedom."\textsuperscript{178} Research reported from this perspective indicates the continuing importance of informal action.\textsuperscript{179}

This contribution demonstrates the key role of modern forms of domination and particularly control–systems in individualising the experience of labour and isolating workers. Indeed Marx
noted that wage-labour not only converted the labourer into a (nominally) free agent, but also a person who "learns to control himself", as he seeks to maximise the wage from "personal achievement", particularly in piece-rate systems. Such individualising tendencies clearly undermines collective resistance.

This view points to the effects of modern formal authority in contrast to the informal authority in the craft work mentioned earlier. The concern of this thesis is the processes in the shift between the two. The next section turns to a consideration of industrial authority and industrial relations.

V. Industrial Authority and Industrial Relations

The literature on the development of modern industrial relations has identified the rise of formal systems of regulation in place of traditional regulation. Modern systems developed a formal legalism, premised on a greater or lesser extent of state intervention, which displaced custom to a greater or lesser extent as marginal. British voluntarist collective bargaining and Australian compulsory arbitration emerged as variants of formal systems.

Dependence on internal contracting and traditional work organisation and methods in Britain, maintained custom through the nineteenth century. Capitalist command was mediated by internal contract which developed a variety of modes of labour control. Thus the practical experience of control varied considerably. This system disappeared as control was bureaucratised under management authority as part of the wider transition to formal industrial relations systems.

In a study of the British building industry, Price charts changes in work relations and industrial relations of craft and non-craft workers. He identifies the pivotal role of work control in a pattern of autonomous regulation. Despite the ascendancy of capital, autonomous regulation was central to 'unformal' industrial relations into the 1860s. The 'unformal' system was decentralised, centred on local issues, lacked general procedures and rested on work control. The latter was generated by the practical performance of labour within the antagonistic employer–worker relation. Work control was grounded in informal workgroup practice – the "purposeful assertion of worker authority over the activities of the workplace" based on customary rules. Since workgroup cohesion and rule enforcement defined and sustained customary authority, the group was the pivotal collective institution not the union. Indeed the very strength of local solidaristic groups thwarted strong, centralised unionisation and early union work rules only codified existing informal rules. This applied to craft and non-craft work in the building industry. Work control is therefore a central category and craft control was a ('respectable') subset. Three conditions were needed – handicraft tradition, exclusionary practices accepted by employers, and clear technical competence.

Thus work control was more than only resistance to Braverman type employer control and more widespread than craft control. It is also distinct from Rimmer and Sheldon's 'union control', in which 'labourers' unions ... published standard conditions ... and work practices in their 'working rules' or 'by-laws', allegedly as a form of workers' control. This mistakenly equates customary and workgroup based regulation with broader issues of organisational control.

Price dates the transition from the 'unformal' to the formalised system from the early 1870s. The 'switch' engendered systemic demands for new authority relations and institutions
which set in train complex changes which resulted in the shift to unilateral management control. With new techniques of 'mutual negotiation' and 'conciliation' employers soon limited formalised industrial relations bargaining to a narrow economism rather than work control. Formalisation brought with it "a set of intangible pressures" at work, where negotiations over any structural component became pregnant with "economist tendencies." The "new game" replaced work groups with unions as the bearers of workers' interests. Accordingly informal work control was marginalised and then soon condemned as 'restrictive practices' and illegitimate by employers.

In this view, modern unions were created by formalism. As the institutional bearers of new 'industrial relations rules', they also became the guardians of bargaining discipline. For this to occur, internal union authority shifted away from the rank and file to union officials, a process completed by 1890. The national collective bargaining system forged after 1900 required a thorough 'modernisation' of unions requiring representative leadership, centralised authority and bureaucratisation. The reconstruction of authority was complete when legitimation flowed from the formal bargaining of rules — in Weber's terms the legal–rational basis of authority. Yet leader/member tensions grew as the workplace 'moral economy' and customary rules were marginalised and the employment relation 'contractualised'.

In short, the transition from informal to formal encompassed more than a simple transfer of workplace power from workers to employers. It required a reconstruction of key enabling conditions — the practice and institutional apparatus of a new type of industrial authority. The key role of traditional customs and informal authority gave way to a narrow economism, 'rational' authority and a new proceduralism. These factors point to deeper and wider societal patterns of rationalising principles not confined to the labour process. Price also notes that tensions and conflicts to arise from the fundamental contradictions of work and industrial relations. Direct authority continues to be generated from the practical performance of work and members clash with union officials. Claims to authority remain as a critical in the dynamics of the labour process to this day. Informal relations, including those identified by Burawoy, are inherently contradictory, both accommodating and conflictual as much industrial sociology and industrial relations writing has demonstrated.

In sum, the creation of a formal industrial relations system was an important institutional condition for the shift in the nature of legitimation and industrial authority. However informal organisation was not eliminated, but rather transformed in its relationship to labour organisation — that is, unionisation — and to employers. Stevedoring has been identified as unskilled and thus with the rise of new unionism, and political activity. The next section turns to these issues.

1. **New Unionism**

The waterfront has provided example of the rise of new unionism in the last decades of the nineteenth century. Early writers in Britain and Australia found little difficulty in identifying the phenomenon. For them unskilled and semi-skilled workers inspired by socialist militancy forged general or industrial unions in 1880s to counter their weak labour market position. Their difference from craft unions was measured by membership characteristics and union policy in respect to growth, recruitment, fees, industrial and political action. Later writers questioned certain
elements of this model but generally accepted it.\textsuperscript{203} Others questioned differences between old and new unions in terms of politics, militancy, structures and benefits.\textsuperscript{204} More recent writers have rejected its applicability in Australia on the basis of significant differences in Australian political relations or ignored new unionism as a model for unskilled workers.\textsuperscript{205} The question of the nature of this collective organisation is central.

Hobsbawm's analysis of British waterside unions places more emphasis on workplace tensions in the transition from competitive to monopoly capitalism. Occupational stability made labour action in the late 1880s possible, but stable unionism required employer recognition and government action which only came two decades later.\textsuperscript{206} Hobsbawm links structure and organisation over time, rather than concentrating on politics, membership, fees and so on. Price extends this approach in his labour process analysis and argues that "the direction of change ... found within the sphere of the social relations of production" is the key to understanding new unionism.\textsuperscript{207}

When extended changes in technology and work methods were combined with a "new style of managerial assertiveness" after 1870, skilled and unskilled felt the impact. The hybrid mid-Victorian social relations of production were remodelled in a general transition from formal to real subsumption. On the docks occupational stabilisation precipitated workgroup type unionism in the 1870s. Initial mechanisation and general labour intensification sparked the 1889 strike and with it new unionism.\textsuperscript{208} Workers realised that a new potential for work control and protest against employer paternalism existed. However, employers turned to free labour and a new formalised paternalism to gain control. Paternalism was later abandoned in favour of union recognition after 1910. However this focus neglects the reciprocal nature of paternalism and the efficacy of customary 'workgroup type unionism' which he previously explored in building industry.

For Price, politicisation, especially through socialist ideas, was a central change, given its impact as a "vocabulary" of interpretation of labour process restructuring. Although mediated by the extent of change and the viability of pre-existing authority relations, only political ideology could explore the "dialectic involved in this [change] process [and] bind together the industrial and political developments". The depth and complexity of change resulted in the appearance of syndicalist ideas, rank and file militancy and demands for workers' control.\textsuperscript{209} In a similar manner American non-craft operatives and labourers were influenced by syndicalism and the ideas of the Industrial Workers of the World (IWW).\textsuperscript{210} In both countries the 1920s marked a new phase in the role of unions since traditional forms of control were by then out of reach.

In sum, explanations of new unionism have moved from a discrete event interpretation to an analysis of its role in a wider social process. Economic pressures were felt on labour processes whether craft or unskilled, but differed in their effects. Although the level of rank and file activism, ideology and union policy differed, all unions were subject to pressures to adopt bureaucratic organisation. What new unionism confirms is that the scope of labour process and organisational restructuring was beyond the capacity of the moral economy – a vacuum quickly filled by a spectrum of political ideologies which operated as interpretative and organisational frameworks.
2. Labour Action and Socio-Political Ideology – A Framework

In feudalism the relations of domination and subordination were based on a decentralised polity and customary regulation of the labour process. In contrast the basis of capitalist domination is a generalised source of validation of rule(s) – that is, a belief in the legality of rational and formal authority. However the substantive rationality (of law) cannot itself be determined by formal rationality. Accordingly political discourse and organisation addressing substantive issues plays a key role, particularly where traditional understandings are weakened by the rapid restructuring of economic and work relations and social norms.

Dominant political themes of the Australian labour movement centre on the nature of social reorganisation needed advance labour, and the methods to achieve it. These themes identify two dimensions of labour activism – the focus of organisation and the method of change – the former classified as predominantly centred on state politics or industrial reorganisation, the latter as reform or revolution. Figure 2.1 sets out the classification of the predominant foundations of activism in the period covered by this study. Three cautionary points need to be made, first, the typology is heuristic and emphasises core tendencies. Second, practical action was constituted by rationalities or ‘vocabularies’ informed by social norms and political ideas. Third, liberalism and socialism have been omitted since these principles interpreted by, and incorporated in, several types set out here.

Figure 2.1 Socio-Political Foundations of Labour Activism

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Focus of Organization</th>
<th>Methods of Change</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Evolutionary (eg Bargaining)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State/Societal (Political)</td>
<td>A. Labourist</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Point of Production (Industrial)</td>
<td>C. Solidarist</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Australian and British variants of labourism have resisted definitive analysis, but certain themes have been identified. Hagan has described the main components of labourism forged in the generation before the turn of the century as pragmatism and egalitarianism. Macintyre rests these principles on the immediate concerns of workers and the conviction that the realisation of workers' rights depends on the abolition of capitalism. Yet labourism is not defined by these ideas. Beilharz points to a combination of liberal and socialist roots which produced a preference of evolutionary reformist change. Labourism sees a critical role for parliamentary political action. Although both the political and industrial wings of the labour movement are guided by an ideal of social reconstruction. In practice labourism has subordinated any radical industrial reorganisation to political reformism guided by egalitarianism.

Communist writers in Australia have identified revolutionary goals and the politics of workplace organisation and unionism as central to communist ideology. Communists were particularly critical of labourist policies of economism, “reformist defeatism”, arbitration and parliamentary politics. Nevertheless Communist policy centred on the political struggle to raise
class consciousness and theoretical understanding of workers in the pursuit of the socialist revolutionary objective. The focus on "practical-organisational" issues, Shop Committees and the like were a means through which communists presented themselves as the "best practical Trade Unionists" in order to draw "the whole of the working-class into the fight, ... and the general revolutionary struggle." In short, the communist strategy centred on societal and industrial reconstruction through revolutionary political means.

In contrast syndicalism places key emphasis on industrial organisation and the rejection of parliamentary politics. Thus social reconstruction and socialism are defined and driven through the administration of industry by direct workers. From this starting point flow changes to society. The rejection of reformism leads to an emphasis on spontaneous revolutionary change from below. Given the emphasis on decentralised industrial control, syndicalist ideas spawned a wide range of models of organisation and societal change. Common to most was the collective basis of organisation at the point of production. Although this ranged from the sectional interests of craft workers – autonomy, anti-modernism, consumer interests – to the marxian inspired revolutionary industrial unionism of the Australian variant of the Industrial Workers' of the World – class, anti-exploitation and socialism.

The term solidarist action denotes an emphasis on workplace solidarity and industrial organisation, rather than revolutionary political organisation. Solidarist action was informed by the workgroup relations, informal work rules (as in 'unformal' industrial relations discussed earlier) and community relations. The politics of solidarist action was based on claims for freedom and autonomy shaped by existing sectional and industrial divisions rather than a political agenda of social reorganisation. Stedman Jones cogently notes that struggles over (work) control in the mid-1800s fit easily into the Leninist trade-union consciousness and reformism equation and were not revolutionary. Solidarist action looked backward, was influenced by a pragmatic egalitarianism and freedom, and had organisational goals centred on mutualism, co-operation and independence.

This typology permits an analysis of the social, cultural, political and industrial strands which underpinned labour action and its changes over the period covered by this thesis.

VI. The Labour Process, Labour Market and Employment Relation

This section describes the characteristics of stevedoring work and employment. The changes in the labour process, organisational structure and industrial authority were registered on the work organisation, methods and jobs outlined below. Stevedoring is an inter-modal function in transport – between sea to road or rail. The variability in shipping arrivals, combined with the nature of the labour process, linked the structure of the labour market and employment conditions more closely than other industries. This section outlines each as an index of authority and control.

1. The Stevedoring Labour Process: Functions, Work and Skills

The functions of the industry are, loading, discharging, receiving, handling, storage and delivery of cargo, centred on loading and discharging of ships. The work covers many occupations, job classifications and tasks. Work functions were conducted in three physical areas – ship, wharf and shed (or yard in some cases). With little shore based specialisation in Australia the primary divide was between ship and wharf work. The latter primarily applies to the work performed near the ship, including transit sheds. Beyond this, work in sheds or warehouses
depended on the size, type of cargo, and pattern of unionisation in a port. Generally, larger ports
have more extensive work specialisation and warehousing facilities.227

Within the ship/shore division waterside work encompassed a number of job classifications,
outlined in Figure 2.2.228 Jobs (listed in Column (2)) and tasks performed varied by port and were
defined by local custom and practice. However this said, the jobs listed were relatively stable,
particularly after the intervention of industrial tribunals from 1900.229

Shipboard labour embraces the work of riggers, winchmen, hatchmen, stevedores and
holders.230 Competencies needed covered a knowledge of rigging, the myriad of ropes and sheets
for sailing ships, as well as blocks, tackles, swivels, clips and other lifting equipment. Initially cargo
was carried on board along planks, then portable steam powered winches, or 'donkey winches', were
used to work sailing vessels, later replaced by ship based steam from the 1870s.231 As steam
replaced sail and wire replaced rope in the years up to WWI, fewer lines were needed for the
equipment but knowledge of ropes/wires, shackles, blocks and tackles, and derrick loads was still
required, particularly for heavy lifts (usually 2 tonnes or more).232 Rigging work, traditionally
performed by sailors, was an area of demarcation dispute until WWI, as was the removal of beams
and hatch covers.233

Winchmen and hatchmen were key jobs on the ship's deck. Standing at the core of the labour
process they linked work in the hold and on the wharf or lighter. Close co-operation was required
for the speed (and safety) of cargo movement to and from the hold. Hatchmen directed the hook
(with a sling loaded with cargo) since winchmen were usually unable to see the 'floor' of the
hold.234 Co-operation was vital to achieve the technical capacities (speed and load) of winches.235
Factors such as the cost of winches, materials co-ordination to and from the hook (loading and
discharging respectively) were also important. Foremen supervised loading and stowing (loading),
unpacking (or breaking out) and unloading (discharging) according to the ships' manifest.
Holders236 worked in the hold, stowing or breaking out cargo usually under an assistant foreman.
This heavy manual work was performed in gangs of six to eight men, according to the ship's size
and cargo type. Two men worked the 'square', attaching (or detaching) sling wires/ropes to the
hook, others made up (or broke) the sling load. Two to four men stowed (or 'broke out') the cargo
and the remainder moved cargo to (or from) the wings to the square or hatchway.237

Stowage required knowledge of the weight and nature of cargo,238 its effect on ship
stability,239 the stability and efficiency of the stow (a tight stow or 'trim') to use all space
available,240 and the order of discharge by the route of the vessel. Stowage thus depended upon
techniques of stacking (cross stacking, stepping and tying in), standing breaks,241 securing cargo
through the use of dunnage,242 rope netting and ropes. Clipper ship wool gangs, for example,
squeezed ('pinned and drove') bales into all parts of the hold with a 'screw'243 and required extensive
experience in stowing trebles and fourbles (types of wool packaging).244 Hand 'trucks' were used to
move cargo in the hold and hand-held 'hooks' to manipulate cargo into place. Co-ordination of
effort (e.g. for lifting) and tasks (team-work in stowage) were key elements of hold work where a
variety of cargo and ship factors had to be considered as well as co-ordination with shore work.
This all contributed to a highly contingent and dangerous nature of work in the ships' hold.
Table 2.2 Job Classification, WWF, and Location of Work (based on Queensland State Branch, 1933 List of Callings)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Job Classification</th>
<th>[other job titles]</th>
<th>Location of work</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>riggers</td>
<td></td>
<td>ship/hold</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>winchmen</td>
<td></td>
<td>ship/hold</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>hatchmen</td>
<td></td>
<td>ship/hold</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>stevedores</td>
<td></td>
<td>ship/hold</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[or lumpers]</td>
<td></td>
<td>[river/harbour]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[topmen*]</td>
<td></td>
<td>[river/harbour]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[holders]</td>
<td></td>
<td>ship/hold</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[lightermen*/boatmen*/watermen*]</td>
<td></td>
<td>[river/harbour]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>lightermen</td>
<td></td>
<td>[river/harbour]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>planksmen*</td>
<td></td>
<td>ship/hold</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>shovellers*</td>
<td></td>
<td>ship/hold</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>wharf labourers</td>
<td></td>
<td>shore/wharf/lighter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[or lumpers]</td>
<td></td>
<td>shore/wharf</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[stagemen, gangwaymen, hookmen, hooker-on*]</td>
<td></td>
<td>shore/wharf</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>truckers</td>
<td></td>
<td>shore</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[trammers*, troleymen, horseman, tippers*]</td>
<td></td>
<td>wharf/shed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>carriers</td>
<td></td>
<td>shore/wharf/shed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>railway truck hands</td>
<td>[shunters]</td>
<td>wharf/yard</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>stackers</td>
<td></td>
<td>shed/wharf</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>shed hands</td>
<td>[wharf storemen*]</td>
<td>shore/shed</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

These were jobs performed by coalworkers (and AWU) in Queensland at this time (but this waterside work was later absorbed by WWF). Waterside work in other states used other terms: topmen and trammers - Melbourne coalworkers (WWF); hooker-on - Newcastle Coal Trimmers (WWF); planksmen, shovellers - Adelaide (WWF) & Sydney coalworkers (Sydney Coal Lumpers). Source: Column (1) from Registration Application No.141, Attachment E, Queensland Industrial Registry, August, 1933. Other job titles from ACAC files (various cases).

Shore work was divided between the wharf and shed. Wharf (the 'apron') work paralleled hold work around the sling. Men (stagemen) attached/detached sling ropes (or on a 'stage') after the load was made up/broken, and knowledge of ropes and slings was again critical for efficiency and safety.245 Truckers (in gangs of 2 to 8 or more) manually loaded two-wheeled trucks (or larger 4 or 6-wheeled trolleys) and pushed them to/from sheds.246 Variability in the condition, dimensions and weight of cargo, distance, quality of the wharf, all affected this work. Over short distances cargo was often physically carried or 'lumped' to sheds, carts, etc. Stackers handled cargo storage and movement in the shed, including receipt and delivery of cargoes. Stacking cargo required similar skills those of stowage by holders. Finally, waterside workers often moored vessels.247

Several ancillary occupations or areas of work existed on the waterfront. Ballastmen (loading and unloading ballast), mainly for sail vessels, but declined along with sail. Coalworkers often formed a distinctive group as the steamship era grew (from the 1860s) but disappeared by the end of WWII. They loaded coal for fuel (bunkering), interstate and export trades.249 The work was particularly heavy and dirty, since bunkering coal was manually shovelled into baskets (or large tubs) weighing 5cwt (250 kg), which were initially manually hauled in and out of the hold. Later steam winches operated by a winchman were used. Handling timber was a small but important occupational section, based on the specialist skills needed for the recognition of different timbers,
efficient sling making and safe winching. Timber was often the first cargo shipped from several areas and was first loaded and handled by ship crews and local labourers. The men who subsequently followed the trade exclusively in larger ports were accorded quasi-skilled status. Stores work on shore usually covered larger warehouses (for wool, hides, wheat, sugar, other commodities and general cargo), and often included work claimed by other unions (Australian Workers' Union [AWU] for wheat and sugar, Federated Storemen and Packers Union [FSPU] for wool and hides) but in several ports included stevedoring and ancillary work (eg cleaning holds). In some cases, FSPU men handled wool and hides near or on the wharf in some ports. Brisbane, Rockhampton, Sydney, Port Adelaide, Melbourne, Geelong and Portland were the main ports for these trades. The tallying, recording, checking and associated clerical tasks were performed by casual tally clerks. The proportion of loading and discharging using lighters (flat-bottomed, steam-powered boats) was small in Australian ports by international standards. It facilitated intra-port movement of cargo and waterside workers were thus employed on these vessels.

Finally, the technology outlined so far relates to the ships' gear. Shore based mechanical equipment could also be used to load/discharge and move cargo on shore. However little mechanical equipment was used on the Australian waterfront. The use of large shore based mechanical equipment – seen first the Newcastle coal trade in the 1870s – steam straights and hydraulic cranes in 1876 and 1878 respectively – required particular circumstances. These issues will be pursued later chapters.

In sum, there are four key aspects of the waterfront labour process; first, process based coordination between functions; second, team based co-operation in work; third, the importance of experience in gaining knowledge and skills; fourth, the high degree of contingency. Foremen coordinated functions (ship, wharf/shed and rail/road) but relied greatly on workers' work co-operation, speed, precise movement and safety, particularly in the linchpin jobs of winch driving and hatch direction. Team based co-operation in the hold and between deckmen/shore work was also vital for speed and efficiency of the labour process. In contrast shore work was more routine being predominantly unskilled manual labour, although competency in building slings was important.

A wide range of manual, perceptual and knowledge competencies were required – all acquired through on-the-job experience. Only rigging and timber work were considered skilled, but the workers had no influence on the general view of waterside work in Australia. Unlike some countries, stowage and deckwork were never considered skilled in Australia. Finally, the labour process was directly affected by a wide range of contingencies; variability in ship arrivals, condition or type of cargo, climatic conditions, the interface with other modes of transport and so on. Thus transit sheds and warehouses acted as a buffer for stevedoring operations. Although direct loading (from carts, drays and later road and rail) was widespread on the waterfront.

The contingencies and variability on the waterfront affected labour demand and the nature of employment. The next section outlines the structure of the labour market and employment.
Chapter Two

2. The Labour Market and Employment Relation

The structure of casualism and employment in stevedoring are unique. This section briefly describes the nature of the labour market and employment relation, which are used to measure effects of changes in industrial authority and relations through the main chapters of the thesis.

In contrast to other casual labour markets, the irregular labour demand (each engagement is a new job) found on the waterfront waterside work was combined with short variable employment periods (few hours or days) and offered year round. Figure 2.3 sets out types of casual labour markets by the degree of regularity and labour market attachment. The irregularity on the Australian waterfront was compounded by seasonal cycles of demand.

Figure 2.3 Classification of Casual Labour Markets

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Degree of regularity of labour demand (engagements)</th>
<th>Effective period of employment</th>
<th>Market Attachment: worker &amp; employer</th>
<th>Eg Industries using casual labour</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Periodic</td>
<td>seasonal</td>
<td>temporary &amp; regular for both</td>
<td>primary, retail, tourist</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Occasional</td>
<td>variable</td>
<td>temporary &amp; irregular for both</td>
<td>building &amp; construction, entertainment, public works, sea-going marine</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Semi-regular</td>
<td>year round</td>
<td>-continuous worker -no employer or continuous employer</td>
<td>service, retail, office agencies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Irregular</td>
<td>year round</td>
<td>continuous for both</td>
<td>waterside work</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: adapted from Morewedge, *The Economics of Casual Labour*, Table 1, p.20

Irregularity yielded poor predictability of earnings and low annual earnings for workers. Since task and team-based competencies were key requirements for labour process efficiency, only long-term worker attachment could develop and preserve these skills. With year round labour demand employers were continuously attached, but they had to foster continuous labour market attachment by workers. To keep a stable availability of competent labour, employers invoked reciprocal attachments by hiring regulars in particular trades, sections or companies. This also yielded predictability of work and higher annual earnings for these workers. That is, the vagaries of irregular casualism for wage-labour were ameliorated by *mutual norms* of labour and employer attachment, albeit based on an asymmetric labour/employer reciprocity in the capitalist framework.

Labour utilisation (conversion of labour-power into labour) in production was necessarily structured by capitalist economic imperatives. Indeed *both* principles play a role in all market and workplace relations, but in stevedoring the control effects of both *continuously* flow to *all* stages of employment. Figure 2.4 outlines six stages of the employment relation in casual stevedoring, from labour supply to the point of production.

Stages 1 and 2 lie outside direct employment and thus normative structuring is much stronger. Inter-generational familial recruitment in labour supply for example, indicates the predominant strength of informal norms and practices. Stages 3 and 4 are pivotal elements in the wage-labour exchange process in which normative structuring and the effects of economic structuring are acutely registered. They are the key to the regulation of casualism, for they are closely linked to stages 5 and 6, centred in the workplace. Although the latter stages are dominated by an economic
rationality, a considerable role for informal relations remains in the labour process, as demonstrated above.

Figure 2.4 Stages in the Casual Stevedoring Employment Relation

<table>
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The close link between engagement and the workplace was constantly reproduced by the irregular nature of the labour market. Thus the exercise of industrial authority – spanning employment and the workplace – was constituted daily even hourly. For this reason, the extent to which direct employment could be avoided was critical for shipping companies. Thus the pattern of change in shipping and stevedoring and the organisation of production and industrial authority are critical to the analysis of the waterfront.

VII. Summary

In this chapter I have outlined the labour process framework of analysis, and pointed to two areas neglected by research and theoretical development. First, the shape of organisational change in which the labour process is embedded, and the attendant inter-organisational relationships. Second, the nature of industrial authority. I have suggested that key factors affect the labour process; the degree of coordination and integration of production with other functions, product markets and inter-firm relationships. Moreover, I have suggested that the nature of industrial authority and its relation to wider structures of political, social and cultural organisation is a key condition for the structuring labour. Finally, I have outlined a number of concepts to analyse the relationships discussed, as well as a model to gauge changes in the labour process, labour market, employment and the nature of labour action.

The framework is applied to the analysis of the central question and issues set out in chapter one namely, the relationships between the shape of work organisation, the production process and industrial relations in stevedoring focusing on the links between work organisation and methods and the organisational structure of capital; the social and political context of the workplace and the nature of industrial authority, control and industrial relations.

2 For a recent discussion in labour history see, P. Scranton, "The Workplace, Technology and Theory in American Labor History", International Labor and Working Class History, No 35 Spring, 1989, pp.3–22
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5. A full consideration of methodological issues lies outside the scope of this work, see K. Marx, *Tests on Method*, trans. and ed. T. Carver, (Blackwell, Oxford, 1975) for a collection and commentary on many of Marx's statements on these issues.

6. K. Marx, *Capital*, 3 vols. (Penguin, Harmondsworth, 1976). 1, Preface to the First Edition, p.92; Note that Marx, following Vico, distinguished human history from natural history. The former was made by humans and the latter was not. However Marx believed humans had not yet become conscious of the forces of history (and therefore did not purposively make it) and therefore saw his work as an exercise in natural history, see *Capital*, p.494, fn 4

7. Marx, *Capital*, 1, p.92. Both Marx and Frederick Engels had come to similar conclusions independently, in the early 1840's. A preliminary statement of their position can be found in their *The German Ideology*. (3rd edit, Progress Publishers, Moscow, 1976) esp. pp.27–102. A full and extensive consideration of the methodological position lies outside the concerns of this work, see *Tests on Method*, for a collection and commentary on many of Marx's statements on these issues. The secondary material is immense.

8. Marx, *Capital*, 1, Ch 1 sees 1.2, pp.128–137, begins with a discussion of the value of the commodity and the form of labour.

9. For Marx the concept of essence (or essential) was a combination of two dimensions, first, the distillation through analysis of the intrinsic connections that define the qualities of the phenomenon(s) in the real world; second is the detection of the underlying pattern of determination at the kernel of a specific form of appearance of that phenomenon(s). Thus essence is not a fixed and absolute axiom—a procedure he rejects, e.g. he dismisses Feuerbach's claim that religion is an essence of humanity for "the essence of man [sic] is no abstraction inherent in each individual. In its reality it is the ensemble of the social relations." *Theses on Feuerbach*, No.6 in Marx and Engels, *The German Ideology*, Addenda, p.516 [emphasis added].


12. Marx, *Capital*, 1, p.786


14. Marx, *Capital*, 1, p.284 "The simple elements of the labour process are (1) purposeful activity, that is work itself, (2) the object on which that work is performed, and (3) the instruments of that work"; *idem, Results of the Immediate Process of Production*, Appendix, *Capital*, p.981 [translators, *Results*]

15. Marx, *Grundrisse*, Introduction, pp.85–6, notes that the property, (the instrument or means of production) may be the hand or the store of practical experience, that is, "the factory gathered together and concentrated in the hand of the savage by repeated practice." In other words, ownership is not limited to only legal relations (but here includes biology and knowledge).


17. Marx, *Capital*, 1, pp.447,451–452 "when the worker co-operates in a planned way with others, he develops the capabilities of his species."

18. Marx, *Grundrisse*, p.587; *Capital*, 1, p.443; also ibid p.449, "co-operation... is entirely brought about by the capital that employs them.... Their unification... lies outside their competence"; *quote*, p.450

19. Marx, *Capital*, 1, pp.439,453, cooperation "constitutes the starting point of capitalist production. This is true both historically and conceptually."

20. Marx, *Capital*, 1, p.453, "co-operation itself... is the first change experienced by the actual labour process when subjected to capital" [emphasis added]; *idem, Capital*, 3, p.328 merchant capital, "mediated between spheres of production of widely different organisation, whose internal structure is still chiefly adjusted to the output of use-values" [emphasis added]; also *idem, Capital*, 1, pp.439,443

21. Marx, *Grundrisse*, p.585; *idem, Capital*, 1, p.455 [emphasis added] the form of co-operation based on the division of labour is the "characteristic form of the capitalist process of production... throughout the manufacturing period so called."

22. Marx, *Grundrisse*, pp.510–11. External markets were non-local, that is were national and international.

23. Marx, *Capital*, 1, pp.455–58. Littler *The Development of the Labour Process*, p.22 identifies a third path to manufacture—a combination of farm-craft workers, the division of domestic and economic work, and urban secondary occupations (eg in textiles rural secondary occupations were used since its industrial form only developed under capital. Watch manufacture was a variant of specialisation in a single craft). Watch manufacturing occurred after the demise of watchmaking as a sparatce craft, after tasks were already decomposed and allotted to "an immense number of specialized workers", then assembled into the final product, see *idem, Capital*, 1, pp.461–462. The separate operations were not sited in one factory as the pressure of competition from home workers and the negligible savings in plant utilisation for the capitalist (where separate tools are used) made it uneconomic.

24. In short, this was not a separate path. In addition, these industries provide some pertinent points on the organisation of production. In the case of textiles (eg Marx uses it clothes manufacture in large towns) Marx is refers to modern manufacture, a term he applied to the nineteenth century manufacture and not the origins of the form. In this case the creation of relative surplus population, urban poverty, subsistence wages and the like, had occurred. Similarly, formulae for the planning and organisation (proporionality rule and the like) were already in place, so it was merely a matter of determining the minimum labour cost and then employing it. Furthermore, modern manufacture in this form was an early example of the co-option of rural secondary occupations (based on non-guild skills) as domestic departments of the factory, discussed above. Littler overlooks these points.

25. Marx, *Capital*, 1, p.490, notes that manufacture, (based on the co-operative division of labour) grew up on the "broad foundation of the town handicrafts and the domestic industries of the countryside"; on his sceptical use of the latter term, see eg. ibid, pp.593,591,622, where he calls it the "so-called domestic industry"; pp.591,645 for in the 'modem' domestic industry (ie mid–19th century), the small workshop was an "external department of the factory" and their physiognomy is totally changed; also ibid, pp.596–599 for discussion of its position under modern industry.

26. Marx, *Capital*, 1, p.915. "The money capital formed by means of luxury and commerce was prevented from turning into industrial capital by the frugal organization of the countryside and the guild organization of the towns"; ibid, pp.479–500, Marx explains that although craft labour, the guild organisation was able to multiply in response to capitalist demands for a more rigorous division of labour, the close relationship between the direct producer and the means of production was still maintained thus limiting capital. In other words the particular labour–form of guild workshops was a fetter to capital; see also *idem, Capital*, 3, pp.334–35.

27. Marx, *Grundrisse*, p.510, inevitable the sale of the product by domestic labour becomes an "illusion" and their ownership of machinery and a "sham property".

28. Marx, *Grundrisse*, pp.506–8, the merchant estate carried the historic function of concentrating money wealth and extending exchange relations through trade.
Marx, Capital, 1, pp.247-248: "World trade and the world market date from the sixteenth century, and from then on the modern history of capital starts to unfold;" ibid, p.454, "from the middle of the sixteenth to the last third of the eighteenth century;" see ibid, Pt. 8, esp. chaps. 26-31, p.587-926 for an outline; idem, Capital, 3, pp.332ff. where the 16th and 17th centuries saw the rise of capitalism, "in its first period – the manufacturing period – the modern mode of production developed only where the conditions for it had taken shape...;" idem, Results, p.1022

Marx, Grundrisse, p.588, "Absolute, not relative surplus time predominates in manufacture".

Marx, Grundrisse, pp.586-587.


Marx, Results, p.1022


Marx, Grundrisse, p.587 [emphasis original]; see also idem, Capital, 1, pp.447,544ff Marx notes that assembly into a single site is a necessary condition for co-operation, but factories proper were associated with automated machinery in the automatic factory in modern industry (p.445).

Marx, Grundrisse, p.587 [emphasis original]; idem, Results, pp.1021

Marx, Capital, pp.461-464, heterogeneous was the assembly of independently made "partial products" or components, which shared no common tools or machinery; organic was based on "connected processes and manipulations" (p.161).

Marx, Capital, 1, p.486; relative surplus value refers to changes in the relative proportion of necessary and surplus labour in the working day; ibid p.432. Organic manufacture was based more on systematic cooperation.

Marx, Capital, 1, p.457-458

Marx, Grundrisse, p.511 [emphasis original]. This point is not expanded but recent evidence suggests that shipping was an industry where constant technical development did take place from the sixteenth century, see Richard W. Unger, The Ship in the Medieval Economy, (Croom Helm, Montreal, 1980). A description of glass manufacture, with comments on paper mills and metal works is also given in idem, Capital, 1, p.467.

Marx, Grundrisse, p.692 [emphasis original]; idem, Capital, 1, p.499; also ibid, pp.463,494,500-504. Marx points to two aspects here, first, machinery is the mechanism behind the use of the tool (eg spinning Jenny or stock ing loom), the multi-function aspect and, second, the "transporting" of articles from one operation to another, or the "transmitting mechanism", or transfer mechanism (the automated, continuous aspect), see P. Blackburn, R. Coombs and K. Green, Technology, Economic Growth and the Labour Process, (Macmillan, London, 1985) pp.21-32 for discussion of concepts.

Marx, Grundrisse, pp.687-688 where Say's definition of fixed capital – as tied to one kind of production and then cannot be diverted to another – is central to Marx's meaning, although in Capital, constant capital is used.

Marx, Results, p.1024, idem, Capital, 1, p.504; also L. Rob, Tools for the Job: A Short History of Engineering (Batsford, London, 1965)

Marx, Capital, 1, p.495; idem, Grundrisse, p.693.

Marx, Capital, 1, pp.389-90 "with the birth of large-scale industry in the last third of the eighteenth century", p.468, fn.19 where Marx mentions the polemic of Lauderdale against Smith and later Ure. He remarks that Smith [writing in 1776] was "the quintessential political economist of the period of manufacture", Lauderdale [1804] was "in the early days of large-scale industry" and Ure [1830] was "at a later and more developed stage", pp.493-494,497, where Marx notes that Wyatt's spinning machine (1735) "started the industrial revolution."

Marx, Capital, 1, pp.505-6,564, the latter quote in reference to the work of Ure published in 1835.

Marx, Capital, 1, p.291; idem, Results, pp.1019-1023,1025-1027; idem, Capital, 3, p.327

Marx, Charle, p.96 "But before distribution can be distribution of products, it is: (1) the distribution of the instruments of production, and (2), which is a further specification of the same relation, the distribution of the members of the society among the different kinds of production. (Subsumption of individuals under specific relations of production.);" see also Carver. Texts on Method, translation as "(Subsumption of individuals under determinate relations of production.)"

Marx, Results, pp.1013,1026-7 quotes respectively, also p.1027-8. "If supremacy and subordination come to take the place of slavery, serfdom, vassalage and other patriarchal forms of subjection, the change is purely one of form."

Marx, Capital, 1, pp.467-468

Marx, Capital, 1, p.465 [emphasis added]. The rules of socially necessary time for production of commodities appeared first under manufacturing. It was enforced by competition.

As the absence of the knowledge necessary to control with certainty the general chemical and physical conditions of the production process", [emphasis added], Marx, Capital, 1, p.465, fn.13; note also, Capital, 1, pp.467-68, the relation of the development of theoretical knowledge and production methods alluded to by Marx. Early manufacture saw only sporadic use of machinery, but nevertheless, the 18th C "...was of the greatest importance, because it supplied the great mathematicians of that time with a practical basis and an incentive towards the creation of modern mechanisms."

Marx, Capital, 1, pp.458-461,469,481

Marx, Capital, 1, p.548, "the machine... (in manufacturing) deprives the work itself of all content."

Marx, Capital, 1, pp.457-558, note that for Marx "Handicraft was... a technically narrow basis which excludes a really scientific division of the production process" [emphasis added].

Marx, Capital, 1, pp.549-550

Marx, Capital, 1, pp.341 "The length of the working day therefore fluctuates within boundaries both physical and social."

Ch. 10 details the political limitation of the working day, see pp.389-411

Marx, Capital, 1, pp.436-437,526-543,590-592,621,646. Intensification occurs in existing industries and subordinate forms.

Marx, Capital, 1, p.589

Thus it stands with other structural features – decennial cyclical of crisis, centralisation and capitalisation of capital, the reserve army of labour, new occupations and so on, Marx, Capital, 1, ch.25, esp. pp.762-802. Even the fragments in the Results centres on structural differences, implications and linkages of formal and real subsumption.

Marx, Capital, 1, p.305, fn.19 he writes that, "the distinction between higher and simple labour, 'skilled labour' and 'unskilled Labour', rests in part on pure illusion, or to say the least, on distinctions that have long since ceased to be real, and survive only by virtue on a traditional convention; and in part on the helpless condition of some sections of the working class, a condition that prevents them from exacting equally with the rest the value of their labour-power. Accidental circumstances here play so great a part that those two forms of labour sometimes change places.

Marx, Capital, 3, p.791-2 [emphasis added]

With particular reference to Britain as "the classic representative of capitalist production", Marx, Capital, 1, p.349 fn. 15; ibid, p.390, "England, the native land of large-scale industry."

Marx, Capital, 1, pp.549-550
Marx, *Capital*, 1, pp.412,504,508,526–527,531; "the isolated worker, the worker as 'free' seller of his labour power, succumbs without resistance once capitalist production had reached a certain stage of maturity." He also notes that machine design was directed at the "revolutions of the working class" (p.63).

Eg the regulation of the working day in Britain was based on particular industries, Marx, *Capital*, 1, esp. pp.389–411


Braverman, *Labour and Monopoly Capitalism*, Introduction, pp.9–11,13–14,17,24

Braverman, *Labour and Monopoly Capitalism*, pp.18–19, Braverman suggests some confusion over the concepts of means, and forces of production, "Marx did ... give a position of privity to the 'means of production' in social evolution", "there is no question that he [Marx] gave primacy to the forces of production in the long sweep of history"; ibid, pp.46ff

Braverman, *Labour and Monopoly Capitalism*, pp.85,215,287

Braverman, *Labour and Monopoly Capitalism*, p.156

He wrote, "two of the prime aspects of monopoly capitalism ... [which both] grow out of monopoly capitalism and make it possible.

Braverman, *Labour and Monopoly Capitalism*, p.252

Braverman, *Labour and Monopoly Capitalism*, pp.85, also "Taylorism belongs to a chain of development methods and the organization of labour..." [emphasis added]; "it arose as theoretical construct and as systematic practice"(p.120).


Braverman, *Labour and Monopoly Capitalism*, p.443 (although here the autonomy criterion is not explicit)


Braverman, *Labour and Monopoly Capitalism*, pp.90,107. Taylor's "system was simply a means for management to achieve control of the actual mode of performance of every labor activity from the simplest to the most complicated" (p.90).

Braverman, *Labour and Monopoly Capitalism*, pp.86–90,120–121, Braverman uses the term "abrupt psychological wrench" needed to get workers "reoriented to the new conditions of work" (Schmidt given as the example), clearly a reference to Taylor's 'mental revolution' dictum; cf. S. Watts, *Order Against Chaos: Business Culture and Labor Ideology in America 1880–1915* (Greenwood, New York, 1991) pp.113–128


Braverman, *Labour and Monopoly Capitalism*, pp.345–346,267

Braverman, *Labour and Monopoly Capitalism*, p.155; machinery gives management "the opportunity to do by wholly mechanical means what it had previously attempted to do by organizational and disciplinary means" [emphasis added].

Braverman, *Labour and Monopoly Capitalism*, p.307

Braverman, cites Taylor on the investment, see *Labour and Monopoly Capitalism*, pp.125–127, also, pp.329,347

The term control-system derives from general systems analysis and it application in many areas of management theory, particularly information systems. The usage here includes the subjective consciousness of power eg. A. Tannenbaum, *Control in Organizations* (New York, 1965), but is an expression of a pattern of authority, or the legitimated expectation of a right to design and implement such a system. (management perspective) and is that essentially codified rules derived from, and legitimated by, forms of authority. R. Price, *Masters, unions and men: Work control in building and the rise of labour 1830–1914*, (Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1980) pp.9–12


For a recent review see, Vicki Smith, "Braverman's Legacy: The labor process tradition at 20", *Work and Occupations*, Vol 21 No 4, 1994, pp.403–421


Kelly, 'Management's Redesign of Work' pp.31–33, quote at p.33.


C. Wright, The Management of Labour, p.10


Chandler, Visible Hand, pp.50–66

Chandler excludes the role of labour in Scale and Scope, see p.13, and therefore makes no mention of work reorganisation, scientific management, Taylorism or similar issues; ibid, pp.35–26,44–713 on sectoral and product diversity

Chandler, The Visible Hand, pp.87–88 was more concerned with the management structure of control–systems.


Chandler, The Visible Hand, pp.87–88 was more concerned with the management structure of control–systems.


Weber drew a distinction between organization and enterprise where organization is "a technical category which designates the ways in which various types of services are continuously combined with each other and with non–human means of production" and its antithesis as "intemperate activity", or activity "which is discontinuous from a technical point of view". Enterprise is a profit–seeking organisation, where the technical and economic coincide. Thus the term discontinuous organisation describes a form of profit–making based on separate units of production, see Weber, The Theory of Social and Economic Organisation, pp.221–223


In manufacturing, proto–factories and early factory production approximate this type, see Chapman, "The Textile Factory before Adworight", p.472.


Hannah, "Visible and Invisible Hands in Great Britain", pp.59–67. An 1859 decision, Mogul v. McGregor, upheld the right of a cartel of steamship lines to control the Very small ships and for such relations, M. Kett, "Regulations for Large Enterprises: The United States Experience in Comparative Perspective", in Chandler and Deams (eds), Managerial Hierarchies, p.165

Hannah, "Visible and Invisible Hands in Great Britain", p.66
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126 see Chandler, Scale and Scope, pp.8,15-36
137 Daems, "The Rise of the Modern Industrial Enterprise: A New Perspective", in Chandler and Daems (eds), Managerial Hierarchies, pp.205,211-212
138 Daems, "The Rise of the Modern Industrial Enterprise, p.212
140 Braverman, Labour and Monopoly Capitalism, capitalist work: "in a crime against the person and against humanity" (p.73), "violates human conditions of work" (p.139), provokes "natural resistance" (p.139), "a natural revulsion" (p.149) and "unbounded cynicism and revulsion" (p.151), precipitates "a crisis of the essence of humanity" (p.171), "rob[s] humanity of its birthright" (p.446) and so on.
143 Marx, Capital, 1, p.341
144 Marx, Capital, 1, pp.348,533-534, 610-612; there is an inverse relation between the length of the working day and intensity of labour (p.534).
145 Marx, Capital, 1, pp.389-411, quote at p.409
147 Marx, Capital, 1, pp.449-450,638
148 Marx, Capital, 1, p.637
150 Marx, Grundrisse, p.705; p.709, idem, Capital, 3, p.819
151 Dife, Industry and Inequality, pp.114-118
154 Marc Bloch, Land and Work in Medieval Europe, (University of California Press, Berkeley, 1967) pp.136-168, eg of the watermill, where the direct producer was denied choice of equipment due to the revenue implications of technology. Also the combination of rights checked covert activity, eg, the rights of communal grazing on grain fields precluded serfs harvesting all the fields or growing extra grain, as the cattle would destroy such crops, cited in Dan Clawson, Bureaucracy and the Labor Process, p.45.
155 Some larger, maritime based centres and the Italian city states were exceptions. Unwin associates handicraft production with towns (over villages), the guild with national markets and the industrial factory with international markets, see George Unwin, Industrial Organisation in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries, 2nd edit. (Frank Cass, London, 1957, [1904]) pp.2-4; he also associates guilds with the political development of 'civic virtue' in the West, idem., The Gilds and Companies of London, (Cass, London, 1966 [1908]), pp.5-14.
156 Weber notes that where economic appropriation is contested between the traditional leader and organised groups, compromise is common, Weber, The Theory of Social and Economic Organisation, pp.348-349.
157 Elizabethan, and joint-stock company, Fellowships and others, see Unwin, Industrial Organisation, p.13, chs 3,4,6 passim, in which these organisational forms are discussed; idem., The Gilds and Companies of London, pp.417-242.
158 Unwin, Industrial Organisation, pp.60,117 for cloths of various crafts, p.48 high fees in crafts to limit them, p.62 high fees in shoemaking and tailors, p.138 the numerous provisions of the Statutes of Apprentices, which signalled the beginning of national legislation and "reprented a vain endeavour to give fixity and permanence to a condition of things which already, in great part, belonged to the past" (p.139), The broad nature of relations that are detailed here.
159 Unwin, Industrial Organisation, p.149, eg regulations in the Paris leather crafts passed by curriers, cordwainers, saddlers skinners and others, which allowed warders to inspect incoming materials, also the requirement to produce a "masterpiece" (or proof-piece) judged by masters to demonstrate skill; also idem., The Gilds and Companies of London, p.265.
160 Terms from Unwin, The Gilds and Companies of London, pp.11-12
161 Marx and Engels, The German Ideology, p.73. Maybe contrasted with the mobility of capital in the twentieth century.
165 Unwin, Industrial Organisation, ch.1
166 Unwin, Industrial Organisation, passim; "the gild, as a craft on one hand and as a fraternity on the other, ... was a more or less conscious device for securing liberal of action", idem., The Gilds and Companies of London, pp.108-109.
167 Weber, The Theory of Social and Economic Organisation, pp.139-143,171-172 specifically lists craft and merchant guilds where the primary motivation is quality, prestige, honour, response to scarce opportunities for acquisition (p.143).
168 Unwin, Industrial Organisation, pp.4,173-4,194; idem., The Gilds and Companies of London, ch 17, pp.293-328; the restrictions of state sanctioned monopolies is also evident in shipping in the case of the East-India Company into the nineteenth century.
169 Unwin, The Gilds and Livery Companies of London, pp.262-264
170 Unwin, Industrial Organisation, pp.9-14, ch.7 and esp. ch.8.
161 Indeed Marx notes that the form of craft work and its command of skill and tools in he West were crucial to the development of capitalist production. He writes, "[t]he medieval guild system... was of such crucial importance in Europe for the evolution of both capitalists and free labourers," (emphasis in the original) and the "limits on production were kept by regulation" (emphasis added) and many other restrictions on production (number of apprentices, maximum amount of wealth etc) were balanced by "political rights, a share in the municipal administration, etc." These factors constituted an independence, but one not directed at the production of "exchange-value as such, not enrichment as such, but a life appropriate to a certain status or condition -- this was the purpose of the exploitation of the labourer" (emphasis in the original). Results, pp.1025-1034, quotes from pp.1029-30


164 D. Keat, The Theory of Social and Economic Organization, pp.121-122


168 Littler, "Understanding Taylorism", in A. Fox, M. Bray and M. Rimmer (eds) Foundations of Arbitration, (Oxford University Press, Melbourne, 1989) pp.64-79, also pp.81-84, also pp.87-90, also pp.101-102; the basis of intentionality over the resistance of other(s) is derived from Weber's formulation of conflict, Weber, The Theory of Social and Economic Organization, p.132

169 J. Parcell and R. Smith (eds), The Control of Work, (Macmillan, London, 1979); the basis of intentionality over the resistance of other(s) is derived from Weber's formulation of conflict, Weber, The Theory of Social and Economic Organization, p.132


172 M. Foucault, Discipline and Punish, (Penguin, Harmondsworth, 1977)


175 Burawoy, The Politics of Production, pp.29-30

176 Knights and Willmott, "Power and Subjectivity at Work," pp.540-550. However power does not constitute social practices.

177 D. Keat, The Theory of Social and Economic Organization, pp.121-122

178 Foucault cited in Knights and Vurdubakis, "Foucault, power, resistance and all that", pp.179-180.

179 Papers in Jeremy Bentham, "Power, Resistance and All That". 1979. As mentioned earlier, Foucault is critical of any claims to absolute human rights, see Knights and Vurdubakis, "Foucault, power, resistance and all that", pp.190-191

180 Marx, Results, pp.1032-1033 (emphasis original)


183 Price, Masters, unions and men, pp.7-17

184 Price, Masters, unions and men, p.59, also pp.61,68

185 Price, Masters, unions and men, pp.76-79

186 Price, Masters, unions and men, pp.10-11,58-62


188 Price, Masters, unions and men, esp. ch.2-5, pp.55-197

189 Price, Masters, unions and men, p.135

190 Price, Masters, unions and men, ch 4, pp.129-163

191 Price, Masters, unions and men, ch 6, pp.196-235

192 Price, Masters, unions and men, pp.129-137. This was also reflected in labour law (p.129). Similar legal changes occurred in Australia, see Adrian Merritt, "The historical role of law in the regulation of employment -- abstentionist or interventionist?": Australian Journal of Labour and Society, Vol 1 No 1, 1982, pp.68-85


194 Price, Masters, unions and men, pp.190-191

195 Richard Price, Labour in Modern Britain (Keat, 1986) pp.4-5; Littler and Salaman, 'Braveramia and beyond' pp.261-269

196 Price, Masters, unions and men, pp.257-258
Traditionally heavy loads (a few tons) were by "reeving" - a tripod of logs (about 6m high) through which a rope (2.5 inch) passed. Know as wharf labouring in the nineteenth century, it became waterside work around World War I. Federal arbitration generally standardised jobs.

Most Australian port development has been of the wharf type, see James Bird, *Evidence of W. T. Craig, OSRA, G. Stedman Jones, "Class Struggle and the Industrial Revolution".*


Donkey winches were used from the mid-nineteenth century, where 'donkeymen' were often seamen. Some trades, like Melbourne timber workers, performed all rigging well into the 1920s, using timber company gear and donkey winches on the waterfront, see Lowenstein and Hills. Donkey winches, pulley blocks etc., winches and cranes" (p.12) and also the rigging of sailing vessels also included the sails, the yards and booms required for New York see James Bird, *Seaport Gateways of Australia,* 1880–1924 (George, Allen and Unwin, London, 1985) pp.13–14.


List of callings required by the Queensland Industrial and Arbitration Act of 1932, and submitted to the Queensland Industrial Court by waterside workers in 1993. Many awards specified award classifications (usually by job titles). Some work was covered by other unions for various periods. The position of lighters and work on lighters has been included, as this work is part of the stevedoring industry.

Know as wharf labouring in the nineteenth century, it became waterside work around WWI. Federal arbitration generally standardised job classifications, whereas in Britain local variability has dogged the industry.

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A key issue at the formation of the Seamen's Union in Melbourne in September 1972 was "the present injurious system of employing seamen in conjunction with stevedores". A resolution banned this - "no sailors shall be employed by stevedores discharging or loading [ships], either in the hold or on deck", quoted in Brian Fitzpatrick and Rowan I. Cahill, *The Seamen's Union of Australia 1872–1972: A History* (Seamen's Union of Australia, Sydney, 1981, pp.7–8). Waterside workers took over most of this work on steamships, but employers still sought to avoid additional wages payments to waterside workers, see, for example employers claim for 1928 award Clause 13 (a) where *inter alia*, "Employees shall be free to employ seamen in removing hatches [ie. covers] and beams ...", WWF Federal Office, ANU/NBA, T62/46/3.

The square is the area immediately below the hatch; the hatchway is the opening down from the hatch to the 'tween decks (usually several) where the cargo would not fall in transit, Lowenstein and Hills, *Cargo Handling at Ports*, p.23-4; see also De Haan, Rigging, Equipment, and Outfitting, p.134, and ship's crane from Cunningham, *Cargo Handling at Ports*, p.25. The second aspect is cost, although hydraulic and electric winches were available in the 1920s, steam was preferred due to the lower cost. Ship cranes were more expensive still, and took up deck space, see Cunningham, *Cargo Handling at Ports*, pp.3-4; see also De Haan, Rigging, Equipment, and Outfitting, pp.48-50 for a more detailed technical description of the wire, derrick and winch sizes and loads, and De Haan notes that hoisting speed was "considerably higher" for a single acting cargo winch (p.136).

This is the general term in Australia, although in one case in Australia the name stevedores was used for shipworkers in general, eg. the Port Phillip Stevedores in Melbourne (a branch of the WWF) although stevedory was a company or foremen in Australia. In British stevedore applied almost exclusively to shipworkers, notably the London Stevedores, who were seen as skilled. Ship and shore work was deeply entrenched in Britain, see J. Lovell, *Steam and Dockers*, esp. ch.2 pp.30–58; Eric Taplin, *The Dockers' Union*, pp.12–13; Wilson, *Dockers*, pp.43–4.

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Making up slings required competency in building a balanced sling - cargo did not fall - various sling types included the netted sling (usually made of rope), a single circle sling (of rope or wire) using a hoist (rope with loops on both ends each placed around the cargo and the floor, the hold often had more than one hatch; the wings is the area not under the hatch. Generally earlier this century ships had 4 hatchways, Cunningham, *Cargo Handling at Ports*, p.23; see also Capt. James Gaby, *The Restless Waterfront*, Antipodean, Sydney, 1974, p.34.


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Two-wheeled trollies carried a maximum of approx. 222kg (Scow) for 2 or more packages and 270kg (600t) for a single package. Four-wheeled trollies (or trays) were lower than six-wheels and were later pulled by tow-motors. The six-wheel had two larger wheels on each side of the trolley and one smaller wheel at each corners (making pushing it loaded across rough planked wharves easier). A 2 man load was about 675kgs (15cwt), 1915 Order, *Under the Hook*, p.53–54.

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252 In Qld and NSW. In some cases, as in Geraldton WA AWU men cleaned ships holds and handled sugar in many Qld ports. Receivals and some shed work was on the wharf, and a few SA ports, loading and discharging was done by AWU men.

253 Wool dumps handled and prepared wool (and hides etc) for storage (sorted, graded by skilled wool classers, then repacked, pressed, and stacked ready for sale) and export. Wharf storesmen received from rail or road by manual unloading (by hand truck) and handled the wool in stores. Physical proximity often created demarcation disputes; eg. in Brisbane the New Farm/Teneriffe and Hamilton areas receivals/unloading were performed by permanent and casual wharf storesmen and clerks; in Sydney, areas were Walsh Bay, Darling Harbour, Pyrmont and Woolloomooloo; Victoria Dock in Melbourne, and Commercial wharf and Docks in Port Adelaide. The first wool sale in Brisbane was on 19 October 1891, Barton, *Jubilee History of Queensland*, p.377, other capitals were more important in this activity.

254 Cunningham, *Cargo Handling at Ports*, p.12. These were Federated Clerks' Union (FCU) members.

255 In many ports overseas, at this time, the major proportion of cargo was lightered, an estimated 80-90% in London and 65% in New York, Cunningham, *Cargo Handling at Ports*, pp.100–101

256 Eg of Vacuum Oil Co. used lighters over road transport in Sydney circa 1900–1920s, affidavit by Charles A. Blumer, Chief of Shipping Dept., Vacuum Oil, p.3, 29 July 1915, File No.16 of 1915, ACAC, *Australian Archives*, B207/ST/17/X62; also CAR, Vol 9, 1915, p.312. Before 1900 lighters were used in many river ports, eg early Brisbane larger ships discharged to lighters in Moreton Bay, off Dunwich and the Pile Light, as the Brisbane River was too shallow, E. V. Stevens "Development of the Port of Brisbane", unpublished typescript, 1952, Oxley Library (OL), p.6. Perth Wharf Lumpers Industrial Union of Workers members only engaged in loading and unloading lighters, (work that “differed considerably from that performed by members of the Waterside Workers' Federation in the other principal ports of Australia”), where the employer argued that on this basis they should be excluded from the provisions of the award (esp. wage rates) after they joined the WWF. The Court rejected this, ordered award wage to be paid and fined the employer £4. CAR, Vol 9, 1915, p.308,121–23; for lighter in small ports in Qld and NSW see Michael Richards, *The North Coast Run: A History of the North Coast S.N. Co. Ltd* (Wass & Co., Sydney, 1967) p.17

257 G. R. Henning, "Coal from Newcastle: Some Assumptions of the Melbourne Trade in the 1870s", *Journal of Australian Studies*, No 18 May, 1986, p.47. Equipment was installed by mining industry companies or government, not stevedoring or shipping companies and coal vessels were generally operated by collieries, *RC on Strikes*, (1891), Minutes of Evidence, Q.428, p.13; Fredman, "Coal from Newcastle: Aspects of the trade with California", *Australian Journal of Politics and History*, Vol 29 No 3, 1983, p.440 the Californian export trade reached its height in the 1880s, when the equipment was installed.

258 It has been said that "all cargo was handled by hand truck and ships' winch". E. V. Stevens, "Development of the Port of Brisbane", p.5 writing about the 1890s, but little changed in essence until WWII and after.


260 Little, *The Development of the Labour Process*, p.46
Part 2

Stevedoring Industry Formation, Shipping and Informalism in Colonial Development

Distance of the Australian penal colony from Britain and between settlements on the coast made the colonies highly dependent on shipping. Given the paucity of land transport, shipping and stevedoring rested on a natural monopoly in the transport market through most of the 1800s. This Part examines the formation of the Australian shipping and stevedoring, its organisation, functions and industrial relations to the late 1880s. Chapters Three and Four address shipping and stevedoring respectively in the period up to the 1850s, and Chapters Five and Six address the same issues from 1860 to 1890. These chapters emphasise the role of regulation, organisation and social norms in shipping adopted from Britain in the structure and operations of stevedoring, while indicating key factors in colonial development of the industry.

Lack of size and the limited volume of shipping in the colonies were important conditions for the small scale of stevedoring up to the 1850s. This was aided by the traditional British model in the ownership, organisation and control of shipping as well as the coordination of water transport system and the organisation of labour and employment in this period. Chapter Three outlines the British model which was also found in the colony. It argues that the discontinuous organisational structure characterised water transport in general and shipping in particular. On this basis the emergence of stevedoring is examined in Chapter Four. It argues that the fragmentation of employment and labour organisation in stevedoring impeded the development of continuous market attachment, but sustained traditional skills and local labour organisation. Chapter Five turns to the organisation of shipping after the 1850s goldrushes, focusing on companies, technology, cargoes and employers. The 1860s and 1870s marked the industrialisation of shipping based on steam energy, which simultaneously stabilised employment on the waterfront and undermined the basis of work and employment. Chapter Six focuses on the stevedoring labour process, labour organisation and industrial relations, and demonstrates the tensions of early industrialisation. Industrial changes permitted growth in traditional labour organisation – resting on the informal pattern of industrial authority – but also accelerated contradictory economic pressures on stevedoring as a co-ordinated organisational structure in shipping emerged. Pressure from capital costs, ship scheduling, turnaround time, and competition associated with industrialisation undermined the basis of informal authority. The techniques of formal industrial relations emerged. The 1890 maritime strike signalled, rather than caused, deeper change to a new formal institutional system. Parts Three and Four chart the relation between informal authority and a formal industrial relations system up to 1935.
Chapter 3
The Institutions of Shipping, Capitalism and Early Colonial Shipping

I. Introduction

This chapter examines the factors which influenced the early formation of stevedoring in Australia. Stevedoring is intimately associated with overseas and intercolonial shipping in Australia since little river or canal shipping developed. The recognition of stevedoring as an identifiable and separate industry was shaped by the pattern of organisation and development in shipping. In Britain shore-based functions of materials handling, storage and warehousing were more important in the nineteenth century rather than shipping. Indeed the diversified origins of stevedoring are due mainly the organisational pattern of occupational and economic interests, mediated by the British state.

The Australian colonies fell under the jurisdiction of British law, adopted British maritime traditions, structures and practices and its economic development was closely tied to, and dependent upon, Britain. This chapter examines the institutional organisation of British shipping and stevedoring, a pattern reflected in colonial Australia and beyond. In this chapter I will argue that shipping was organised by merchant capital as a discontinuous organisational structure. Chapter five will address the process of 'industrialisation' after the 1850s.

Development of Australian shipping occurred in three areas, or trades, namely, overseas, intercolonial and local shipping. Thus stevedoring was organised and performed under the customs of the trade and more importantly different economic pressures and patterns of development. I demonstrate the interrelation of economic activity and authority, for clearly shipping is needed for the development of stevedoring, organisational form was most important in its effects on stevedoring.

The next section will first discuss the institutional pattern of British shipping and stevedoring, at the beginning of the nineteenth century. Section III will then examine the political and economic context of shipping and stevedoring in early settlement. Section IV concludes the chapter.

II. British Shipping and Stevedoring: Structure and Authority

The structure of the British maritime industry is important since shipping and law predominated through the nineteenth and into the twentieth century. Moreover, developments in Britain served as the backdrop for the Australian colonies, and crucial differences can be more easily demonstrated. Finally, later British ownership of companies operating in Australia influenced management policy and style.
I will show that the relations of authority in shipping were based on pre-industrial forms of ownership and organisation. Economic and social relations between shipowners, brokers, ships' husbands, merchants, masters and stevedoring workers, formed a complex network at the beginning of the nineteenth century. Each function in commercial trade and transport formed a separate and economically insulated labour process or discontinuous structure with no integrated production process or unified control—system existed. The key point is that stevedoring work was performed by a range of different workers where similar, but local social relations operated. The creation and recognition of a separate stevedoring labour force required a fusion of labour from number of sources, in a process subject to contradictory pressures, towards homogeneity and heterogeneity.

1. The Social Organisation of Shipowning

Before 1800 shipowning was a neither a recognised occupational category, nor industrial activity or enterprise, such as millowner, or colliery owner. Ownership fell into one of four main categories; merchants using ships as an intermediate phase in the realisation of commercial profit, masters or adventurers/privateers operating independent vessels for an income, brokers owning ships as an extension of their brokerage activities, and finally, fishing and whaling.

1. Partnership Shares – 64ths System

In vessels below about 100 tons individual ownership (the 'sole trader') was common. Over this size, ownership was generally dispersed through partnerships, a common ownership pattern generally. Partners were usually merchants, masters, and 'sleeping partners' (or silent investors), and conventionally held a proportion of shares totalling sixty—four – known as the 64ths system. Three characteristics emerged; every ship had a unique set of owners (often more than twenty), many individuals had multi—ship holdings, and the division of shares was usually relatively equal. Thus majority shareholding (more than 32/64ths) was uncommon, although the initiator of the project usually acted as the ship's manager. Partnerships spread investment risk (ships were often lost), and tied together a complex social network of commercial and other interests. They thereby fostered economic, political and social alliances which then characterised British commerce. Shipping companies did not exist given the lack of a legal framework and an economic function.

Individual ships were an avenue of investment and commerce where various middlemen (and silent partners) associated with trade in commodities (such as merchants, agents, dealers) invested in ships as a logistical necessity for trade. Shipmasters and families were also significant investors. Generally shipowning was an investment open to an expanding British commercial class and was reflected in the absence of purely industrial shipping enterprise. It was a high risk venture, since ship construction was often inferior, equipment was inadequate, navigational knowledge limited, charts scarce and vessels were at the mercy of the environment. Costs were high since wood and hempen materials required continuous maintenance and refitting, were costs often exceeding the ship's value. This prohibited profitable ship operations, without significant additional profits derived from the cargo/trade activities to offset long term risk and costs. To further minimise uncertainty, merchants sought monopoly control over trade and trade routes.
2. **Monopoly Trading Companies**

The state underpinned shipping partnerships, through mercantilist policies of licences and regulations where authority was delegated to directors of 'Chartered Companies' to operate in various trades, to their own advantage. They created monopolies by excluding competitors. Moreover, the companies operated without regulation of load limits, repair or maintenance, safety, or even registration of ships (not introduced until 1786).\(^{17}\) In short, the state established monopoly institutions where revenue legitimately flow to politically defined groups. Rather than face competitive markets, these companies often *created* markets. Thus shipping was potentially a lucrative, if uncertain, investment.

The British East India Company (BEICo) was an example of these monopolies. Established by charter in 1600 it controlled all shipping and trade to the Indian and Pacific Oceans and thus Australasia. The BEICo did not own ships, yet it developed a relatively complex administrative structure to regulate shipping.\(^ {18}\) Rather it granted licences to partnerships to operate under the Company charter, in return for rights to the revenue generated\(^ {19}\) and denied licences to all others. Regulations maintained a range of restrictions. For example, from about 1660 a system of 'hereditary bottoms' vested in owners of a particular ship the right to build a replacement thereby continuing their original charter. Owners, or 'ships husband', could sell the right of command to the master in the Company's service (according to charter regulations) which then became hereditary alienable property. Not surprisingly, the choice of master was influenced by personal and political connections overriding considerations of competence or experience, yet owners had to be mindful of the risk this involved.\(^ {20}\) In short, widespread exclusionary practices were used to restrict access and maintain the flow of economic revenue.

Pressure to restrict these restrictions grew during the industrial revolution at about the time of Australia's settlement. The authority of the older merchant/commercial interests waned the exclusionary regulations were abandoned from the 1790s.\(^ {21}\) And although such changes expanded the BEICo's access to ships, new owners, and cut costs, many old practices continued. Masters retained some rights to trade, giving them significant income above their salaries, a point discussed below and ship's husband retained the right of selecting commanders and officers.\(^ {22}\) Finally, while the practice of having on ship's manager per vessel (to oversee its affairs) continued, chartering was increasingly handled by ships' brokers. The latter first appeared in the 1690s.\(^ {23}\)

3. **Brokerage and Chartering**

Ship brokers handled many ships. Ships did not run by schedule, but often spent weeks in ports, discharging, gaining and loading cargo (or undergoing extensive repairs). The functions of shipbrokers centred on commercial tasks, such as securing cargo, arrangement of freight and charter-party (contract to hire the ship)\(^ {24}\) agreements, handling customs clearances and insurance. Ships were chartered in part or as a whole, by the month, by the voyage or by the ton.\(^ {25}\) Davis identifies a long term trend away from time to tonnage chartering as owners became aware of the specific operational aspects of ships.\(^ {26}\) Shipbrokerage gained status after 1800 as shipping expanded\(^ {27}\) and the number and demands on owners grew. Brokerage expanded to meet this commercial demand, and they also invested in partnerships for financial and social gain. To maximise their financial returns, they coordinated cargoes with regular sailings. Thus brokers became shipowners, and with closer links to operations than hitherto, and indeed the new shipping
companies. Hyde writes in reference to Harrisons of Liverpool in the 1820s, "the inducements which the growing port of Liverpool offered to young and adventurous spirits who wished to seek their fortunes in the business of shipping." The Harrison family, like others entered shipping through merchant, shipbroking and agency activities. The status of brokerage and the social recognition of the economic functions of shipping rose in tandem.

In sum, the State deregulation lowered the political barriers to entry to shipping as economic barriers fell with declines in the real cost of ships. The state thereby opened new areas for capital accumulation in which brokerage became an important aspect of the water transport system and a source of authority in shipping and stevedoring. This role of London brokers was a key issue in Australian shipping for the next century. As shipbrokers became shipowners, then shipping companies they assumed greater authority over stevedoring.

2. Masters, Command and Authority

The ship's master played a critical role in the operation of ships and associated work, evidenced by contemporary manuals. The authority of master was nested in the "general usage and custom of the country" which gave masters sole rights of management of the ship in the contract with owners. Masters were clearly distinguished from other crew members. They were assumed to be party to an individual commercial, rather than employment, contract with owners, and were accorded a significant degree of commercial and managerial authority. For example; masters could seek reimbursement from the wages of seamen for losses through their negligence for the masters was contractually bound to keep the vessel in good order. They could enter into charter-party agreements without notifying owners, although they were bound by any owners' charter-party. They could set fares, passenger numbers, quality and quantity of catering, nature of crew victualling, and many other conditions.

That is, dual demands fell on masters - they held operational responsibility requiring technical knowledge and experience (to sail, maintain, keep safe the ship and cargo and so on) as for a modern employment contract. They also performed managerial functions (getting cargo, dealing with merchants, foreign exchange, weights, recruitment; victualling, maintaining accounts, and so on) with key commercial responsibilities. The balance between the two functions depended on the trade. On shorter, established trades masters were often stripped of management functions and autonomy (as ships' husbands, agents or brokers supervised these areas) whereas on longer, new trades, such as the Australasian and Southern Pacific areas, masters retained or even increased their responsibility and autonomy.

To ensure compliance with ship husband's or broker's instructions on long distance routes, joint ownership and the sale of rights of command co-ordinated the economic interests of owners and masters. These gave the master responsibility for the ship's profitability and thus his own financial return. It was more to share joint returns than merely steal or abuse the ship, given the relatively rapid deterioration in ships. Much of his income came from his own investment in the ship and its cargo. For East India Company ships, owners received a guaranteed contract (ie a fixed income, and any additional revenue flowed to the master, officers and crew. In practice the master received the largest share. Finally supercargoes were often employed to handle the commercial functions of the merchants cargo.
Moreover, cultural ties of honour permeated authority in this economic relation. According to Eastwick, the agreement (or charter-party) between the owners and the Company were unwritten and depended upon, "the custom of contract [which] was so well-established that both parties mutually relied upon it, and considered themselves bound by its ties of honour to observe their implied customary engagements". Even when sale of command was abolished masters (and other crew) retained rights to substantial income from private trading using the hold space allocated to them (usually calculated as a tonnage amount). In practice, officers often monopolised this space. Alternatively masters could receive a percentage of the freight paid for the ship's cargo. For example, when Captain Robert Eastwick was given command of the Rebecca he remarked that,

"This was a brilliant appointment ..., and equal to at least £4,000 a year, for, in addition to pay of five hundred rupees per mensem, I received two and a half per centum commission on all freight, goods and passengers, ... which was an exceedingly profitable arrangement".

Masters in BEI Co service could net more than ten thousand pounds from a return trip to the East. Similar financial arrangements were open to British Navy captains as well as the profits from the capture of a 'prize' (a merchant ship of a hostile power).

Endogenous social recruitment - often sons of partners - into the maritime service combined with extended periods of 'training', either through formal indentures or not, also consolidated social and moral bonds between owners and masters. Eastwick was apprenticed to a ship for a period of four years and BEI Co. regulations specified minimum periods of employment for future masters. These practices moulded the normative values of masters in a manner consistent with the objective interests of owners. The access to income outside that available through direct employment was a common form of economic distribution at this time. Officers income was potentially high, although direct salaries were relatively low for most. Maritime personnel were not generally paid while in port and Eastwick estimated that only a second officer's salary was sufficient for a comfortable existence.

Thus access to income derived from social status and social function, rather than predominantly from occupational competence and performance in a modern sense. Clearly competence was required, but it was subordinate to social closure of status. Competence and authority of master was reinforced by their complementary interest with owners in profitably and safely completing a voyage. Moreover, this system minimised the money investment (ie wages) by shipowners by tying income of masters to the perquisite of trading. The potentially high returns for masters was dependent on their ability to profit or not from trading and was not a direct cost to owners. Finally, in terms of labour the master's command encompassed total disciplinary authority at sea. The origin of this authority in medieval food distribution and later naval warfare gave it both moral and military rather than merely economic force. The powers of enforcement were extensive (physical coercion as in flogging, withholding wages, fines and dismissal). The merchant seamen Acts between 1750 and 1800 and after retained significant power of masters over seamen. Not surprisingly seamen's working conditions were very poor, particularly when masters sought to maximise their revenue through cutting back expenditure on victualling.

In summary then, ship masters possessed a significant amount of power at the turn of the nineteenth century. The social, economic and legal conditions of eighteenth century British society provided successful masters with status, access to high income and the customary and legal right to
exercise a formidable range of managerial and coercive authority. How did this affect the functions of loading and unloading ships?

3. Organisation of Labour and Authority in British Shipping and Stevedoring

This section will examine the connection between shipping, merchants, port development and stevedoring work. First, I will demonstrate that the shipping labour process invariably covered stevedoring resulting in ships’ crews performing much stevedoring work particularly in smaller ports. This was affected by shipping technology, the nature of shipping trades and the volume of trade. Second, given this, I will examine the institutional framework in which stevedoring and stevedoring workers developed on shore. Political factors and the material conditions of production shaped developments up to 1800 when shipping emerged in the Australian colonies.

1. Ships and Manning, 1600–early 1800s

The size of ship crews was large by modern standards because of operational manning requirements and protection. The size of ships by tonnage gradually increased from the emergence of modern shipping around 1600, to the latter 1700s but manning slowly decreased relative to ship size. The rate and nature of this change quickened about 1800 and distinguished this from the earlier period discussed here. Later developments will be examined later in the study.

The operational manning requirements were determined by the size and area of sail (more men for larger ships and sail area) as more topmen were needed to rig and work sails, given a constant technology of square rigging and hempen ropes. The square rigged, three masted configuration was a technical advance in shipping after 1600. After this more complex square rigging, better ship design, sail cut, mast construction, hull efficiency, structural strength and other factors, which all contributed to raising the technical limits on ship size. Importantly, the competencies needed for rigging sails were identical to rigging spars and derricks for loading and unloading operations.

Manning included skilled craftsmen such as carpenters, sailmakers, caulkers, cooperers (and their mates) for maintenance work, given the paucity of shore facilities, seamen to tender livestock and gardens for food on long voyages, poulterers, butchers, cooks and bakers, many stewards and even private servants. Inadequate commercial facilities saw supercargoes undertake commercial transactions for merchants rather than the master or senior officer. Finally, manning also included the need for protection against the ever-present dangers of piracy and privateering, particularly in the East and during open hostilities. All ships therefore carried guns, sometime dozens, and often travelled in state-organised convoys, especially in the American trades. Of course the crew listed above invariably also operated guns, but additional men were often carried.

The decline of these dangers by the end of the eighteenth century, and better commercial networks contributed to countervailing factors in decreasing crew size, especially for gunners and the supercargo position, which became rare. Overall the technical or operational functions in shipping remained closely enmeshed with commercial functions and masters retained authority over both as indicated earlier.

As international trade grew, better commercial agent networks emerged, the volume of cargoes available and supply of ships increased. It became easier to secure cargo to operate vessels
at full capacity, thus the preference of owners for smaller ships shifted to larger ships. In other words, the restrictions created by market demand on ship size (rather than technical possibilities) was lifted and this triggered a series of changes in the economic base of shipping. Shipping became more predictable. Larger vessels with greater capacity utilisation lowered the operating costs per ton of freight and the need for multiple port visits. In turn there emerged a demand for quicker loading, less start-up time, reduced port time and quicker round trip times (from two to three, three to four and so on return trips per annum). The cycle of fewer port visits, reduced start up time, more high volume and single cargo freight, reduced port time made larger ships were more financially attractive to operate.

What effects did these changes have on crew size? Apart from the decline in the need for gunners the most significant technical effects came from higher demand for shipping services. For example, the greater sail area needed for larger ships was addressed by increasing the number of smaller sails, more easily handled from deck with tackles and running gear. Although the sail complement was more complex, implying a higher level of worker competency, the total sail area was handled with fewer men. Davis estimates a "dramatic reduction" in crew size in many trades from the mid-eighteenth century, amounting to a 50 percent rise in the tons per man ratio.

But for Australia key factors made technical change slow and uneven. In the Eastern trades, East India Co. vessels remained heavily manned even after 1800. The institutional inertia of the Company was buttressed by its monopoly and the relatively undeveloped nature of many eastern trades including the lack of maintenance facilities over its long distances.

In sum the argument emphasises four issues. First, from 1600 to the late 1700s the manning requirements for rigging, defence, victualling and maintenance saw crew size increase in British vessels. Second, the relative size of crews declined as ship size increased, particularly since security needs of merchant shipping declined in the late eighteenth century. Third, technical changes also lowered manning, although this was slow for Eastern trades. Nevertheless, ship size and tons per man increased steadily. Indeed, technical knowledge in design and rigging related to manning was available in the early seventeenth century but was not diffused due to the problems of defence needs and undeveloped markets. Finally, economic and trade growth increased market demand for shipping in the decades up to 1800. Market growth lifted the economic limitations on larger ships and permitted the diffusion of technical advances.

2. Ships' Crew and Stevedoring

The work of the ships crew in port was dependent upon a range of conditions. Large ports have docking and maintenance facilities, in others the crew performed this work. Also in small and undeveloped ports often seamen performed stevedoring work when ships lay out at sea and worked lighters or barges. When trade was irregular or labour demand peaked the crew worked the cargo, sometimes alongside shore labour. The work covered manual carrying of cargo along a gangplank (no rigged hook, wheeled cart or truck used). Also the apparently high literacy rate of seamen clearly added a necessary skill for recognising, recording and handling cargo as it was loaded and unloaded.

Since generally seamen were not paid in port, there was an incentive for them to perform this work. The crew was a ready labour force especially if shore-based labour was minimal or unavailable. Indeed prior to 1800 stevedoring was often specified in the charter-party, with a legal
obligation on the master to take responsibility for loading and unloading.\textsuperscript{61} The master (or first officer) supervised stevedoring operations and the seamen's articles required men to remain with the ship and obey officers' commands,

till the voyage is ended and the ship discharged of her cargo, ...[which included] their duty by day in discharge of the cargo, and keep such watch by night as the master or commander of the ship shall think necessary.\textsuperscript{62} [emphasis added]

In 1697 the City of London authorities granted coal heavers fellowship status provided that,

no Porter nor freeman of London nor Seaman belonging to such Shippe be excluded the said Werke [ie unloading coal] ... as ... the Coletrade shall require.\textsuperscript{63} [emphasis added]

In sum, for logistical, practical and legal reasons, stevedoring operations were closely tied to the shipping labour process. Seamanship was linked to stevedoring work and the master's wide operational and commercial authority flowed easily to stevedoring. With overlapping skills and physical proximity it is not surprisingly stevedoring was customarily performed by seamen. This was reinforced by legislation and customary form of commercial contracts.

However, as noted in reference to maintenance work, large or established ports saw a higher degree of specialisation. Here not all stevedoring work was performed by seamen. Shore labour performed stevedoring work as part of a related but separate area of work. I will now turn to an examination of these workers in Britain.

3. \textit{Shore Labour and Porterage}

The final component of the stevedoring labour force was shore labour. They formed the core of the recognition of waterside labour and stevedoring in the 1800s and became the only stevedoring workers after 1900. These workers provided the continuity of social organisation of labour that shaped workers' industrial organisation over this period. A brief outline of their historical role will be sufficient to demonstrate the model underpinning worker action and consciousness discussed later. Initially shore workers were called porters and London provides an exemplar of their early organisation.\textsuperscript{64}

Shore labour developed in large ports and established merchant centres, where workers specialised in carrying, or portage, particular goods or in certain trades. Porters, lumpers, and river-based lightermen and heavers performed stevedoring work for centuries before 1600.\textsuperscript{65} London porters transported goods (also letters, etc) between warehouses, vessels and road carriers. Most performed at least some waterside work.\textsuperscript{66} As trade expanded so did the demand for porterage. The resultant large labour force created two main problems for the London municipal government; providing transport services and regulating labour for public order. The City adopted a traditional organisational form, namely, fellowships and guilds.

Fellowships were a form of labour organisation constituted by civil authorities to regulate unskilled work characterised by instability and fluctuating demand. They were of lower status than guilds\textsuperscript{67} and lacked the independent recognition of guilds (through self-governing corporate status). Fellowship porters were regulated by civil authorities more for reasons of public order than purely economic function. Although after they were established some porters engaged in active organisation to extend their role, their monopoly was often attacked by merchants.\textsuperscript{68} Civil authorities retained authority over fellowships, particularly in the regulation of numbers, since the "City looked upon porterage as a public service which it owed to merchants".\textsuperscript{69} Nevertheless some
of these waterfront organisations assumed craft status, such as the Thames lightermen, and watermen.\textsuperscript{76}

In sum, they provided an institutional framework of authority over these workers, placed porters in a social and economic hierarchy and, served as a political control system. In return the porter fellowships assumed collective liability for damage to goods.

4. Regulation of the Work

The governance of porters' fellowships and societies (eg. Billingsgate, Tacklehouse porters, London coal-heavers) was under close direction by Court of City Alderman. The porters still pursued the same strategy of securing and maintaining the legal rights to their occupational territory as did guilds. They served various merchant trades or certain city localities and were directly employed by merchants, wharfingers, agents, warehouse owners and shipmasters. Waterside work was performed by Tacklehouse porters (handling English merchants' goods), waterside ticket porters, Aliens' porters (handling foreign merchants' goods) and the Billingsgate or fellowship porters\textsuperscript{71} that followed the pattern of merchant development.\textsuperscript{72} Regulation covered entry to the work, wage rates and working conditions in the porters goal of restricting unlicensed porters while ensuring licensed porters were available. Rates for work were set by the City or Parliament, and the small variation by trade meant that in practice there was a standardised the cost for merchants, shippers and warehouse owners.\textsuperscript{74} Finally work methods and conditions were fixed by complex set of conditions and rules which ensured equality of work for licensed porters. A brief description illustrates its nature.\textsuperscript{75}

The authority of the governing body allowed it to determine the structure of employment and the organisation of labour. The following discussion is based on Figure 2.4 in chapter Two. Access to the labour market (Stage 1 of labour supply) was tied to the local organisation of labour. Sponsors and references were required for membership which tended to be in a local section of the industry and merchants were obliged under threat of fines to employ licensed porters (if available)\textsuperscript{76} thus limiting access to Stage 2. Porters were tied to defined places for engagement (or 'stations') that were policed by a Ruler or Assistant. They required permission from the Society to transfer to another, which meant that sufficient labour was allocated to all city locations. Hours of work were limited with no Sunday work.

In general terms engagement rules (Stage 3) had the twin goals of ensuring sufficient opportunity to offer for work and eliminating unfair distribution of engagements. Waterside porters were often employed by the gang, at the wharf, where higher status Tacklehouse porters acted as contractors.\textsuperscript{77} Their Society, formed in the early 1600s, was to take charge of ticket porters. Although both could act as contractors, only licensed waterside ticket porters could be employed. The engagement of more than one team was prohibited and all porters had to the work for any engagement, thus preventing workers choosing only the best work. It also ensured work was completed, in effect the first continuity rule.\textsuperscript{78} Billingsgate porters operated a seniority-based roster system where names on a 'slate' rose as men where employed in turn (called 'turn labour'). Attempts to avoid the 'slate' system meant loss of pay and even suspension.\textsuperscript{79}

Work allocation (Stage 5) was based on equality of work and limitation of effort. Each work team appointed a bookkeeper from among the group to inspect tickets, record names, turns of work, and act as paymaster (collecting the payment for the work, usually piece work based, and paying the
men for recorded work done). All team members (including contractor if one existed) had to work. Effort was limited by standardising loads (based on fixed sized basket\(^8^0\)) and a seniority system gave older workers entitlements to easier work. That is, the distribution of work and level of effort varied according to service and capacity. As Stern points out, the roster system, "prevented collusion between a Porter and buyer and seller of a commodity and guaranteed strict impartiality: ... seniority ensured the older and feeblest Porters a share of work."\(^8^1\)

This regulation had a key economic and institutional effect extending into the nineteenth century. Since a contractor was required to work in the team and only one team could be engaged on a vessel the growth of contracting was effectively curbed. That is, municipal regulation provided a political limitation on an economic function.

Waterside labour was largely unskilled\(^8^2\) and poorly paid, but they could still claim perquisites or customary rights that added to their income. For example the London waterfront coopers and lumpers kept a percentage of the goods they handled, gang leaders were often permitted to take leftovers, sweepings and scrapings for later use or sale, men who brought down a new barge to London could sell the rudder, all practices that augmented workers' income.\(^8^3\) George concluded that "[t]he ideal [of political support of regulation before 1800] ... was to be a privileged body, limited in number, under civic control, with fixed rates of pay out of which a fund could be raised for sickness and old age and for their widows and orphans."\(^8^4\)

This incorporation of small scale privileged sections formed a critical base for the exercise of industrial authority. Local specialist knowledge and competencies became the organisational basis of claims for skill in later periods. This characteristic mode of pre-capitalist labour organisation flowered in the early transition, but the industrial revolution heightened claims to skill and autonomy as capitalist rationalisation intensified. While corporate porterage disappeared practice after 1800 it did provide a legacy as a mode of association and organisation on the waterfront. Its legacy of urban communality was a key resource for worker informality and power even though it municipal and national political supports were stripped away. Fellowships left a web of informal practices, which became a vital enabling condition for worker authority. Equally important in the claim for authority was the organisation of the labour process, to which I will now turn.

5. **Organisation of Labour: Teams and Gangs**

As outlined in the chapter two the labour process required considerable (simple) co-operation – that provided the material structure or *method* of work, essential for the production of use-value and represented an historical *form* of production where the conditions of production and the distribution of value are tied to a specific value-form.\(^8^5\) Until to the end of the eighteenth century, these two aspects of stevedoring production (by shore labour) generally co-existed. What does this conceptual difference mean in practice? The material work was grounded in teams and but employment was based on gang labour.\(^8^6\) Prior to 1800 teamwork predominated, generally under the authority of porters, after this date gangs came predominant. The transition reflected the deepening of capitalist relations, but was also based on the changes in the physical structure of ships described earlier.

Smaller vessels restricted physical operating conditions which limited teams to about four to six men, particularly in the hold along the plank. The size of ships and the scale of operations
generally limited team size to no more than ten men. In addition, in the small teams the bookkeeper could monitor and tally the work of each man.

Simple co-operation in teamwork utilised, first, labour indivisibilities, that performing tasks which require cooperative labour, such as heavy lifting logs (requires men at each end) or heavy boxes/casks/containers/etc (which more than one worker to lift) and, second, decreasing labour-power inputs for a given output. The co-operation between the hatchman and winchman, or men stacking cargo are examples of this phenomenon, where the performance of individual and separate tasks raised output by virtue of simple co-operation.

The regulation of team formation took into account the interests of workers and needs of employers. Teams were spontaneously made up on board ship given three conditions, first, the short period of time allowed to form the team (called the 'beginning'). Second, rules ensuring team continuity and, third, roster rules for individuals not teams, for example, the Billingsgate porters' roster. These rules were reinforced in the late eighteenth century, particularly the continuity rule. For example a worker needed the written permission of the Society's Governor, to leave a job (unless fewer than six drafts remained) under penalty of forfeiture of wages, fine of 10s, and exclusion from further work until the ship was cleared. On coastal work (called 'jobs') porters could not act as contractors, since all team members had to work on an equal footing. Similarly tasks were allocated equally, accounting for seniority and ability – heavier carrying was often allocated to younger and junior workers and easier tasks to older, senior or handicapped men. Finally, the team functioned as a distributive mechanism for income, as the rates of payment were fixed by the state, either by the city authorities or Act of Parliament.

In summary, the fellowship organisation delegated authority to direct workers through the relative autonomous operation of teams in the labour process. Manual work methods and close cooperation were the material conditions of production in stevedoring up to the end of the eighteenth century. It was an appropriate form of production where commercial enterprises and the labour process operated relatively autonomous by where sustained by state policy and cultural practice. Team work permitted workers to enforce rules of equality in work tasks, effort and payment and it limited labour contracting.

The rise of gang work signalled a key change in the structure of employment and work in British stevedoring in the late 1700s. Early porters gangs formed more than a century earlier, but their origins are unclear. Two aspects are important here; first, it appears they emerged as a worker response to labour market expansion and uncertainty. Their internal organisation replicated teams, indicating a continuity of worker authority in the workplace. Second, the employers' view of gang altered in the 1700s, when its role as an expression of worker authority disappeared as it was subsumed under employer control-systems after 1800. Nevertheless the gang was a vital objective condition for the continuity of worker authority in the workplace in the nineteenth and after. I will briefly examine these two aspects of gangs.

Early records of the Billingsgate and Tacklehouse porters before the 1600s do not mention gangs. Unlike teams, gangs were permanent associations of men "working on joint account," described by the Court of Chancery as "partnerships at will". Partnership gangs formed prior to engagement, not spontaneously at the 'beginning' of each job. Membership often required an entrance fee (sometimes over £100) and gangs often owned their own equipment and, importantly,
generally worked on only one quay, although competition between gangs was known. The price of partnership positions was determined by trade conditions and potential gang income. From Stern's evidence, gangs were larger than teams, usually from 4 to 20 men, with an average of 10–12, comprising two teams (even four) and was engaged as a unit. They were seen as "the undoubted aristocracy of Ticket Porters" based on their "earnings and opportunities." As such they represented a key organisational form of direct worker authority.

Why did larger gangs emerge? Expanded trade and demands on labour for heavier work on large vessels appear as the immediate reasons. Expanded trade provided more work and occurred decades before the size of vessels rose. When larger vessels and cargoes appeared the larger gang unit, was more suited to the work. Gang members also secured higher earnings than as individuals from the better returns from efficiencies of simple co-operation and from technological change (rudimentary mechanical devices, such as hand winches and wheeled trucks) as well as maintaining authority over the labour market. Semi-permanent market attachment to an employer or trade, increased their continuity of work, earnings and security. Wharfingers and merchants often favoured gangs. Although portage wage rates changed only slowly, in practice, gangs came to set rates for particular trades. In short, the incentive to form gangs was high in the face of increasing capitalist labour market fluctuations and uncertainties, rather than labour process pressures.

The internal gang organisation of gangs replicated that of teams, with task allocation emphasising equality of work and effort. The 'housekeeper' or gangmaster role (allocated tasks and tallied work performed) was rostered and earnings were determined by the tally of work. Members were often fined for not presenting for work every day and there was a tendency to hereditary recruitment. This aided internal discipline based on familial relations. Dismissal was an ultimate sanction since the payment entitleme only covered the share of equipment. Gangs secured additional income through the claiming prerogatives associated with the goods handled. Finally, on retirement a porter would receive either a lump sum payment of his share of the assets of the gang or an annuity to the same value. A gang position was thus more an investment in a partnership enterprise than an employment of service contract.

In summary, the gang form of organisation continued the exercise of worker authority over the work and income as seen in teams. In this case, worker organised gangs responded to expanding market relations, greater volume of work, and tentative steps of on shore technical change. It allowed workers to cushion changes, by altering unit of labour organisation to retain authority in the labour process. The evidence indicates that gangs (and earlier teams) prior to about 1800 were employed directly by the service user and contracting was limited to porters who relied on cooperative partnerships or customary practices in any case. That is, State sanctioned institutional regulation limited any change in the form of labour organisation.

This calls into question two kinds of argument. First, Braverman's assumption that direct worker 'control' in the workplace as necessarily based on the possession of skill and 'craft control'. Second, Littler's view that the gang form was necessarily associated with internal contract and the hierarchical gang-boss structure. His view that partnerships and democratic gang organisation on the waterfront formed only under exceptional circumstances fails to address the contextual features of workplace organisation.
The attitude of employers was initially antagonistic, especially from City authorities in 1600s. Aldermanic opposition saw porterage as a public service and thus incompatible with gangs. They were banned amongst the Billingsgate porters and ticket porter gangs were dissolved by as an illegitimate combinations. But by about 1700 employers recognised the benefits of gang work for as Stern writes "Merchants found their work handled more quickly and efficiently by gangs than teams combined ad hoc." Accordingly employers secured agreements with specific gangs on a semi-permanent basis, the City dropped prohibitions and gangs spread to all quays from Tower Dock to London Bridge by the 1790s. They were then officially recognised by the Court of Fellowship Rulers and admissions, resignations, work, demarcation disputes and so on were all regulated. The Fellowship preferred to incorporate and regulate gangs rather than ignore them given the rising pressure against corporate restrictions by this time.

So far I have argued that gangs emerged as teams appeared an inadequate form of labour organisation in the face of expanding market relations, cargo volumes and ship size. Initially they were unofficially organised by workers but gained tacit recognition by employers, then official recognition by the City. The economic advantages outweighed the political resistance to gangs. Employers preference for stable gangs was registered in agreements but workers retained the high level of workplace authority as in teams, and the economic advantages from simple co-operation and initial technical change.

But the material changes in the labour process about 1800 had already altered the customary division of benefits. This occurred in two ways. First, through changes in the nature and pressures on cargo handling. Larger vessels allowed the size of cargo – casks, chests, barrels, boxes, – to rise as well as new cargoes of heavy machinery. Moreover pressure to lower loading and discharging time arose. With little or no compensation in terms of regulated handling (wage) rates, porters either needed more men or intensify work effort for the same earnings. When these rates changed slowly merchants could gain more by simply changing the nature and size of packaging. Furthermore, variation in trades and commodities extended seasons (eg. new strains of oranges increased the season by several months) or raised labour demand in the peaks of work, both increasing the size of gangs. The effort bargain in porterage was thereby significantly altered.

The second change was that, gangs themselves became contractors, and employed casual labour. Two forms of this emerged; either gang leaders gave up direct labour or a middleman organised labour under contracts with shipowners or masters. Certainly by about 1800 at least half a dozen porters were operating as full-time contractors. The demand for casual labour in peak periods opened the door for cheaper non-porter labour. Middlemen were best known in the coal trade where Thames publicans also acted as coal contractors, known as 'undertakers'. There links with shipmasters and men made this function easy and was common in the eighteenth century. 'Undertakers' formed their own corporate organisation. However, their treatment of coal heavers was harsh, with conditions of employment of heavers and coal-whippers lower than other porters.

The City porterage regulations against contracting soon became redundant. Contractors replaced the Fellowship in organising labour, but the workers' authority in the workplace remained resilient largely due to the spread of gangs as the unit of labour organisation. Table A3.1 indicates new porter gangs after 1800. While Fellowship porter gangs still remained those outside it became
the dominant in the trajectory of change. The expansion of capital through economic growth and market relations altered the institutional conditions of labour organisation and so the function of gangs in the new context. Gangs retained worker authority but also allowed an ever greater influence from the capitalist economic rationality. Paradoxically Fellowship gangs proved to be a transitional structure in the transition of forms of society.

In sum this section has outlined key changes the material structure of labour process (larger ships, volume and size of cargo and technology), the shift from teams to gangs and the rise of contracting, all of which were responses to economic pressure in shipping around 1800.

New transport demands of an expanding capitalism, particularly for port facilities and cargo handling came with economic growth from the industrial revolution. London merchants had complained for over a century about the inadequate facilities little was done in the face of vested interests of older charter merchant companies, wharfingers, trade organisations as well as porters and river workers. But new trades emerged and new merchant houses sprung up, many of which did not share the privileges enjoyed by the older companies. Many did not employ licensed porters.

Growing political pressure on municipal and national government saw not only legislative changes for shipping (owners, chartered companies, masters and seamen discussed earlier) but also on expenditure on port facilities. New wet docks, wharves, storage facilities and the like were built. These changed the role of shipping and seamen (who became subject to new legislation as a problem group at the end of the eighteenth century) and shore workers. These indicated the breakup of economic institutions of mercantilism in shipping. On the waterfront new facilities brought new categories of labour – the modern dockworker.

6. New Shore Labour: Dockworkers

The British State financed port infrastructure development through legislation establishing monopoly dock companies around 1800. Significantly the new docks were vested with rights to employ labour outside the existing porterage system. New dockworkers in British stevedoring formally removed the exclusive rights of fellowship and society porters to provide waterfront labour. Dockworkers performed loading, discharging and warehousing work, taking work from seamen and porters.

The new dock companies controlled docks, port canals (as in London) and warehouses and had the responsibility to ensure more efficient loading and discharge of ships in ports under their authority. Since it was compulsory for ships in particular trades to use these facilities. Crucially the state redefined its responsibility to providing stevedoring and labour services for efficient service. Whether this was the case in practice is another question. Loading and discharging fell under the control of harbour–masters and dock–masters appointed under the dock company legislation. Yet while in port ship masters were still required "during all the time [the ship was] employed in unloading or discharging, actually remain on board, and superintend, aid, and assist, in such unloading and discharging; and ... [failure to do so] pay any sum not exceeding £50, nor less then £20".

The complexity of major British ports increased as they handled more cargo for the British market as well as transhipments to continental markets. The rise in cargo volumes that passed through British ports were handled by more commercial enterprises. Both of these condition
encouraged greater specialisation in specific trades on shore and between ship and shore work. With the new docks built after 1800 the rise of stevedores, or contractors completed the takeover of loading, stowage, unloading and discharge of vessels in most ports through the nineteenth century. The expansion of dock labour in most British ports followed the rise in trade arising from the industrial revolution.\textsuperscript{111}

Despite the altered role of the state, labour organisation in the range of occupations in the new London docks (such as the Customs weighers – a gradation of preference men down to irregular extras.\textsuperscript{112}) was based on the existing practice of public employment. The generally followed many fellowship practices, albeit under the direct authority of the dock companies. Dockworkers were mostly employed by the day (there was provision for hourly work) and they worked in gangs directly employment by the dock companies until the 1840s. However from the 1840s to the 1870s contract labour was introduced and extended by these companies. And as Pattison shows, continuous and relatively stable dock employment was destroyed by the introduction of contractors by shipping management.\textsuperscript{113}

In brief, therefore, dock labour was a new form of organisation which circumvented fellowship regulation of porterage and its range of privileges. The state increasingly withdrew from fellowship regulation. Porterage came under most pressure from dock companies, as trade and ports expanded. (the Port of London extended beyond the jurisdiction of the City as dock construction reemerged after 1850), wharfingers, merchants and other middlemen (eg. coal 'undertakers') all established new labour arrangements all of which rendered fellowship privileges irrelevant despite their survival to 1894.\textsuperscript{114} Gang work and contract labour thus became characteristic of the organisation of porter and dock labour after 1800. Deepening capitalist relations reshaped the organisational conditions of economic activity, including the organisation of labour in the workplace in the nineteenth century. This trajectory of change furnished the conditions for the crisis of authority in the labour process that culminated in the 1889 dock strike in Britain and the 1890 maritime strike in Australia.

4. Summary

In this section I have argued that British shipping was characterised by a diversity of ownership, a relative insularity of function between shipowners, ship operations, merchants, brokers, fellowships and later dock companies and warehouse owners. Water transport thus involved uncoupled labour processes based on customary employment. In larger ports stevedoring was based on state sanctioned industrial authority focused on the local level. Prior to 1800 production was dominated by commercial interests which enjoyed significant protection from the state.

Access to work was based on social status and patronage at higher levels and informal, familial and community links at lower levels. In this system access to income was linked to employment and rights or customary expectations of income appropriate to the type work performed. Patronage also secured political authority which secured flows of income for those in high status positions. For workers, the work performed, skill and state regulation defined and maintained their collective position. Thus porterage was regulated in a manner similar to guild craftsmen. Fellowships granted workers significant industrial authority but the system was
dependent on political authority. That is, skill and 'craft control' were political as much as economic or technical.

This system was transformed by capitalist economic growth. Shipowning partnerships and Fellowship porterage survived in name only as new forms of economic and labour organisation, new industries and occupations marginalised the older forms of organisation. With economic growth came changes in the nature of State policy – from mercantilism to laissez-faire. Yet work practices on the docks and elsewhere still relied heavily on existing custom. The British experience provides the background to developments in Australia.

III. The Foundations of Shipping in Australia

This section will examine the development of shipping in the Australian colonies up to the 1850s and provide the context for the discussion of stevedoring labour in the next chapter. I will argue that the pattern of shipowning in colonial Australia was based on the significant social recognition of traders as a commercial class. As in Britain the social and occupational category of shipowner remained undeveloped. Shipowners in general were not directly connected with operational shipping and associated labour processes, but were predominantly merchants concerned with commercial activities.

Growth in shipping was constrained by British economic policy and the penal nature of the settlement. Shipping was important industry as a vehicle of 'frontier' expansion as well as the only viable transport mode, especially over long distances until the twentieth century. The role of the government and private trading gave way to the greater influence of merchants and traders albeit within the structure of a strong state.

What were the implications for stevedoring? From the discussion here, a number of points will be expanded in the next chapter. First, the institutional structure of shipping was small and relatively dispersed and the operational aspects of shipping and stevedoring were conducted by maritime personnel. Second, as in Britain, shipowning was based on partnerships for particular commercial ventures and vessels. High profit rates were (at least potentially) available lowering the economic pressure for the 'efficient' use of labour. Third, the combination of the authority of maritime personnel over stevedoring, and weak economic pressures saw the use of customary working methods and levels of effort. In contrast to Britain the role of convicts made it difficult for stevedoring to be recognised before 1860. The fourth and final point is that stevedoring was not part of a unified control--system, since seamen, convicts and free labour were used.

The small size of the colony, limited time pressure, low technical level, use of seamen and fluctuating labour demand for shore labour, were all conditions that rendered stevedoring a secondary consideration for employers of such labour. Each area of employment developed varying degrees of autonomy in the workplace, which provided the social and 'space' for a relatively autonomous organisation of labour in later decades. In the next chapter and later chapters I will argue that this autonomy of labour organisation drew heavily upon the British experience, but encountered different contexts, conditions and capacities.

This section will first consider the impact of British economic policies on colonial shipping, second the organisation of colonial shipping, and third the stages in the nature of colonial shipowning. The next chapter addresses early colonial stevedoring.
Chapter Three

1. British and Colonial Policy and Strategy

Australia was founded as a British penal colony, some twenty thousand kilometres from Britain. The Australian settlements were part of a larger pattern of population movements sparked by the quickening pace of the new economic dynamic in Britain. Convict transportation represented one aspect of this wider pattern. Whatever the validity of interpretations of settlement, as purely a penal settlement, as a geopolitical stratagem, or as a source of raw materials, the colony was characterised by a centralisation of political power, exercised largely by military command.

Britain and its rival European colonial countries sought political and economic hegemony in the Pacific and Indian ocean regions. Indeed the consignment of convicts to Port Jackson may be seen as a strategic manoeuvre which provided forced convict labour for the British naval and military presence in the region rather than or only as a device to rid Britain of unwanted criminals. The French were the main rivals in the late eighteenth century, later Russia and Germany were seen in a similar light in the nineteenth century. Until the final defeat of the French in 1815, instability characterised European political and military relations, extending to the South Pacific. In these conditions, British policy sought to prohibit contact between the new settlement and any territories of foreign powers. Thus shipping was restricted.

The search for economic and political hegemony itself precipitated mercantilist policies by Britain and other European states. The notion of deterrence for crime was also linked to the then current ideas concerning the role of labour/lower orders in society. These social and ideological conditions will be discussed in the next section. The most significant commercial influence on the early development of the colony was the position of the East India Company. As noted earlier the Company was a creation of mercantilism, and its fortunes illustrates the nature of changes in shipping and stevedoring for the purposes of the argument advanced here. Its exclusive rights to Eastern trade granted in its Royal Charter of 1600 was supplemented by the Navigation Laws of 1651. British built skippered and crewed ships were given a monopoly in trade to all British colonies. It also saw more cargo flow through the hands of British merchants and ports.

As noted the dismantling of the Company's monopoly and restrictive provisions began in the 1790s. It quickened after 1800 and was finally abolished in 1834. The Navigation Acts were repealed in 1849. The effects of the Company's charter will be examined in the next section, but suffice to say here that these aspects of state policy were important considerations in the early operations of the Australian penal settlements.

Another major factor in such restrictions was the need to contain convicts in the new settlements. If escape was impossible the deterrent value of transportation was correspondingly increased. Restrictions on contact with shipping in the colony, whether British or foreign, decreased the possibilities for escape.

The East India Company Charter and internal security were of major importance in the Governor Phillip's instructions for the Port Jackson settlement. Shipbuilding was prohibited as he was told "do not on any account allow craft of any sort to be built for the use of private individuals which might enable them to affect such intercourse [with European nations]". In addition, since Norfolk Island was also to be established as penal settlement, Phillip instructed Lt. King, commander of the settlement, that, "no boat over twenty feet in length is to be built on the island.
No ships were to call, unless in distress, without a permit, any vessel driven ashore is to be destroyed.\textsuperscript{129} These instructions were repeated for later Governors.\textsuperscript{130}

Robert Campbell commented on the adverse effects of East India regulations in 1812, in his assessment of the scope for trade between the South Pacific, the colonies and Asia.\textsuperscript{131} Indeed criticism of the regulations developed soon after he set up formal trading operations in the new settlement. In 1805 he sought to challenge the prohibition on importing goods to Britain without an exemption certificate issued by the Company.\textsuperscript{132} Although he failed, the political pressure against such Company restrictions continued. In 1813, the Charter was amended to permit ships of over 350 tons to trade in previously restricted areas (except China).\textsuperscript{133} The settlement gained little advantage since trade with the colony using large ships was unprofitable. Thus in practice overseas trade was barred from the colony.\textsuperscript{134}

As a result trade was confined principally to local shipping, which slowed colonial economic links to wider commercial markets. This blockage (eg. for Campbell's seal skins) slowed foreign exchange earnings and probably kept local prices higher than otherwise. Indeed, general shortage of many commodities and staples, such as sugar and tea, normally assured good profits for foreign vessels that did call at Port Jackson in violation of British policy. American vessels were the main source of this type of shipping, with over forty ships between 1792 and 1813.\textsuperscript{135} Although the arrival of more than one vessel with the same cargo would easily flood the market and so result in losses.

The close relation between economic interests and politics was another effect of British policy.\textsuperscript{136} Commercial interests in the settlements remained dissatisfied with the Charter arrangements after 1813. A Sydney public meeting condemned the restrictions and petitioned the British government in January, 1818. The petition called for the liberalisation of trade and shipping regulations and broader civil liberties.\textsuperscript{137} The agitation later in the decade continued to be concerned with trade, specifically focused on shipping restrictions.

The pressure from commercial interests (including from several emancipists) over the issues of trading and legal rights continued over the next few years, with the permission of Macquarie. The recession of the middle of the decade had brought to light the inadequacies of the colonial legal structure, notably in the area of debt and commercial agreements. Colonial traders and prominent residents voiced support for currency reform to the local administration.\textsuperscript{138} The lack of access to export markets, inadequate supplies and high prices were all points of criticism in a 1819 petition.\textsuperscript{139} A further petition was presented to the colonial authorities and the British Government. Demands spawned by practical issues spilled over into general concerns of legal and political rights.

The organisation of merchants and 'emancipated colonists', as they called themselves, indicated a growing autonomy of the collective economic interests of the embryonic commercial class. Moreover colonial politics moved beyond the personal factionalism of the end of the Bligh governorship towards the articulation of collective economic interests. Although 1260 people who signed the 1819 petition represented a cross section of "free Settlers, Merchants, Land and Householders" their substantive demands rested on the economic structure of the colony.\textsuperscript{140}

In response the British government set up the Bigge Inquiry in 1819 to assess the colony. Commissioner Bigge was himself sceptical of the real effects of British law on emancipist
merchants, asserting it was more "the principle of the law, ... not the practice," which had caused them hardship.\textsuperscript{141} He was particularly critical of their business methods and the degree of support and social acceptance they had received from Macquarie.\textsuperscript{142} Bigge's censorious reaction to the social position attained by ex-convicts in the colony reflected the social mores of 'respectable' society in Britain and the colony. Notwithstanding these comments, the inquiry and resultant recommendations established the path to self-government. The first legislature was established in 1823. In 1819 the British government further relaxed the mercantilist regulations of the East India Charter, by lifting the restrictions on the size of vessels trading between New South Wales and Britain. In 1822 British ships were permitted to trade directly with the colonies.\textsuperscript{143} These and other reforms indicated a transformation in British political economy.

The web of mercantilist regulation, faltered under new economic pressures and gave way to the philosophy of free trade and free colonisation.\textsuperscript{144} Dunn summarises, that "[n]ew commercial laws had overthrown the Mercantile System: by 1830 all the British colonies were free-trading and British supremacy no longer rested upon a closed colonial Empire."\textsuperscript{145}

In sum, the combination of penal security needs, strategic occupation and British state regulation all restricted shipping for the first decades of the new settlements of New South Wales and Van Diemen's Land. Early restrictions confined commercial shipping to local areas and probably slowed access to wider markets for colonial products. The East India Company straddled both commercial and strategic interests, but its appearance as the external face of the British state was stern and uncompromising.\textsuperscript{146} But after about 1800 the political landscape was steadily redrawn, as the political mood in Britain and the colony, saw the dismantling of the East Indian monopoly. The emergence of separate political identity was however only beginning in the colonies. Shipping then developed more local pressures of necessity and politics albeit still under the umbrella of British maritime companies, law and traditions. The next section examines the pattern of the growth of colonial shipping in light of these early restrictions and British traditions.

2. Colonial Practicalities, Trade, and Shipping

What effects did the organisational and authority relations in shipping have in the new settlements? British policies just mentioned encountered the practical problems of establishing a penal settlement at a great distance from source of supplies and political authority. This section and the next will examine the pattern of development of shipping in Australia until the middle of the nineteenth century. I will argue that, in common with the British pattern discussed in Section II, merchants and other commercial interests were an important social and economic group. Merchant partnerships and then shipping companies in the 1830s, were key interests in the colony, even into the second half of the century. Their commercial activities provided the economic dynamic of the new settlement. Shipping was vital for early trade and the expansion of shipping provided demand for stevedoring labour and the nature of the labour process. It is for this reason that the pattern of colonial shipping and shipowning must be explored.

1. Policy and Context in the Colony

Given the geographical position of Australia, shipping was the only means of transport.\textsuperscript{147} Yet as noted, under Colonial Office instructions Phillip was compelled to restrict shipping and prohibit the construction of vessels.\textsuperscript{148} The colony struggled to secure even basic food requirements in the early years and was forced to devote resources to basic demands. The British
shipping policy was, in practice, seen as inapplicable to the successive Governors who faced these practical problems.

However the Colonial Office required the new colony to be self-sufficient. Poor soils in the Sydney Cove area and lack of sufficient skilled agricultural workers soon forced officials to search for new areas of agricultural production and hence transport. Severe penalties for theft of food were also introduced as continuing poor agricultural productivity, crop unreliability and consequent regular food shortages. The government was forced to charter ships to import food supplies from India, the closest administrative centre of the British empire, despite restriction on trade with India because of the policy of self-sufficiency. Finally, under these harsh conditions, colonial officials welcomed the arrival of foreign vessels with supplies.

In brief, the pressing considerations of food and basic raw materials took precedence over the views of a remote Colonial Office and local shipping expanded. Firstly, there were few alternatives to water transportation. Road-building was slow, expensive and difficult, especially since troublesome and unskilled convicts worked on government road gangs. Second, food was transported from nearby settlements of Parramatta, Hawkesbury and Newcastle. Supplies were also shipped from overseas. Third, the influence of trading on the pattern of shipping. Several Governors saw the expansion of trading as a method of breaking the commercial monopoly enjoyed by a small section of the population. Colonial trade and the commercial class it represented, produced the same contradictory pressures of economic and politics found in Britain, albeit in a small colonial penal outpost.

The earliest traders were New South Wales Corps officers who monopolised the market until about 1800. Their access to foreign exchange combined with the restrictions on external contacts by private residents allowed officers to purchase the entire cargo of visiting ships and local goods, and then set their own prices. Their influence over shipping and stevedoring was limited since they only chartered vessels and didn't seek authority over direct operations.

Their monopoly over goods produced the debilitating effects on settlers commented upon by several Governors. These effects were three-fold, first, most free settlers could not survive the economic pressures created by the officers' monopoly. Second, this adversely affected production and pressured the state for relief. Third, a range of abuses of the convict system emerged which generally lead to a lack of discipline. To break their monopoly Governor King allowed local settlers to purchase goods directly from ships that arrived at the settlement. This began the breakup of the officers monopoly of trading, which was completed when some emancipists and free men began trading soon after 1800. They became the centre of the economic dynamic in the colony.

The failure of public agriculture lead to the introduction of private farming. The higher productivity of the private sector both relieved and magnified the contradictions in the role of the state. The demands on the government for self-sufficiency was confronted the reality of low productivity and food shortages. Thus the position and use of labour and the supply of capital quickly became dominant issues in the colonial economic dynamic to overcome these problems. The colony was thus subject to its own relatively autonomous capitalist dynamic. The form of labour and capital formation were therefore vital aspects of the society.
In the first decade most labour was theoretically owned the state, but in practice, the cost of maintaining convicts was prohibitive. A system of assigning convict labour to free settlers, as long as the settler provided food and shelter relieved pressure on the state stores, but it also multiplied tensions between state regulation and the demands for economic freedom. Convict labour was relatively inefficient, since extracting work effort proved difficult. The apparent low cost of labour, actually favoured large employers over small, since the former could profit from larger scale organisation.

The initiative in capital use quickly moved to private merchants, largely through the superior resources of such traders and the official hostility to the officers. But with continuing poor harvests, high prices and market dominance allowed private traders to also set monopoly prices from colonial production. In addition, credit was used to exploit small settlers. Governors such as Hunter and King were critical of the officers in their dealings with ordinary free settlers, not understanding the growing role of the nature of the capitalist dynamic. The officers personified the dominance of capital as an economic form, which was not relieved by the ascendancy of a nascent commercial class from 1800 to the 1820s. The distress of poorer settlers remained, as Bigge noted. Traders and merchants (and continuing trading by officers) merely extended the social group which gained access to the market and the potential for capital formation. Macquarie's attempt to break the dominance of some merchants in their intermediary role in agricultural production (through a number of regulations and practices after 1812) failed.

In sum, the growth in trade in the colony centred around food and basic provisions, as a response to practical problems and the debilitating effects of the officer monopoly. The private commercial activities which later developed, albeit under the auspices of the state, did little better in aiding small settlers. Merchants, whether emancipist or not, and larger settlers, accumulated significant capital. Growth of trade generated demand for shipping and therefore stevedoring labour. Growth came from economic expansion rather greater productivity, not surprising given the relatively primitive nature of the technical basis of the colonial settlements. This also characterised growth in transport and shipping, which came predominantly from the use of more vessels and labour rather than a significant change in its technical base. I will show below that the overseas shipping showed marked increases in manning ratios for shipping, but the small size of colonial shipping meant that productivity was not increased until later in the century.

2. Government shipping

Given the penal and strategic nature of the settlement, it appears surprising that the state played a small role in colonial shipping. The distance of the settlement from Britain made transport and communication a problem. Phillip soon realised that water transport was the only practical form of communication. He had several small vessels constructed for servicing ships, such as a 'flat' constructed for the unloading of ships. Over the next decade a lighter was built and several long boats for the same purpose.

Larger government vessels were used for transport of general provisions, grain and coal, in addition to surveying. In the period 1793 to 1817, the number of colonial government vessels remained small, totalling approximately a dozen ships. These ranged from a sixty ton brig employed in surveying duties to a number of small long boats and flats used for loading and unloading ships. The colonial administration chartered larger ships for supplies from India on
many occasions. The arrival of naval ships, chartered transports and supply ships were the main areas of government shipping in the early decades.

By the 1820s local private shipping had developed to the extent that the government was able to let tenders. The colonial Government preferred a tendering system for services, although it maintained a number of smaller boats for routine tasks associated with other government functions. These were mostly associated with convict centres. The government relied on private operators in coastal trades beyond the limits of local areas. These were still minor, there were only three shipping tender contracts in 1828; namely, transport of coal from Newcastle to Sydney (at 8s per ton), general cargo between Sydney and Newcastle (12s per ton) and passenger traffic between the two towns (15s for cabin and 9s 6d for steerage). No fixed or minimum volumes are reported, indicating irregular demand from the government. Regular internal mail services began with the establishment of a Post Office in the 1820s. Private vessels took transport contracts, and overseas mail contracts began in the 1840s. Finally, ships chartered for the transport of immigrants were of concern to the government.

In sum, the relatively minor state involvement in shipping flowed from the insufficient government demands to warrant the costs of more or larger vessels, as a Naval report concluded 1839. Moreover the colony was too small to have its own naval defence force until well into the nineteenth century, and thus depended on the Royal Navy. Research on the development of colonial Australian shipping indicates that the direct operation of vessels by the government was very limited. Therefore it was private shipping operations that were the most important determinant of the pattern of shipping in colonial Australia. It is to this I will now turn.

3. Early Private Shipping Activities

As noted earlier, the practical problems of the colony, its small size and the need for transport had greater effect on private shipping than British policy in the first decade. In later decades, local shipping grew but its access to external markets was limited by British policy.

Local private shipping was established in the first few years with small boats running between Sydney and Parramatta as early as 1794. The ban on the construction of private vessels was not enforced soon after 1800 and private shipbuilding of vessels over one hundred tons was permitted. Governor King gave permission to Robert Campbell to build a 130 ton merchant vessel in 1804.

Profit rates for officers were high in the first decade given their monopoly of entire cargoes. Divided into smaller lots they sold goods to retailers at more than double their price. A petition by settlers to Governor Hunter in 1800 complained of excess profits, regularly in excess of 100 percent, often over 200 percent. The settlers wanted a 'public warehouse' and government price setting. King later permitted settlers to purchase goods directly from foreign vessels. He also welcomed Robert Campbell's overtures to extend his merchant business to the settlement. Between 1800 and 1810 profits remained high. Robert Campbell admitted that profits on liquor could be as high as 500 percent, although on most commodities it was generally 50-75 percent. Not surprisingly therefore, the liquor trade attracted frequent criticisms of undue profits and unfair practices. But high profits brought trade expansion and with it greater demand for shipping.
Profit in trading must be clearly distinguished from profit on shipping. Here the situation appeared quite different, with a much lower level of profit being the norm. There is a dearth of information on this issue, Hainsworth states that he has discovered only one set of coastal shipping accounts. In this case, the schooner Halcyon, jointly owned by McArthur and Blaxcell, showed only a 20 percent return for an eleven month period to March 1809.178

Expansion took place in several routine trades; grain from the Hawkesbury, timber from the Hunter and Shoalhaven Rivers and coal from Newcastle.179 These remained the basis of colonial shipping up to the 1820s and beyond. Bigge commented that vessels were "perpetually plying in this passage [between Sydney and the Heads]" which was on route to all these coastal settlements.180 Hainsworth points out that of the 112 vessels operating from Sydney between 1803 and 1821 more than half had traded on the Hawkesbury run and about 25 did so exclusively. About 40 vessels worked on the Newcastle run at one time.181 From this base, colonial traders and merchants continually sought out opportunities to trade in a wide range of commodities. Seal skins, whale oil, flax, sandalwood, coal and a number of other commodities all figured in the search for a staple product that could fill ships' holds on the homeward leg to Britain.182 However, when such possibilities apparently arose, prohibitively high British import duties limited the trade.183

The first significant colonial recession of 1812–1815, combined with the continued restrictions on external trade to limit expansion for a number of years. This precipitated losses for several merchants over this period.184 The problem of homeward cargoes continued as major restraint on overseas contact. Bigge recommended that larger scale industry, such as wool, be developed. This occurred from the 1830s onwards. Bach identifies grain, timber and coal as the main cargoes of trades to or from Sydney from coastal regions to the north and south, Van Dieman's Land and New Zealand.185 Other staples of tea, general foodstuffs, supplies and spirits made up much of the rest of the inward cargoes. Table 3.1 shows the scale of vessel movements in Sydney to 1825 and reflects the restrictive conditions discussed, although these figures undoubtedly fail to report small boats.186

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Movements</th>
<th>Tonnage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1800</td>
<td>*27</td>
<td>7,642</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1805</td>
<td>140</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1810</td>
<td>127</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1815</td>
<td>147</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1820</td>
<td>144</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1825</td>
<td>134</td>
<td>24,560</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Bach, p. 29 puts the number at 29


The first registration list of private vessels, showed seven vessels (from 6 to 31 tons), averaging only 14 tons and employing 5 or 6 men or less.187 These were local boats plying the routine work mentioned above. Many of these boats were operated by convicts, but the nature of labour on these vessels will be discussed in chapter four. The number and size of local vessels increased over the next decade, with 23 vessels in 1804 (at an average size of 20 tons) and about 30 in 1806 (average 35 tons) with a number of these engaged in the sealing trade in Bass strait and 33 vessels in 1814 (average 52 tons). The vessels in the sealing trade show marked increase in size to
over 60 tons. Bigge reported 29 vessels were employed in coastal work in 1820. Local shipbuilding yards emerged and supplied small vessels for this growing trade so that virtually all colonial vessels were built predominantly in Sydney or the Hawkesbury River. Although ships of over 200 tons worked in sealing, the vast majority were less than 50 tons. By 1814 there were 7 colonial vessels of 100 tons or over. In 1820, there were only 7 vessels under 15 tons. Thus the instructions to Governors on prohibiting boats were largely a dead letter, but not surprisingly most vessels constructed in the colony were small.

This can be seen in a contrast with overseas ships that visited Sydney. In 1810, 29 overseas ships called at Sydney averaging almost 250 ton, and about a third were over 300 tons. In 1820 they averaged over 350 tons, rising to a high of 420 tons in 1822. This rise in average size was not sustained, for as Bigge reported in 1823, trade directly from Britain was opened to smaller vessels by the removal of the East India minimum size regulation in 1819.

Table: 3.2 Overseas ships Sydney, 1810 & 1820

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tonnage</th>
<th>No.of vessels (percent)</th>
<th>Av. Crew</th>
<th>Size</th>
<th>Tons per man</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>&gt;500</td>
<td>2 (6.9)</td>
<td>10 (18.5)</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>300-499</td>
<td>7 (24.1)</td>
<td>22 (40.7)</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>200-299</td>
<td>8 (27.6)</td>
<td>11 (20.4)</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&lt;200</td>
<td>12 (41.4)</td>
<td>11 (20.4)</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>54</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: derived from Appendix Tables A3.8 & A3.9

Table 3.2 contrasts overseas vessels that arrived in Sydney in 1810 and 1820. The proportion of larger ships increased, from less than a third to almost two-thirds of arrivals, but manning on large vessels fell by about one-third, increasing the manning ratio by between 40 and 90 percent. Two points arise from this evidence; first, colonial vessels were much smaller than overseas vessels, thus the economic barriers to entry were low in the colony, particularly in view of the potential returns available on investment in trading. Second, the labour requirements for stevedoring rose for larger vessels – a point that will be examined in the next chapter.

One further point is that in the decade or so to the mid 1820s the number of shipping movements in Sydney remained relatively stable but the overseas arrivals more than doubled (from 29 in 1810 to an average of about 75 from 1820 to 1828). This meant that the slump in local shipping around 1815 continued into the 1820s and that the increase in tonnage handled by the port was due largely to the rise in overseas trade. However Bigge's assessment that smaller overseas vessel would arrive proved correct, as the average size of overseas shipping dropped steadily from 1822. Moreover, the average size of overseas ships did not rise to the 1822 level again until 1852.

In Van Dieman's Land the pattern of shipping was similar to New South Wales. Local shipping in the Hobart environs provided essential transport and the routine routes were to settlements such as Launceston in the north and further afield to Sydney. These routes led in turn to the development of shipbuilding within the first decade of the colony's life. The first ship was completed in 1813 and by the 1820s shipyards were producing ships in the range 30 to 100 tons. Hobart and Launceston became centres of commercial activity handling local primary production and overseas shipping. Shipbuilding continued to grow and by 1830 two one-hundred ton ships
were produced every year in Van Dieman's Land. In 1832 the first steamship was imported and in 1838, the "Maria" of 289 tons was launched. Hartwell concludes that by 1850 shipbuilding was an important industry in the colony.192

4. Summary and Conclusion

In this section I have shown that the practical problems of the colony forced colonial authorities to overlook British instructions on the prohibition of local shipping.

Capitalist relations soon dominated, as labour, nominally under the authority of the state, was set to work in colonial production which was dominated by larger producers. Commercial capital was initially the most important form in the colony. It soon shaped the nascent market through its use of resources (initially through access to salaries by the officers), to realise large profits. In turn it was able to exploit small producers through the use of credit and the monopolisation of the market. It was these mechanisms that formed the main basis of capital accumulation in the early decades of the penal colony. Industrial capital, primarily in the pastoral industry, was poorly developed.

The dominance of commercial capital was reflected in the subordinate position of shipping as an industry. Large profits arose from commercial activities and not shipping as such. One index of this subordination was the lack of differentiation in economic calculation of shipping. The lack of surviving records probably indicates that few existed, yet its small scale is also a factor. Records that do exist show a low rate of profit.

Nevertheless private shipping quickly emerged and expanded as the dominant sector in water transport, with government shipping remaining very limited. Not surprisingly, local ships were small, particularly in comparison to overseas ships and this lowered the economic barriers to entry into shipping. No viable alternatives existed in the local trades (in and around Sydney harbour) and shipping was needed for sealing and longer routes to Van Dieman's Land. Water transport was to enjoy this position for most of the next century. Overseas shipping was limited by British government regulation and the lack of homeward cargoes for the first three decades.

The next section addresses the issues the pattern of colonial shipowning and trading.

3. Colonial Shipowning, 1800–1850s

This section will examine the pattern of shipowning in the colonies up to the 1850s. The latter part of this period saw the first shipping company appear which marked a new institutional form of capital in this industry that expanded after the 1850s. Thus two periods in shipping ownership are identified that affected stevedoring and the organisation of labour in the industry. The first was the speculative period, the second the merchant consolidation in which joint stock ownership. For stevedoring the first period represented a dispersed function, carried out under the authority of maritime personnel but subordinate to commercial interests as it had not developed an industrial identity. The second period extended the first however stevedoring work became more regular due to the growth of shipping and trade. From the late 1830s the beginning of the industrial identity of stevedoring emerged but was only fully established after the 1850s as will be discussed in chapter four.

1. Early Shipowners

The first owners of the small vessels running between Sydney and Parramatta were ex-convicts and ex-marines operated around the Hobart area – to the small settlements of Pitt Water or Double Bay.193 As shown above, regular trades emerged as traders – including emancipists and
ex-convicts - began business around 1800. Of the 127 owners identified by Hainsworth 54 were emancipists or time-expired convicts and a further 16 were probably ex-convicts.\textsuperscript{194} The owners included colonial sealers and shipbuilders, such as Henry Kable, John Underwood, and Andrew Thompson, dealers such as Simeon Lord and Samuel Terry, established and respected merchants such as Robert Campbell, and occasionally large landowners such as John McArthur. Certainly, up to the 1820s shipowners were varied in their backgrounds and interests.

Attempts to prevent convict escapes and curb the illicit liquor trade brought numerous regulations. The experience of one such regulation issued by King in March 1805 allows an analysis of the occupational position of those associated with shipping. King's General Order required that ship's masters deposit a bond of £800 with an additional £100 from "two sufficient Freeholders, or well-known Merchants or Dealers" to stop ships departing without permission or carrying convicts aboard. The same annual bond was required from local private vessel owners.\textsuperscript{195} The requirement for three people to lodge a bond, mirrored the customary London practice of three-person partnership in trading.\textsuperscript{196}

The data from this regulation identifies ownership as well as links in commercial activities. I will discuss two aspects in turn, the pattern of ownership and the occupational characteristics of owners. Table 3.3 shows the ownership pattern of colonial vessels and bonds paid from 1810 to 1819. Sole ownership predominated, of 35 ships listed, 26 had only one owner, indicating a small number of owners.\textsuperscript{197} This pattern parallels that of 1800 to 1806.\textsuperscript{198} Yet no single man or partnership had shares in more than a handful of vessels, perhaps four or five at the most. Most had interests in only one or two. Those with holdings in several vessels, for example Henry Kable and James Underwood, were involved in sealing and whaling, where ownership was more concentrated. This industry was not however central to transport shipping nor stevedoring.

\begin{table}
\centering
\caption{Bonds paid by vessel type, ownership shares and bondsmen 1810–1819}
\begin{tabular}{llll}
\hline
Vessel type & No. of ships & No. of owners & bondsmen \\
\hline
schooner & 10 ships & 1 owner and 1 etc & 3 bondsmen \\
       & 2 ships & 2 owners and 2 etc & 4 bondsmen \\
       & 1 etc & & 3 etc \\
       & (Sub-total 13 ships) & 16 owner shares & \\
       & 11 & 1 & 3 \\
       & & 2 & 4 \\
       & 1 & 3 & 3 \\
       & & 4 & 4 \\
       & (Sub-total 14 ships) & 20 owner shares & \\
       & 3 & 1 & 3 \\
       & & 2 & 4 \\
brig/ & (Sub-total 6 ships) & 11 owner shares & \\
ship & 2 & 1 & 3 \\
       & & 2 & 4 \\
n.e.c & (Sub-total 3 ships) & 4 owner shares & \\
       & 1 & & \\
Total & 36* & 51 owner shares & 68 bondsmen \\
\hline
\end{tabular}
\footnotesize{* Bond was paid for one vessel under two sets of owners and two names, so there were 35 vessels in all}
\end{table}

Source: derived from J. S. Cumpston, \textit{Shipping Arrivals and Departures Sydney, 1788–1825}, pp.161–64

Finally, there is an indication that larger vessels, described as ships, were more likely to have multiple ownership. This followed the Britain pattern, discussed earlier, where ships of less than
100 tons generally had one owner and over 100 tons were owed by a partnership. Given the small numbers no definite conclusions can be drawn, but the predominance of merchants and dealers as owners and bondsmen is clear in Table 3.4. This could be seen as an artefact of the bond requirements but there was no mandatory requirement that bondsmen be merchants or in trade.

Table 3.4 Occupational groups, Owners and Bondsmen 1810–19

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Occupational group</th>
<th>Owner</th>
<th>% Shares</th>
<th>Bondmen (excl. owners)</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I Commercial</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>54.9</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>55.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II Admin/farmer</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>13.7</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>8.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III Skilled trades</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>17.6</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>19.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not given</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>13.7</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>16.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>(*99.9)</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>(100)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* rounding error

Source: derived from Appendix Table: A3.7

Significantly the vast majority of owners did not describe themselves as shipowners, but as either dealers or merchants. A small number of 'middle class' occupations accounted for about thirteen percent of owners, and again it is likely that some of those not classified would have fallen into this group. Only a small number of masters owned and operated their own vessels. Skilled workers, representing eleven crafts, made up about one-sixth of the owners and a slightly higher proportion of bondsmen. Those crafts associated with the maritime industry (boat-builders, sailmaker etc) were more likely to be owners while the remainder were bondsmen. Most of the skilled workers were probably small masters who were associated with shipping either as an investment or to provide transport of their own raw materials or goods.

Undoubtedly the early colonial social structure provided few opportunities for talented emancipists or ambitious craftsmen to secure high economic returns apart from trading. Similarly well placed residents were able to undertake short-term speculation for profit. The latter pattern followed that identified in Britain (discussed in section II above). The economic role of trader continued beyond the early 1820s but the social position of the occupational category of merchant was to reassert itself from this time.¹⁹⁹

I have argued that the pattern of shipowning up to the 1820s shows that the social recognition of traders, indeed a trading class, was high. Just as clear was that the social and occupational category of shipowner remained undeveloped and that generally owners were not directly connected with the operational aspect of shipping and its associated labour processes.

The primary motive for investment in ships was capital accumulation through trade and commerce.²⁰⁰ Much early manufacturing also served the commercial class. Local trading provided the basis for commercial profits, but export commodities (timber, skins, sandalwood, coal, whale products) all had a potential for high profits. This was essentially speculative commercial activity. Later in the period merchants, such as Simeon Lord and Robert Campbell, spread their interests into colonial manufacturing or primary production²⁰¹ respectively. MacArthur's interests in primary production required transportation thus he invested in shipping. These developments provided the pre-conditions for a period of merchant consolidation.

What did this mean for stevedoring? Three main points can be made. First, shipping institutions were relatively undeveloped. As in Britain shipowning was focused on the ship as the unit of ownership, this being reflected and reinforced by state regulations. High rates of profit in
trading put little economic pressure for the 'efficient' labour utilisation on ships or in stevedoring. Second, shipowning was a means to an end. Ships were owned because they were a vital material aspect for the realisation of commercial profit, not as an industrial enterprise. Indeed the limited available evidence shows low profits for ships themselves. The differentiation of economic calculation had to await the differentiation of economic institutions. As a consequence of these points the third point is that industrial authority in the operational aspects of shipping and stevedoring was not part of a unified control-system.

In short, commercial and financial practice was largely uncoupled from industrial practice, that is, the labour processes in shipping and stevedoring. The subordinate position of stevedoring, the small size of the colony and the relatively infrequent demand for stevedoring labour inhibited the formation of a specifically industrial presence for stevedoring.

But briefly one example of the above conclusion can be seen in the case of overseas shipping. I pointed out above that overseas shipping carried large crews. In the colonial context this level of manning provided labour to unload their own cargo. So at this stage of the development of shipping the bulk of stevedoring work was performed by workers who were not distinguished from ordinary sea-going maritime workers. The technical requirements of shipping set both a lower limitation on any reduction in manning for the effective operation of the ship and at the same time provided labour for other ancillary tasks. No unified industrial enterprise existed to control the labour process and performance of work. These remained under the traditional authority of ship masters.

2. Merchant Consolidation and Shipowning

The second period of shipowning, from the early 1820s until the 1850s saw the consolidation of the dominance of merchants and growth of the market. Shipping grew as it held a natural monopoly in long (and short) distance transport. Speculative trading was dealt a heavy blow in the Macquarie period as he succeeded in building a stable colonial commercial class. By the early 1820s many early speculators were replaced by more conservative merchants, as commercial capital consolidated its position. Thus shipowning expanded in two ways, merchant shipowning expanded to serve the growing demands for transport and second, opportunities for individual owners (particularly for shipmasters) to operate one or a few vessels grew. In turn stevedoring and the demand for labour expanded. Employment was however divided between various small operators, larger merchants, and shipmasters resulting in a diverse and dispersed pattern of development.

Bigge reported that twelve merchant houses existed in Sydney in 1822, only three were owned by emancipists. Cunningham confirmed the latter's demise when observed in 1826, that after Macquarie's departure emancipists were "again thrown into the shade", not to be seen in the company of the Governor. Bigge saw a strong potential for commercial growth as imported commodities stabilised and a competitive colonial market grew, since "the price of English goods imported into New South Wales vari[d] from sixty to one hundred percent above the prime cost." Indeed, merchant business moved into a period of routinisation, consolidation and growth. Cunningham also reported an industrious commercial district in Sydney in which there were twenty-two "agents for the management of shipping affairs", eleven auctioneers, and a Chamber of Commerce to "arbitrate in matters relating to shipping" amongst other functions. The first
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Chamber of Commerce formed in June 1826. According to Macmillan, as early as 1820 the cargo of most vessels that entered Sydney or Hobart was handled by the colonial merchants, rather than the captain or supercargo. After years of agitation, currency reform stabilised the colonies' financial system in the mid 1820s following the formation of the Bank of New South Wales in 1817 and the Bank of Australia in 1826 and a fixed sterling value. The financial and commercial institutions that emerged before 1830 consisted "of a company of merchants, traders, and landowners" and had been a priority of local capital. In short, the economic organisation of the flow of goods was largely channelled through a more stable institutional structure of commerce, rather than the hitherto speculative and contingent nature of shipping arrivals and cargo sales.

In this period the Australian colony expanded beyond the Sydney and environs and Van Dieman's Land. It extended further along the coast of New South Wales, north to the penal colony of Moreton Bay, even Melville Island, south to new colonies at Port Phillip Bay and at Adelaide in the 1830s, as well as west to the Swan River. The rapid growth of Melbourne and Adelaide in the 1840s saw shipping demand rise, while the penal settlements of Brisbane and Perth languished until after the gold rushes. The spread of settlement and arrival of more free settlers required transport and opened new commercial opportunities. The larger population expanded the commercial market. Some immigrants specifically sought to operate ships, whether as masters, or merchants and shipowners. Overseas shipping also grew, although the depressions of the late-1820s and 1842-44 slowed the rising trend of arrivals and tonnage, particularly as a result of the gold rushes.

As noted merchant consolidation spawned mechanisms for a wider and more extensive institutional form of capital accumulation. Soon larger investment through joint stock companies emerged, albeit under the dominance of commercial horizons of merchants and gentleman. The development of shipowning in this period of the merchant consolidation followed a halting but definite pattern.

In the period from the early 1820s to the boom of the late 1830s merchants acquired ships in small partnerships or individually. Interest in wider economic alliances grew in the main towns of Sydney, Newcastle, Hobart and Launceston, and later followed by Melbourne and Adelaide. But these were halted by the small size of settlements, depressions in 1829-30 and 1842-44 and poor harvests in several years which slowed the demand for shipping. Nevertheless men such as Campbell (who recovered a prominent place in commercial and political life by 1825), the House of Walker, Jones and Riley (who played a dominating role from their Waterloo warehouse), the Riley Bros, Alexander Berry and Edward Wollstonecraft, and Robert Jenkins all established reputations as respectable men of status. They operated successful merchant businesses and agencies in Port Jackson and were joined later by men such as Alexander Spark, John Lamb, John Lord, John Manning, Robert Towns and others who built up a network of commercial contacts and interests in and around Sydney in the 1830s and 1840s. Spark, for example, held agency agreements for many vessels and was involved in bringing the first steamship, the Sophie Jane, to the colony in May, 1831. This and other steam vessels, and small sailing vessels ran between Newcastle and Sydney for the remainder of the decade. In Van Dieman's Land, the merchants Swanston, Orr, Henly and Gellibrand played the same role, as did merchants in later settlements in South Australia and Port Phillip.
In 1832 there were about 100 vessels registered in the colony, varying in size between 17 and 392 tons. In addition to the New South Wales coastal trades and Van Diemen's Land services vessels also engaged in whaling, fishing and the island trades. As both Little and Butlin point out, fishery products remained the main colonial export until the late 1830s, when wool became the dominant commodity. In Van Dieman's Land there were 10 ships and 42 boats employed in the fishery industry, expanding to a high point of 35 ships and 155 boats in 1835.

It was these commercial possibilities that led merchants to seek to spread the risks and costs of transportation of their goods. The gradual and uneven development of the joint stock company was the institutional form of commercial capital. An example is instructive.

The first Scottish ventures to Australia arose from interest in the colonies shown by merchants in Leith and Edinburgh who were anxious to maintain their position in British commercial sector. The Australian Company of Edinburgh and Leith, formed in 1822 with 92 partners in commerce and shipping also had close connections in banking. This company attempted to build a trade route and passenger service between the Australian colonies and Scotland. It chartered ships of about 400 tons, sailing at three monthly intervals for the year long round trip. The company floundered as passenger rates fell, local (Scottish) competition started, through the Tasmanian Joint Stock Co., and sufficient return cargoes were difficult to find. The depression of the late 1820s brought these ventures to an end.

The first colonial shipping company was formed in Van Dieman's Land for local work. Formed in May 1828, the Derwent Steam Navigation Co. had John Lord as its secretary and a seven member Board of Directors. The company attempted a steamer service between Hobart and nearby Bellerive (then known as Kangaroo Point) but failed and was bought out in 1846. A similar fate befell the Tamar Steam Navigation Co. in 1845 after its formation in 1832. It tried to run three steamers between Launceston and the mouth of the Tamar River (about 65 kms). The assets of both companies were bought by the Tasmanian SN Co. formed 1840 with capital of £6000 (later increased to £10,000).

In New South Wales shipping companies were proposed and formed in the 1830s. The first was a small service between Sydney and Parramatta in 1833. The most significant was the Hunter's River Steam Packet Association formed in June 1833 with capital of £10,000 in 400 shares. Its only vessel, the Ceres, operated between Newcastle and Sydney. The Ceres was lost six months later forcing the association out of business, although it was not wound up until 1836. It reformed with capital of £25,000 in 1,000 shares as the Hunter's River Steam Packet Co. and later became a major Australian coastal shipping company until well into this century. Regular intercolonial transport was not established until the 1840s, for example in 1843 between Sydney and Hobart.

This wave of company formation indicted a change in the form of capital from the 1830s. Stockholder companies were generally initiated by commercial capital given its dependence on transport. Although companies began the process of differentiation between productive functions and commercial activities it was not completed until after 1850. Commercial capital remained predominant at this stage, as reflected in the types of companies formed from the 1830s to 1850. Transport companies, mostly in shipping accounted for over 27 percent of companies and financial companies (banks and insurance) accounted for over half of the rest. The ownership pattern of
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the 256 vessels registered in Sydney in 1846 reflected the traditional pattern. Some 208 companies, partnerships or individuals were listed as owners, with the merchants Campbell, Towns and Fotheringham owning 17 vessels. But, in contrast to the partnership model, the Hunter River SN Co owned six of Sydney's eight sea-going steamers.

While the direct connection between pastoralists and trading, best illustrated by MacArthur, lapsed, the MacArthur family and others such as Thomas Icely still linked pastoralists to merchant capital. From the 1830s pastoral industry profits rose as the Australian colonies captured the lion's share of the British wool market. Newly established pastoral merchants acted as consigning agents. Companies such as Elder Smith and Co Ltd (1839), Dalgety, Boroadaile & Co. (1846), T. S. Mort (1843), and Richard Goldsborough (1848) were formed in this period and maintained a close association with shipowners for decades to come (in the 1890s strikes). The political organisation of merchants and pastoralists covered other areas, such support for free trade and the abolition of transportation. There are two points to be made in this connection, first the economic role of commercial capital was vital to the pastoralist. Use of credit was needed in the commercial trading in wool, as it took up to 2 years from the clip to the actual return to come back to the grower. Second, close cultural associations still remained between merchant profits and landownership.

In sum, new shipping companies were the beginning of a new institutional structure in shipping and stevedoring. Only a small proportion of ships were under joint stock company ownership in this period, most were owned by sole traders, merchants or the traditional partnership form.

In all cases little changed in the stevedoring labour process. It was again the master and wharfinger who held authority over stevedoring labour. Keep in mind that the autonomy of the master was largely preserved, as the cult of 'character' of captains grew enormously in this period. The importance of the pastoral industry connection is that the rural industry agencies (ie merchants) had close connections with shipping and stevedoring as they later built warehouses in the ports and employed stevedoring labour. These issues will be examined in later chapters.

IV. Summary and Conclusion

In this chapter I have outlined the main features of British shipping until the early decades of the nineteenth century. Shipping was largely dominated by commercial trading in goods transported rather than shipping as a transport business – as common carrier. Shipowning centred on the individual ship as the unit of investment. The linkage between partnership shares and operational shipping was mediated by agents and operational authority remained with maritime personnel. The ship's master held legal authority over the labour process including stevedoring. This discontinuous organisational structure continued to be based on traditional work methods and organisation based on customary practices and relations. It paralleled large British ports and established merchant centres where shore labour in stevedoring and porterage were governed by custom or legal regulation based on custom. Work control arose from traditional relations of supervisors and workers on a daily basis.

Slow technological changes in the size and rigging of vessels limited growth in the scale of the labour process. Thus shore-based labour could absorb change through a larger unit of labour organisation – from made-up teams at each job to stable gangs. However as economic demands grew in Britain in the late eighteenth century, new shore facilities spawned new categories of
stevedoring workers – dockers. Work organisation, employment conditions and labour organisation came increasingly under the authority of capitalist employers, dock companies and warehouse owners. The corporate fellowship organisation soon became redundant.

Shipping in the Australian colonies replicated the pattern of ownership in Britain. Merchants interests predominated and operational authority lay with shipmasters. However, the small size of the penal colony, security concerns, mercantilist regulations, and distance restricted the early growth of shipping. The next chapter turns to the development of stevedoring in the colonies in light of British traditions and development and the shape of Australian shipping.

1 The Murray–Darling River system was the only inland water transport route. Coastal rivers only served as feeder routes (employing punts, droghers, lighters) for coastal ports. The last of these, barges moving paper down the Derwent River (Tas), ceased operations in 1987.

2 Hill, The Dockers, pp.85–6 gives summary of 19th century shipowners and dock companies rivalry in London; Walter M. Stem, The Porters of London, (Longmans, London, 1960) shows that waterfront labour in London was City and merchant controlled. In Hull, dock companies worked more closely with larger local shipowners but clashed with the Shipping Federation in 1890 and 1893 see, Brown, Waterfront Control in Hull 1879–1900, pp.63,68,81–89


4 Merchant capital refers to capital dominated by the market realisation of surplus value rather than direct production of surplus value in the labour process, that is, the dominant principle was commercial rather than industrial profit. Although Marx saw merchants as the vehicles of capital expansion of the market, they did not operate ships (or other modes of transport) as discrete productive enterprises but as means to a commercial profit, operated through maritime conventions, as described later in the chapter. The authority of masters was complete and supported in law. The spread of trade beyond regional merchant guilds, saw merchants became 'extensive dealers' or 'merchant adventurers' and they succeeded in securing a monopolies through companies of merchants. The monopoly of the eastern trade was vested in the East India Company, see Rambhitha Mukerjee, The Rise and Fall of the East India Company: A Sociological Appraisal, 2nd ed. (Popular Prakashan, Bombay, 1958) chs.1–2. The operation of ships remained the preserve of masters, albeit with increasing economic and political pressure forcing them into the status of an employee. It was not until the second half of the nineteenth century that this process was complete.

5 A consideration of the origin and foundation of social relations in sea-going work lies outside the scope of this thesis. Several points of clarification should be noted; first in general shipping derived from two sources, military usage and trade. In trade social relations were characterised by a greater degree of co-operation rather than hierarchy. While military use of ships declined greatly after the fall of the Roman Empire, they reappeared in the early modern period as defence of merchant vessels. Second, the authority of masters and officers in the merchant service adopted military principles of hierarchy and defence. Most merchant ships prior to 1800 were armed, a practice continued into the 19th century. Even ship design reflected discipline imperatives due to piracy and rival powers, although it was commercially inefficient. It took some centuries for more economic ship design to develop, see Richard W. Unger, The Ship in the Medieval Economy, (Croom Helm, Montreal, 1980); Dorothy Burwash, English Merchant Shipping, 1450–1540, (University of Toronto Press, Toronto, 1947).


8 Ralph Davis, The Rise of the English Shipping Industry, pp.81–82 notes the relatively undeveloped level of specialisation in commerce that could have parallelled the division of labour in industry, even at the end of the 18th century. This probably underestimated specialisation, where particular trades, or even commodities were handled by merchants or agents who specialised. Certainly the rise in demand for raw materials from the industrial revolution quickened the pace of specialisation in the 19th century. The point is that the institutional form of ownership, and its management authority still remained divided between the sole owner (trader, proprietor etc) and partnership forms. For the general problem of partnerships, see Sidney Pollard, The Genesis of Modern Management, (Edward Arnold, London, 1965) pp.150–51,233–35

9 Palmer, "Investors in London Shipping, 1820–50", p.55 most shipowners in London in the first half of the nineteenth century were associated with the shipping industry in one way or another.

10 Rupert C. Jarvis, "Fractional Shareholding in British Merchant Ships with Special Reference to the 64ths", Mariner's Mirror, Vol 44 No 3, 1959, pp.301–19

11 One economic reason for this pattern of ownership was the prohibitive rates of interest (averaging about 36%) for debt financing of shipping investment. This high rate was charged to cover the provision for the cancellation of debt in the event of the loss of the ship (known as the 'bottency bond'). In these circumstances equity financing was far more attractive particularly if the risks could be dispersed through a large number of partners, see Davis, The Rise of the English Shipping Industry, p.84

13 Davis, *The Rise of the English Shipping Industry*, pp.82-85, notes fourth system of shipowning shares was international during this period. The maximum division of 64 was set down in the Merchant Shipping Act of 1854 and continued well into this century. Only very rarely did individuals own more than a few ships (exceptions eg Sir Henry Johnson owned shares in 36 ships). In 1813 for the 115 ships in service with the East India Company there were 55 managing owners, ship's husbands and owners, and of this number 31 owned one ship, 12 owned 2, 6 owned 3 and 3 owned 4 ships, figures from Cotton, *East Indiamen*, p.47; see also Davis, "Maritime History", pp.170-71; see also for Liverpool, F. Neal, "Liverpool Shipping in the Early Nineteenth Century" in J. R. Harris (ed.) *Liverpool and Merseyside: Essays in the economic and social history of the port and its hinterland*, (Cass, Liverpool, 1969) pp.149,159 where 80% of ships were owned by three or less persons and, the "overwhelming majority of vessels were owned by merchants, either individuals or partners in a trading concern". Further, "it was unusual at this time [early 1800s] to find any shipowner functioning purely as a ship owner in the sense that he,... invested money in a vessel which then carried only the goods of other traders." 

14 In the case of Liverpool at this time "most Liverpool vessels were owned by merchants who used them to carry their own goods," Neal, "Liverpool Shipping", p.149.

15 By the 18th century a web of merchant houses, warehouses, stores, grainstores, coalyards, maltings, etc emerged, each a potential ship partners. Importantly most of these enterprises employed porters in some capacity, thus were employers of some section of the dock labourforce, as Stern, *The Porters of London, passion for reference to a range of employers. Egs of specialist industries where middlemen had significant holdings in ships, were coal and cheese mongering, see G. E. FusseU, "The London Cheesemongers of the Eighteenth Century", *Economic History*, vol.1, 1926-9, pp.394-98; even manufacturers established agencies in the East for trade, see I. Nish, "An East India Merchant House in the China Trade in the 1830's", *Bulletin of the Business Archives Council of Australia*, vol.1 No 6, 1959, pp.1-10, note that typically effective control of goods and deals entered into was with the agents - they were able to "exercise substantial independence" (p.4). 

16 Palmer, "Investors in London Shipping, 1820-50", pp.53-55,63-64, shows that in this period London owners were highly localised, using the classification of individuals or trading partnerships for shareholding in ships. For 1824 based on individuals the main holding group were; merchants and associated commercial interests (34%), masters (23%), shipowners (17%) and professional/gentlemen and others (8%). For trading partnerships, 70% (commerce and industry) and about 30% (maritime industry, details of individuals were not given, but they account for less than 7% of total shareholders). 


19 Cotton points out that payment to BEICO was often limited to cargoes of just under 500 tons to evade the statutory requirement to employ a Chaplain on board vessels 500 tons or more. Moreover, in most cases the registered tonnage of BEICO ships was stated as the tonnage transported under the name of the company (ie. just under 50 tons) rather than its actual tonnage, see Cotton, *East Indiamen*, pp.40-41.

20 Appointment of naval officers was also associated with political patronage, nepotism, and the spoils of state power, where dominant naval officers held significant positions in shipbuilding, see G. V. Scammell, "European seamanship in the great age of discovery", *Mariner's Mirror*, Vol.68 No 4, 1982, pp.357-75. 


22 Cotton, *East Indiamen*, pp.48-49, purchase of hereditary command and hereditary bottom were abolished in 1796 and 1799 respectively and tendering of freight was introduced in 1796. For 50 years the Company had guaranteed a minimum tonnage of goods (usually 499 tons) and set freight rates. 

23 Cotton, *East Indiamen*, p.25; the ship's managing was the managing owner, appointed by the others, the company counterpart was the 'Company's husband, see ibid, p.48 fn.77. Eg in Australia given by Capt. Eastwick, who had sold the brig Harrington to Capt. Campbell "who now commanded her." He adds that "(the Government or the Buffalo [commanded as a Naval captain] had between them the majority of the settlement in their debt for former supplies and the house of Campbell had almost all the remainder". A Master Mariner, (1891) quoted in Allan Bax, "Australian Merchant Shipping, 1788-1849", *Journal of the Royal Australian Historical Society*, Vol 38 Pt 6, 1952, p.259.

24 Davis, *The Rise of the English Shipping Industry*, p.165; although general commission-based brokerage existed, the specialist shipbroker emerged in the 1690s. Also printed news sheets of shipping movements and newspaper advertisements first appeared in the second half of the 17th century. Such reports were widespread in all major Australian newspapers in the 19th and into the 20th. centuries. They have at but disappeared now. 

25 "A charter-party is the same in the civil law as an indenture at common law. It settles the terms upon which the cargo is to be carried, as the bills of lading determine the contents of the cargo; the master or owners, usually binding themselves, the ship, tackle, and furniture, that they shall be delivered (dangers of the seas excepted) well-conditioned, at the place of discharge agreed upon... The merchant or freight, on his part, stipulates to comply with the payment promised for freight on delivery of the goods: and both parties oblige themselves in penalties for non-performance", Steel, *The Ship - Master's Assistant and Owner's Manual*, (1888), pp.192-193.


28 Davis, *Maritime History*, pp.171,195 ff 18; emphasizes brokerage more than ownership in the higher status of ship's husbands before 1800. 


30 Efficiency of design steadily improved for centuries, although ship design manuals did not appear in Britain until the late 18th century. Since London ship construction was 'traditional', (shipwrights formed a strong guild) shipbuilding centres developed in other areas particularly the north-east, particularly in face of American competition increased after independence. More efficient yards lowered the cost of ships, see Davis, *The Rise of the English Shipping Industry*, pp.54-55,58-57; Unger, *The Ship in the Medieval Economy*.

31 Steel, *The Ship - Master's Assistant and Owner's Manual* (1808), p.189 states that "The master and owner are... so intimately connected together, that many observations in the preceding chapter of owners will be found to be necessary knowledge for the master of the ship". The authority of British Naval captain was greater than in the merchant marine, in that the system of patronage carried with it greater (potential) power over subordinate officers as well as ordinary seamen, Dandeker, "Patronage and bureaucratic control - The case of the naval officer in English society 1780-1850", *Mariner's Mirror*, Vol.68 No 4, 1982, pp.357-75. 


Steel, *The Ship-Master’s Assistant and Owner’s Manual* (1808), pp.184–207; profits from selling passage, see Cotton, *East Indiamen*, pp.67–74 passim. Excesses in this practice were legally regulated after 1800. Up to 1684 East India company “factors and writers” and officers of garrisons transported to the East were given free passage, although wives and servants were not. Moreover, a maximum fines was set for passengers in the company’s service, although a lower fare could be negotiated with the master. In the 19th century the state eventually regulated the numbers of passengers for safety, the standard of accommodation and other factors. Thus as the doctrine of free trade spurred deregulation of the transport market, although regulation was required for competition and operations of enterprises — a characteristic of the dynamic of economic practices in capitalism.

34 Preface, *Steel, The Ship—Master’s Assistant and Owner’s Manual* (1808), notes that changes in legislation had been numerous since the last edition of the manual. The additions to the 1801 edition cover mainly issues that arise out of changes in legislation. Davis, *The Rise of the English Shipping Industry*, ch.7 discusses three wage forms for seamen, which were, lump sum payment (used for coastal and short voyages), monthly wages (used mainly for longer voyages). In British coastal trades by the middle of the eighteenth century the master claimed two-thirds of the net earnings of the ship “for victualling, mailing and wages” (cited on p.133), the owners received the remainder.

35 Davis, *The Rise of the English Shipping Industry*, ch.8; Capt. Eastwick summed up experience of Port Jackson, as follows, “These circumstances ... will serve to show how much I had to contend against, and how difficult are the conditions of conducting business amongst young communities before it was learnt to be guided by established commercial customs”, Eastwick, *A Master Mariner*, p.184.

36 Technically the supercargo was not a crew member but a separate employee under the authority of the merchant that assigned him to the ship to conduct commercial activities which included using commercial considerations to override the masters on the course of the ship, especially in newer trades, see Davis, *The Rise of the English Shipping Industry*, pp.170–71.

37 Eastwick, *A Master Mariner*, pp.41–42 [emphasis added]

Cotton, *East Indiamen*, pp.32–33. Rights to private trade of some description was conceded to seamen in most Western maritime nations, see G. V. Scammell, “Manning the English merchant service in the sixteenth century”, *Mariner’s Mirror*, Vol 56, No 2, 1970, pp.141–45; Davis, *The Rise of the English Shipping Industry*, p.133 argues that payment by share of earnings was one form of income for masters and seamen, albeit the least used method. In fact, under this method, all concerned with operation of a vessel received revenue in proportion to earnings, the owner received 3/9, the master 2/9 and the rest of the crew 4/9, that is, one-third to the owner and two-thirds to the crew.

39 Eastwick, *A Master Mariner*, p.93, this appointment was in 1893 at the age of 21 years. The *Rebecca* was a ship of 1,100 tons and operated in the Rangoon–Calcutta–Madrass–Straitts trade. He commanded this vessel for 2 years and was able to save money but again remarks that the experience had “showed him what immense profits were to be made by those who judiciously invested their means in shipping”. He therefore purchased a ship and operated it on the same run “which yielded me exceedingly profitable returns” (p.94).

40 Example given in Cotton, *East Indiamen*, pp.36–40


41 Scammell, “Manning the English merchant service”, pp.137–138; paradoxically Eastwick was offered a junior officer position in the East India Company, but as I noted above, he was unable to accept, as the salary was insufficient for him to support his wife. Company regulations required that officers must service a minimum of three voyages (usually each was between 12 and 18 months), one as fifth or sixth mate,zoalther at third of fourth and finally one as first or second mate. Lucrative income was available only from the position of second mate and above, see Eastwick, *A Master Mariner*, p.94; there were also age restrictions see Cotton, *East Indiamen*, pp.22–25.


43 Acts passed covered despotism (2 Geo II, c.36 sec.3,4 and 31 Geo III, c.39), absence without leave (2 Geo II, c.36 sec.5) and provision for written agreements and discharge (2 Geo II, c.39 sec.26 ; 31 Geo III, c.39 (coasting trade)) in addition to wages, penalties and other regulations; see also Cotton, *East Indiamen*, p.60,91. Flogging was not was confined to maritime employment, but was widely used in prior to the nineteenth century. Masters could discharge seamen without wages and so on, virtually at will.

44 The fifteenth and sixteenth centuries established the first prestation of world by Europeans, (the Age of Discovery) and was a material condition for the growth of relatively regular shipping in the period I have mentioned. The technical developments in the earlier period made the longer journeys necessary for discovery possible. In other words there was a dialectical relation between commercial activities of shipping and their technical development, see eg. G. V. Scammell, “European seamanship in the Great Age of Discovery”, Unger, *The Ship in the Medieval Economy*, ch.5; Burwash, *English Merchant Shipping*, 1460–1540

45 Square rigging was the use of square sails usually rigged on three masts, usually called full-rig or ship-rig design. Hempen ropes were used into the nineteenth century and they were relatively easily stretched which mean that they needed constant adjustment, or trimming the braces (tackles at the end of yards), by deckmen to keep the sails taut, assuming a constant configuration of sails. Altering the configuration of sails in response to changes in the weather required more work, see eg. Unger, *The Ship in the Medieval Economy*, chs.5–6, G. P. B. Naish, “Ships and Shipbuilding”, in Charles Singer et al. (eds), *A History of Technology*, Vol 3, (Oxford University Press, London, 1957), pp.470–72.

46 On ship size, *Davis, The Rise of the English Shipping Industry*, ch.4 who shows a slow increase in size. But in some areas the increase in size was more marked eg in East Indiamen showed the following growth, 1708 average of 400 tons, 1730 – 500 tons, 1775 – 800 tons, 1790s – 1200 tons, G. S. Lafrd Qowes, *Sailing Ships: Their history and development*, Part 1, Historical Notes, Third edit. (HMSO, London, 1932) pp.89–90; on ship technology, idem esp. pp.72–92; Sir Allen Moore, *Rig in Northern Europe*, *Mariner’s Mirror* Vol 42 No 1, 1956, pp.6–37; Scammell, “European seamanship in the Great Age of Discovery”. Ship technology still remained a localised craft with no systematic codification or standardisation of technical knowledge. Therefore many advances were on a trial and error basis, knowledge and innovation could not be easily defused and indeed knowledge built up over a lifetime by our craftman (or group) may be lost on his death or demise. Advances were halting and inconsistent.
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48. Eg, a large ship of 750–800 tons, under the East India Co. around 1800 would carry a crew of approx. 100 including, 50 able seamen, Master, 6 officers, a surgeon and mate, purser, midshipmen/coxswain, 4 midshipmen, 3 petty officers (boatswain, gunner, and carpenter, each with 2 mates), 6 quartermasters, sailmaker, carter and mate, cooper and mate, armourer, purser, butcher, baker, captain's cook, ship's cook and several stewards. A 900 ton ship's crew was 110 crew; 1300 tons, ~130 crew, Cotton, East Indiamen, p.24. Indiamen were generally larger and better crewed than most yet even at about 1700 a 450 ton vessel might have a 90 man crew, see Davis, The Rise of the English Shipping Industry, pp.109–113.

49. Particularly in the Pacific region well into the 1800s, see John Bach, "The Maintenance of Royal Navy Vessels in the Pacific Ocean 1825–1875", Mariner's Mirror, Vol 56 No 3, 1970, pp.259–273, who notes also that maintenance was only one of several material problems (p.273) in long distance shipping. Also the absence of dredging due to technical limitations, so silted and poor quality wharves were common, incompetent pilot services, dangerous and unmarked harbours and rivers, and so on, all a daily part of shipping, see also Scammell, "European seamanship in the great age of discovery", esp. pp.365–67.


51. The fifteenth and sixteenth centuries were a "time of almost universal piracy and privateering", Scammell, "European seamanship in the Great Age of Discovery", p.368; so by the seventeenth century the result was slow, heavily armed ships, which were a constant source of complaint of English merchants and shipowners. That is, English shipwrights only produced 'defensible ships' that were slow in comparison with the 'flyboats' (flute design) of the Dutch, see Davis, The Rise of the English Shipping Industry, pp.52–53. Privateering was widespread in a period that saw almost constant hostility, see H.C. Timewell, Guersey Privateers, Mariner's Mirror, Vol 56 No 2, 1970, pp.199–218. One result of the high manning of ships was the effect on labour demands for maritime nations, Scammell, "Manning the English merchant service", p.133–44.

52. "Throughout the century [1841], merchant ships, both large and small, were armed, and consequently their appearance did not, at first sight differ greatly from that of men-of-war of similar size", Clowes, Sailing Ships, p.89; "the East India Company... [ships]were heavily armed for defensive purposes, and bore a considerable resemblance to the frigates of the Royal Navy"; Bax, "Australian Merchant Shipping, 1788–1849", p.269. Guns came into use aboard ships at the end of the fourteenth century, John F. Gullmartin, "The Early Provision of Artillery Armament on Mediterranean War Galleys", Mariner's Mirror, Vol 59 No 2, 1973, pp.258–260.

53. This is not surprising since trade for America and Caribbean occupied the largest percentage of British overseas shipping by the eighteenth century. Convoys organised by the state (ie. through the expansion of national military naval power) and paid for by various charges on ships had a number of advantages for the State, see Unger, The Ship in the Medieval Economy, pp.264–65. The use of convoys (sailing in company or 'convoys') had a long history to before the modern era, Scammell, "European seamanship in the Great Age of Discovery", pp.367–68.

54. The largest factor in the fall of manning, also tons/man ratios of military and merchant ships, in the 1500s military vessels were 3 tons/man (or less), merchantmen 10 tons/man see Unger, The Ship in the Medieval Economy, pp.259–60.

55. Davis, The Rise of the English Shipping Industry, p.190 and idem, "Merchant shipping in the economy", p.60 notes that in most of the eighteenth century one round trip a year was seen as the workload of a ship, for it round trip to America and the West Indies commonly took nine or ten months; North, "Sources in Productivity Change in Ocean Shipping", pp.961–963.

56. Davis, The Rise of the English Shipping Industry, p.76. The most well known and first specialised cargo ship design, the Dutch flute [flyout] of the late sixteenth century only had 6 or 7 sails at most (and usually carried no guns) requiring fewer men than hitherto at a Manning ratio of about 20 tons per man. But the size of these ships averaged about 100 tons. English ships did not match this. Larger ships of later centuries had larger (and more) sails which required more men to handle, see Unger, The Ship in the Medieval Economy, pp.262–263.


58. Even piracy and privateering remained a significant danger in the East into the nineteenth century, as Britain was at war between 1803 and 1815, see eg. Eastwick's description of the Bay of Bengal, Eastwick, A Master Mariner, ch. 7

59. North, "Sources of Productivity Change in Ocean Shipping", pp.964,967. North here refers American and West Indian trades, which followed European examples in minimising piracy and privateering. The Eastern trades faced the problem even after 1800 which still exists to this day. North reports the fall in the number of guns per ship as tons per man increased, leading to a fall in armament costs (including manning). Increases in efficiency of British ships was slower due to slow technical advance. The Dutch developed and used the more efficient flute design in 1600s, precisely their trades (Baltic bulk trade) faced no piracy, was short distance and high volume, (p.904).

60. Davis argues that the Navigation Act (1651) which reserved all British trade for British ships eliminated competition (especially against the Dutch) forestalled the diffusion of more efficient ships in Britain, resulting in heavier capital and labour demands, see Davis, "Merchant shipping in the economy", pp.70–73; also Unger, The Ship in the Medieval Economy, pp.260–64.

61. Scammell, "Manning the English merchant service", p.136, evidence of a high rate of literacy amongst seamen was found by Nicholos and Shergold in their sample of over 19,000 convicts. Those who identified themselves as seamen had a literacy rate of 80% and sailors of 84%, both were well into the top half of the occupational (recording more than 20 observations) literacy rates reported by the authors, Stephen Nichols and Peter R. Shergold, Convicts as Workers, in S. Nicholas (ed), Convict Workers, Table 5.2, p.66.


63. Articles under Act preventing Desertion of Seamen from British Merchant Ships, 6 June 1797, (37 Geo III, c.30) printed in Steel, The Ship–Master's Assistant and Owner's Manual [1808], pp.209–10. Before this Act it was customary that on "return home in the rivers" seamen go ashore each night to sleep, although prohibited under these articles. Shipowners were responsible for the cargo until received by the agent which required seamen and officers to stay with the cargo even after loaded into lighters, until it was delivered to the agent. The legislation set a (separate) daily wage of 2/6 for this river work, additional to the monthly wage.


65. At the height of intercourse (c.1700) discussed here, a very high proportion of labour was employed in London maritime work. A major reason for this high level of maritime development was its concentration in London — shipping alone accounting for between 10 and 20% of the non-agricultural labour force in Britain in 1890. London handled half Britain's shipping traffic, in addition to shipbuilding and other specialist services, etc estimated at 25% of the London labourforce, see Ralph Davis, Merchant shipping in the economy of the late seventeenth century, Economic History Review, Vol 9 No 1, 1956, p.71


67. Much like the difference between trade unions and professional organisations today.
Stem, The Porters of London, p.vii,9-13; also M. Dorothy George, "The London coal-heavers: attempts to regulate waterside labour in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries", Economic History, Vol 1 No 2, 1927, pp.229-248 coal-heavers actively sought state recognition and protective regulation; George Unwin, The Gilds and Companies of London, Fourth edition, introduction by W. F. Kahl (Frank Cass, London, 1965) pp.3,352-65, in his view, the gilds in transport entered upon the most active period of their existence at a time when the gilds of handicrafts were becoming obsolete (p.335). He attributes this rise in organisation in the 17th century on small markets, the lack of competition from the products of rural labour, no need for middlemen and that civic authorities already regulated wages and entry into the occupation. However these need to assessed in the context of growing demand for those services which by their nature (labouring fixed in time and place) could not enter into competition with the products of rural labour. In fact, the pattern of regulation forestalled the large scale development of middlemen, an organisational and social stratum that emerged in the 19th century.

Stem, The Porters of London, p.55, this, of course, is not surprising since the personnel of city government were often merchants of high social and commercial standing.

They were characterised by self-government, rules of exclusion and long apprenticeships, see Harry Goulston, Up and Down Stream, (Methuen, London, 1927) for a first hand description of river workers.

Stem, The Porters of London, p.15, criteria for the distribution of work were: 1. type of merchant services (eg Aliens and Tacklehouse served specific groups of merchants); 2. types of goods (fellowship porters dealt with measurable goods only); 3. locality (ticket porters could perform non-waterfront work); and 4. place of origin or destination of goods (claim to certain work based upon the origin or destination of merchandise, ie shipping trades). By the 18th century ticket porters did much of the work as members of the Society of Tacklehouse and Ticket Porters. The same ticket porter came into use in the mid-18th century when street porters had to wear tan badges (or tickets) to claim Society privileges. The ticket tied them to a station, with stations near the waterfront (ergo waterside ticket porters) or city (ergo Uptown ticket porters) ibid, pp.44-50

Merchants (through companies) specialised in commodities or trades (some long before the eighteenth century). Companies were state sanctioned monopolies which operated as a loose collection of enterprises. Individual companies had employed workers before the beginning of historical records. For example, porters of the Vintner's Company had a monopoly of unloading imported wines in 1508. (Note Vinters incorporated under Henry VI in 1436, Unwin, The Gilds and Companies of London, p.100). Other porters gained similar privileges, eg grocers, salters, fishmongers, drapers, skinners, haberdashers, clothworkers companies, see Stem, The Porters of London, pp.38-40.

Stem, The Porters of London, pp.41-42 eg. street porter numbers were regulated. New positions could only be offered to freemen, where the approval of 4 Tacklehouse porters, an Alderman, and at least 4 Common Councilmen (from their ward or where most of their work was done) could be demonstrated to a selection committee. Moreover, periodical certificates of good behaviour by way of a testimonial of neighbours, and the place of residence had to be registered with a Tacklehouse porter (a maximum 3d charge) where any change of address was to be notified within seven days. Special appeals to the Court of Alderman however could secure a position, although this usually required several years experience first. Street porters later joined the Tacklehouse porters and formed the Society of Tacklehouse and Ticket Porters.

eg. Stem, The Porters of London, pp.11, "portage had to be performed at standard fixed rates for the Port."

largely because it was seen as a public service rather than a competitive market; rates for the services of Aliens' porters, had been set by the City Corporation in the sixteenth century but after decades of dispute within the state in the seventeenth century legislation was passed by Parliament in 1660. This included a schedule of rates, (pp.35-36)

The following paragraph is based on Stem, The Porters of London, pp.54-65,201-210.

The payment of 1s per hour was necessary for each hour that a ticket porter offered his services when a foreigner was employed, Stem, The Porters of London, p.56.

Even within this contract arrangement the Tacklehouse porter could employ men as journeymen or as teams on an individual job basis, and again contractor was bound to employ ticket porters, although foreigners could be put on if no ticket porters offered for work. The subsequent appearance of a ticket porter required the dismissal of foreign under threat of fines, see Stem, The Porters of London, p.60.

What this meant in practice is as follows; first, the period of hiring for a particular ship (discharge of ordinary cargo was termed 'ship's work', of coastwise goods 'jobs') was extended during the period called the 'beginning' to allow licensed men to hear about the work and appear for work. The 'beginning' was defined as the time it took to lift the first 6 drafts (a sling loaded, winched up and slewed onto the wharf) of a load of more than 18 drafts. Each sling load would probably take a minimum of 5 minutes, which means that the 'beginning' would be between 30 minutes and an hour. In the case of smaller cargoes the 'beginning' would be the time it took one third the load to be unloaded or the cargo attracted a fine of 5d. Finally the rule to ensure continuity and completion of work was first introduced by the Court of Rulers in 1670, ibid pp.60-61.

The Fellowship of Billingsgate Porters unloaded corn, salt and other commodities on London wharves and quays. Stem, The Porters of London, pp.9-13, regulation involved a system of licensing, and so entry into the occupation, a fixed rate of charges, allocation to districts in the city, obligations on merchants to use only licensed porters, and so on.

This was for stone and earthenware goods, where the basket was 29 inches in depth, 27.5 inches diameter at the top and 23 inches at the bottom. Also bottom porters (not working on the waterfront) had a series of resting places (called 'pitching-places') distributed around the city which were also used by the ticket porters, Stem, The Porters of London, pp.59,61.

Stem, The Porters of London, p.205

The expansion of porters was quite large by the last third of the eighteenth century, although the majority of this was in the 'Uptown' section of the industry, that is, carrying cargo to the waterfront (where waterside ticket porters were employed) from warehouses around the city, at markets and acting as couriers, Stem, The Porters of London, pp.55-60.

Evidence of John Drinkald, West India shipowner, House of Commons Select Committee on Shipping (1823) cited in Stem, "The First London Dock Boom", p.61. idem The Porters of London, p.64, Goulston, Up and Down Stream, p.3.

George, "The London coal-heavers", pp.229-30 (referring to the coal-heavers in this case).

The difference discussed here is between form and content, a vital aspect of Marx's discussion of the transition to capitalism. What I am concerned with here is to show that the transformation of form is an organisational characteristic until around the turn of the nineteenth century (when material developments emerged) with a constant content (ie. the work methods showed little or no change) although the objective conditions of production changed (demand varied and increased) through the technical changes made possible through market expansion. Market expansion, in tum was an immanent aspect of the rise of the value-form characterised by the dominance of exchange-values, viz. capitalism (see chapter two).
96 Chapter Three

86 Stem, The Porters of London, pp.62-94, refers to the difference thus, "Teams of Ticket Porters formed wherever the handling of cargo required several workers. Gangs on the other hand were permanent partnerships of Ticket Porters working on joint account", and "Temporary association in teams... gave way to permanent association in gangs", in latter in the case of Billingsgate porters.

87 This was the normal size of a team in potato work, which was lumping, when it was performed by young men. The number did go to 20 at one stage but then was limited to 15 and then 10 again but those changes took place in the nineteenth century when other pressures came into play, as I will discuss below. Even in the eighteenth century, Billingsgate porters worked in teams of not more than 5 men, or 7 men for overboard work, Stem, The Porters of London, pp.242-243, 207-8.

88 Stephen Nicholas, "The Organisation of Public Work", in idem (ed), Convict Workers, p.156 here Nicholas only mentions the lifting of logs, but of course small or light logs might be lifted by one person.

89 For example salt work was seen as an obnoxious cargo and therefore was given to junior Billingsgate porters. Initially it was turn work and the whole cargo was given to the first 10 men at the berth. In 1829 it became gang work with 3 gangs of 15 men of Slat Porters performed the work. Billingsgate porters working overboard (on the Thames), consisted of teams of between 5 and 7 men in the boats nose (bow) was reserved for those with physical handicaps, see Stem, The Porters of London, pp.234, 208.


91 Stem, The Porters of London, p.64 notes that gangs sometimes assumed control over all work on a quay including the warehouse.


93 Stem, The Porters of London, pp.63-64, 212-13. Latter describes the pressure for (wage) rate changes around 1800 and Stem comments that many portage rates, "enacted a century ago, out of date; the basis of computation had changed" thus actual Portor charges "did not represent what the Common Council in the remote past had laid down".

94 As noted by Littler for the 19th century, idem, The Development of the Labour Process, pp.66-71.

95 Stem, The Porters of London, p.56 gives eg. where the admission fee of the Bear Quay Gang was was approx £80, and the payment on half his labour was £20, clearly a substantial penalty.

96 cf.the 19th century where the lumping across a gangway or wharf was used, many sections of workers resisted the use of winches and wheeled equipment.


98 Stem, The Porters of London, pp.62-63, 95-96. Porters were not "to refractorily associate themselves in gangs" which were banned in 1666, yet continued to exist, until finally regulated in 1781.


100 Orange chests increased in size by about 10% to 100% in the 1830s, lars of Grapes went from 28-30lbs to 901bs or a 200% increase, and men complained of broken limbs, other injuries and fatalities, see Stem, The Porters of London, p.247.

101 They were delayed compensation when West India docks opened (in 1820) since they derived no income from personal labour. Stem, The Porters of London, p.43, West India Dock supplied its own porterage.

102 George, "The London coal-heavers", Stem, The Porters of London, pp.108-113, 237-38. eg. by the end of the 18th century, Custom Authorities in London had not issued any new licences for quays since 1666. The owners of legal quays, suffered heavy losses from 1780, and the Court of Queen's Bench denied compensation when West India docks opened (in 1802) since they derived no income from personal labour. Stem, The Porters of London, pp.63-64, 212-13. Littler describes the pressure for (wage) rate changes around 1800 and Stem comments that many portage rates, "enacted a century ago, out of date; the basis of computation had changed" thus actual Portor charges "did not represent what the Common Council in the remote past had laid down".


104 For Hull, see Brown, Waterfront Organisation in Hull 1870-1900, pp.3-4 where docks built from 1776 onwards; Taplin, The Dockers Union, pp.6-8 where docks built in Liverpool from 1715 onwards; Lovell, Stevedores and Dockers, ch.1 and Stem, "The First Great Dock Boom: the growth of West India Docks", pp.59-77. Stem notes (p.62) the first London dock appeared to have been built as a private concern in the 17th century (actual date in dispute), but states, "[n]ot until the end of the 18th century, however, did a commercial company seek incorporation and powers of compulsory land purchase and dock management from Parliament."

105 New docks were financed by tonnage and other dues. For London, the relevant legislation in the early 19th century: 39 Geo. III. c.60; 42 Geo. III. c.39; 39 and 40 Geo. III. c.47 and local Acts; see Steel, Ship- Master's Assistant and Owner's Manual [1808], ch.34, pp.504-520. These Acts established and regulated the West India, East India and London Dock Companies, respectively.

106 Stem, The Porters of London, Part III.

107 At the West India Docks a system of 'permanent labourers' attached to each warehouse soon emerged with a finer degree of differentiation in terms of employment and specialisation. Note, day-work was the practical unit of employment, at between 2/6 and 3/- per day, see G. Patterson, "Nineteenth-century dock labour in the Port of London", Mariner's Mirror, Vol 52 No 3, 1966, pp.263-65. E.g. ships carrying West Indian produce had to use the West India docks under threat of forfeiture to the King and a £1,000 fine, 39 Geo. III. c.69, Stevedores' Master's Assistant and Owner's Manual [1808], p.506. By the late eighteenth century the West India and American trade was the largest user of British shipping and therefore it is not surprising that much of the legislation at this time was enacted to regulate this trade, see Davis, The Rise of the English Shipping Industry, ch.13.

108 Regulation of 42 Geo.III. c.113, Steel,Ship- Master's Assistant and Owner's Manual [1808], p.511. A range of regulations and practices developed from the interests of the State or pressures on the State. The need to ensure the appropriate flow of custom duties and the like meant that all cargoes had to be checked and weighed, special regulations of explosives for a minimal level of public safety and so on.

109 The usual informal plank of British policy in this area was the Navigation Act.

110 Shipping expansion in the industrial revolution was largely complementary, rather than causal in economic growth, see eg. Ralph Davis, The Industrial Revolution and British Overseas Trade, (Leicester University Press, Leicester, 1979) argues that overseas trade made little direct contribution to the industrial revolution was important for further expansion of the British industrial economy. The argument here is that further contribution rested on new economic institutions for shipping and a new role for the state.

111 George, "The London coal-heavers", p.230; Patterson, "Nineteenth century dock labour in the Port of London", p.263 where there were 'preferable weighers', 'extra weighers', 'supernumerary weighers' and so on. Master Weighers had employed porters on the waterfront for centuries. The point is that the structuring of the labour market through the employment of preferential men, who were virtually permanently employed, and grades of extras was regulated by civil authorities and was usually in response to demands made by the trade as a whole. It was therefore a system of industrial authority which was generated by the direct workers and sanctioned by the state. This is an altogether different situation than structures of the labour market that developed through the nineteenth century, although on the surface it appears similar.

112 Patterson, "Nineteenth century dock labour in the Port of London" pp.265, 272-277

113 Stem, The Porters of London, Parts 2.3. The Act dissolving the last section of the Billingsgate porters was passed on 15 March 1894, effective from Midsummer day of the same year (p.303).

115 Criminality was an aspect of internal population mobility, for a discussion of the global context of labour mobility see, Stephen Nicholas and Peter R. Shergold, "Transportation as Global Migration", in S. Nicholas (ed), Convict Workers, pp.28-42; also P. McMichael, Settlers and the Agrarian Question, Foundations of Capitalism in Colonial Australia, (Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1984).
All such reasons may be insufficient in themselves, but necessary conditions for the final result, see G. C. Bolton, "The hollow conqueror: flux and the foundations of Australia", Australian History Review, Vol 8 No 1, 1968, pp.3–16 esp. p.16 or C. M. H. Clark, A History of Australia, 6 Vols (Melbourne University Press, Melbourne, 1962–1978) 1, esp. ch.4, pp.59–72. See also R. W. Connell and T. H. Irving, Class Structure in Australian History, (Longman Cheshire, Melbourne, 1980) p.31, who also note the controversy surrounding the establishment of the colony, see fn.1, p.66. The latter however place more emphasis on local struggles rather than linking these with changes in Britain. The role of political command and the law is most recently discussed in David Neal, The Rule of Law in a Penal Colony: Law and Politics in Early New South Wales 1788–1840 (Cambridge University Press, Melbourne, 1991).

McMichael, Settlers and the Agrarian Question, pp.448.

Michael Dunn, Australia and the Empire: From 1788 to the Present, (Fociana, Sydney, 1984) pp.17-27; the transportation of convicts to Western Australia was in direct response to pressure by pastoral interests which were encountering an insufficient supply of free labour, pp.34–5.

J. Bathurst to Bigge, 6/11/1819, where he writes in reference to the settlements in New Holland, "Not having been established with any view to territorial or commercial advantages they must chiefly be considered as receptacles for offenders, ...", BPP, Vol 14, 1823, [U.P., Colonies, Australia, Vol 3, 1970] p.237.

Capt. F. Rhodes, Pageant of the Pacific: Being the Maritime History of Australasia, 2 Vols (F. J. Thwaites, Sydney, 1937), 1, pp.27–8, 32, 135f; Bolton, "The hollow conqueror", pp.14–15; later in the nineteenth century motives of imperial expansion were attributed by many in the Australian colonies to Russia and Germany. However, one writer has recently pointed out that the emphasis of German contact with the colonies in the latter decades of the nineteenth century was in terms of trade in order to secure raw materials and export markets and to promote the economic viability of German colonies, John Perkins, "German shipping and Australia before the first world war", Australian Economic History Review, Vol 29 No 1, 1989, p.42.


Dunn, Australia and the Empire, p.17.


It seemed that the attractions of the colonies outweighed the deterrent value, eg. evidence of James Busby, (whimaker and government official in NSW) Thomas Macqueen, Edward Wakefield, Report from the Select Committee on Secondary Punishments, Cmd 276, BPP, Vol 7, 1831, Minutes of Evidence, Qs.1233, 1246, 1271; further evidence of evidence of Lachlan Macquarie, "Q. Does the East India Company’s charter in other respects materially impede the prosperity of commerce? A. I should consider so". Minutes of Evidence, [SC on Transportation, 1812]; further instruction to Macquarie in reference to the Navigation Acts, I. Bathurst to Macquarie, 11 Dec 1815, H.R.A., Series I 8, p.648.

The mercantile class was the most promising method for this.

John Cumpston (an invaluable compilation of shipping movements) lists 41 American vessels, many of which made several visits. Most proceeded on to South east Asia or China, see idem, Shipping Arrivals and Departures Sydney, 1788–1825, (Canberra, 1964) p.3.

The purpose, to "prevent it being occupied by the subjects of any other European power", cited in Rhodes, Pageant of the Pacific, 1, p.99.


idem. Shipping Arrivals and Departures Sydney, 1788–1825, (Canberra, 1964) p.3.

eg. evidence of Campbell, "Q. Does the East India Company’s charter in other respects materially impede the prosperity of commerce? A. I should consider so", Minutes of Evidence, [SC on Transportation, 1812], p.76.

For the politics of Campbell’s trip, of the "Lady Barlow," to Britain, see Margaret Steven, Merchant Campbell 1769–1846: A Study of colonial trade, (Oxford University Press, Melbourne, 1965) ch.5; Hainsworth, "The New South Wales shipping interest 1800–1821", Journal of the Royal Australian Historical Society, Vol 29 No 1, 1989, pp.106, 138; Bax, "Australian Merchant Shipping, 1788–1849", pp.252–57, puts the number at 46 up to 1809, and also gives a summary of Macquarie’s support for the abolition of the Navigation Acts referred to above; Cumpston cites the figure of 58 between 1792 and 1811.

In Britain the economic interests of capital had already developed a strong political voice in the shape of demands for free trade, best illustrated in the work of Adam Smith. Commitment to mercantilism waned before 1820 as the industrial revolution fuelled free trade ideology and rendered mercantilist regulations, such as the East India charter, obsolete. Regulations were rescinded as much by many British merchants and shipowners as they were in the colonies, eg. the merchants of Leith and Edinburgh in Scotland applied pressure on London for the removal of the East India restrictions form the end of 1812, with a petition presented to Parliament in April 1813, D. S. Macmillan, Scotland and Australia 1788–1850, (Clarendon, Oxford, 1967) p.141.
In the early 1820s, several meetings were attended by Eager, Redfern, Lord, Terry, Fulton, and others, and they continued to be held after Bigge's departure from the colony. A petition was passed at a "numerously attended" meeting of 23 Jan 1821 and transferred to England.

**Bigge Report Cmnd 448** (1822), pp.140-55 outlines some alleged unsatisfactory business practices and the inadequate policies of Macquarie. He voiced similar criticisms regarding the role of merchants in Van Diemen's Land, *Bigge Report Cmnd 136* (1823), p.29

By the end of the first decade almost 6,000 acres of land were under cultivation in the Hawkesbury, Parramatta and Sydney regions. With these factors, private employers lacked authority over discipline, labor market costs, and so on characteristic of wage-labor. The state retained disciplinary authority over convict labor, regulated rations, working hours, and so on which compounded the settlers' recalcitrance in the settlement. Many commentators also pointed out the low level of convict productivity, especially on government gangs. Indeed many smaller private settlers remitted assigned convicts for they could not pay thefr own way in terms of production. Road gangs were inefficient, see eg. G. Karskens, "Defiance, Deference and Diligence: Three Views of Convicts In New South Wales Road Gangs". The poor soil of the Sydney Cove area forced the colony to expand to these areas. By 1800 about 6,000 acres were under cultivation in the Hawkesbury, Parramatta and Sydney regions. With this population, 5,557 it meant that one acre of cultivation was required to feed one person.

Rhodes, *Pageant of the Pacific*, 1, p.119; eg. Macquarie stated that he was forced to charter ships for supplies from Bengal due to near famine conditions in the colony soon after his arrival in 1810. Copy of Report on the colony of NSW to Bathurst, 27 Jul 1822, Papers relating to Her Majesty's Settlements in New South Wales, BPP, Cmnd 450, p.2 [UOP Colonies Australia, Vol 3, 1970]

The principle that the labor of convicts became the property of the state underlay Transportation Acts from 1777 onwards (4 George I, c.11). In colonial Australia the Governor held authority over labour and was empowered to assign it to a nominated third party. The economic advantage to larger employers derived from lower relative costs for rations and superintendence for labour discipline. Convict labor was between a 33%-66% less productive than wage-labor. Many small employers returned assigned convicts, see Butlin, *White Human Capital In Australia, 1788–1850*, Working Papers in Economic History.
Hainsworth points out that the emancipists who arose as leading traders around 1800 seemed to do so very quickly, and therefore he suggests that they probably had been accumulating capital for some years before 1800 in a role as middlemen, dealers and the like. Certainly the evidence he presents in the case of Lord seems quite clear on this point, see Builders and Adventurers, pp.7,12,14,18; for the later dominance of traders, see e.g. Bigge Report, Cmd 136, 1823, pp.21-23; Margaret E. Stone, "The changing pattern of commerce in New South Wales, 1810-1821", Business Archives and History, Vol 3 No 2, 1963, pp.139-155 points out that Macquarie had to depend on an expansion on state regulation to promote the growth of a "dynamic society" (p.140), while at the same time encouraging the role of the commercial class in the colony. The point that I wish to emphasise is that his policies were unable to curb the influence of new economic forms in pursuit of economic development. At this level, the success or otherwise, of this or that group, is immaterial, it is the process of change that is important.

See G. J. Abbott "Economic Growth", in G. J. Abbott and N. B. Nairn (eds), Economic Growth of Australia, 1788-1821, (Melbourne University Press, Melbourne, 1969), p.158 for distinction between economic growth (increase in the output per capita) and economic expansion (simple extension of current practices) on a larger scale. The early years saw expansion but not growth - due to three factors, (1) no or little technical improvement in agricultural productivity (main gains in private agriculture were from greater effort), (2) unresponsiveness in labour supply (arrival of convict labour) leading to absorption problems, (3) high proportion of military and administrative positions.

The precise number is difficult to determine. Jones, Australian Colonial Navies, Appendix 1 p157 gives the number as 10, Cumpston reports the number at 15, in 1800, in addition to, "several smaller boats for various uses", idem, Shipping Arrivals and Departures Sydney, p.37.

See Appendix Table: A3.2 which gives details of registered government and private vessels, June 1801.

Bigge Report, Cmd 448, 1822, pp.28,34,47 where Bigge lists some 29 government vessels employed in Sydney Harbour, worked by convicts, transporting supplies, such as lime, grass, wood etc for various government establishments. Similar boats were worked in Hobart Town and George Town (near Launceston). In fact, Bigge commented that the number of such boats at George Town was "more numerous than there is any present occasion for" (p.47). The use of such small boats continued for decades and were reported (and worked by convicts) in use in Van Diemen's Land in the 1840s, see e.g. Returns by J. Thompson, Registrar, with Comptroller-General's Report No.4, 5 Jan 1846, Correspondence and Papers Relating to Convict Ships, Convict Discipline and Transportation, BPP, Cmd 573, 1843-47 [U.P, Crime and Punishment, Transportation, Vol 7, 1970]

Returns from the Commissariat Department for tender services to 24 Dec 1831, Minutes of Evidence, Bigge Report, Cmnd 448, 1822, pp.35-37,65 where Bigge lists some 29 government vessels employed in Sydney Harbour, worked by convicts, transporting supplies, such as lime, wood, etc. The number at 13 in 1800, in addition to, "several smaller boats for various uses", idem, Shipping Arrivals and Departures Sydney, p.37.

This particular report mentioned the "enormous profit" on imported commodities, in particular the China trade. Jones, Builders and Adventurers, p.74; see Appendix Table: A3.3 listing vessels, tonnages, owners and traders in the China trade. The early years saw expansion but not growth - due to three factors, (1) no or little technical improvement in agricultural productivity (main gains in private agriculture were from greater effort), (2) unresponsiveness in labour supply (arrival of convict labour) leading to absorption problems, (3) high proportion of military and administrative positions.

Petition 25 Jan 1800, idem The Sydney Traders: Simeon Lord and his contemporaries 1788-1821, (Melbourne University Press, Melbourne, 1981) p.122, Hainsworth (ed) Builders and Adventurers, p.79 estimates colonial vessels at between 110 and 120, with only about 12 not built in the colony. The hazardous nature of colonial shipping is indicated by the fact that more than a third of these vessels were wrecked.
Steven, "The changing pattern of commerce", pp.141-47,150, the French war and commercial 1812 produced much of the downturn in shipping and trade. There had been a minor trade recession in 1804.

Hainsworth, A Maritime History of Australia, pp.73-74, "By the time of Bigge's visit, therefore, the local maritime industry had developed in several well-defined trades; these were the grain carriage from the Hawkesbury and from Van Dieman's Land to Sydney, the transport of timber, particularly of cedar, from the coastal regions north and south of Sydney, but also of spars from New Zealand, and the shipment of coal from Newcastle to Sydney"; see Bigge Report, Cmnd 136, 1823, p.60.

Tonages handled were not recorded until 1822. Campion gives only a general description of cargoes compiled various sources.

Bigge Report, Cmnd 448, 1822, pp.44,80-84 where eg Bigge writes "Lime is procured from ... Double Bay ... Seven men are employed there, and work their own boat in bringing the lime to Hobart."

Steven, "The shipping interest", pp.19-28, see also idem, The Sydney Traders, Appendix E, Part 2, pp.242-43, which lists partnerships by convict or free status. The most famous was Sir John, merchant, sealer, later expanded into manufacture) Henry Kable and John Underwood (operated from a boat-building licence early in the early years of the century, and engaged in sealing), Andrew Thompson, (acquired boats from a small retail business in Windsor) Charles (or Samuel) Nichols, (transportation of coal and cedar), Thomas (or Mary) Rieby, (sealing and some Pacific trade), Jonathan Griffins (Hawkesbury River boat-builder and coastal trader and vessel owner), see Steven, Merchant Campbell, pp.140-42.

General Orders, 30 March 1815, Hr4. 1. p.315

Palmer, "Investors in London Shipping, 1820-50", p.50, found that in his sample of the years, 1824, 1836 and 1848) trading partnerships of more than three were the exception. It should be noted that in all of those years, trading partnerships never amounted to more than about 9% of all shipowners.

This proportion is very similar to that reported in the 1814 registration list, where of the 31 private vessels, 27 were solely owned, and 8 were owned (at least in part) and operated by the master, see Table: A.5.5. Also the 51 owner shares, (although this does not refer to share arrangements in a financial sense) is greater than the number of actual owners as several men owned or part-owned more than one vessel.

The Naval secretary's list indicated only 39 owners, although John Gilmor and Co. was based in Calcutta.

see Appendix Table: A.3.3 & Table: A.3.5

Steven, "The changing pattern of commerce" pp.139,151-55 argues that the nature of the merchant function changed from 1820, from a labour process and colonial labour of the 'lower orders'.

McArthur withdrew from this type of speculative activity to focus on wool production. Merchants such as Campbell with contacts in Calcutta and Britain were able to utilise vessels to carry long term goods in a manner which was otherwise unsustainable by others, especially the emancipists. For example in exporting seal products, men such as Lord had to rely on American ships for export (or sell to Campbell, as did Kable and Underwood) that would not bring the same profits, see Steven, Merchant Campbell, pp.107-110

McMichael, Settlers and the Agrarian Question, pp.66-7. Lord was the first to develop a private manufacturing estate at Botany Bay

Peter Cunningham, Two Years in New South Wales: A series of letters, 2 vols (Colburn, London, 1827); facsimile ed. Libraries Board of South Australia, Adelaide, [1866] 2, p.133

Bigge Report, Cmnd 136, 1823 p.62

Cunningham, Two Years in NSW [1827] 2, p.75

Steven, Merchant Campbell, p.286, Council and Living, p.54.


McMichael, Settlers and the Agrarian Question, p.67; the most comprehensive discussion of the development of the financial system is S. J. Buxton, The Foundation of the Australian Monetary System 1788-1851, (Melbourne University Press, Melbourne, 1953); the Bank of New South Wales was the first limited liability company in the colonies. Bigge Report, Cmnd 136, 1823, pp.65-68

Cunningham, Two Years in NSW 2, p.99

Colin Jones, Australian Colonial Novels, (Australian War Memorial, Canberra, 1986) p.9, settlement of Northern Australia was with the aim "... of establishing a definite claim to another part of the vast empty continent.

Dunn, Australia and the Empire, p.33

David S. MacMillan, "The Rise of the British Australian Shipping Trade, 1810-1827: Its Problems, Progress and Promoters", in Alan Birch and David S. MacMillan (eds), Wealth & Progress: Studies in Australian Business History, (Angus & Robertson, Sydney, 1967) pp.11-12, who points forward the view that the large increase in the number of emigrants "was to be a decisive factor in promoting the shipping trade in the colonies."

Steven, Merchant Campbell, p.284

J. H. Gross owned the vessel in partnership with T. Street. The latter gave up his interest in 1838. Other steamers on the run were the Tamar, the Australia and the Ceres, see N. L. McKella, From Derby Round to Burketown: The A.U.S.N. Story, (University of Queensland Press, Brisbane 1977) p.3
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Hartwell, The Economic Development of Van Dieman’s Land, p.169, and ch.9 in general

Bach, Maritime History of Australia, p.77

eg. Lang reports that 26 ships were engaged in whaling in Aug 1830, see An Historical and Statistical Account of New South Wales, 1834 cited in Little, "The sealing and whaling industry", p.118


L. Norman, Pioneer Shipping of Tasmania, (Walch & Sons, Hobart, 1938) see Table p.28

An indication of this can be seen in the volume of shipping entering and departing for the colonies and the value of the cargoes in the 1920s. For example in the year to Jan 1825, 30 ships (totally 11,439 tons) sailed for the Australian colonies with £212,694 in exports. Only 12 vessels (3,968 tons) entered from the colonies in the same period, with imports of only £47,409 see Returns from Inspector General of Imports and Exports, 7 April 1825, BPP, Cmd 207, Vol 21, 1825 pp.2–3 [UUP Colonies Australia, Vol 3, 1970]

MacMillan, Scotland and Australia, chs.4-6; Table: A5.9 shows a growth in overseas shipping in the 1820s with a levelling in arrivals and a fall in tonnage between 1929 and 1831. It was not until 1833 that significant improvement in overseas shipping took place.

Norman, Pioneer Shipping of Tasmania, pp.146-47


Hartwell, Economic Development in Van Dieman’s Land, p.160

The newspaper the Australian published list of 42 merchants belonging to Sydney commercial circles that had contributed "the ???ed of the commercial strength and importance into which this Colony is rising"

see Appendix Table: A.3.11


McMichael, Settlers and the Agrarian Question, ch.5 pp.106–117

McMichael, Settlers and the Agrarian Question, ch.4 esp.pp.95–105

The majority of published local histories of shipping companies, ships or particular trades call heavily on this motif in their work. This is largely an unreflected representation of the cultural relations that have been so dominant in the shipping industry.
I. Introduction

The organisation of labour in stevedoring work occurred in the shadow of other economic functions in the context set out in chapter three. Moreover Australian colonial conditions made the waterfront unique. The colonies were small and the use of convict labour delayed the full emergence of informal labour organisation and institutions such as benefit societies and autonomous regulation. The waterfront was consolidated later in Australia than in Britain and elsewhere overseas. Nevertheless I will show that labour organisation was evident in practices related to the nature of stevedoring, local conditions, and patterns inherited from Britain.

In this chapter I will examine the formation of a stevedoring labour force in colonial Australia and its relation to the general labour market. Colonial society quickly generated a working class, whose response to colonial life began with attempts to deal with the vagaries of the labour market. The previous chapter showed that the market quickly took root in the colony, despite its penal status and restrictive state policies. The latter also inhibited the emergence of a recognisable stevedoring industry and labour force.

Before I examine the emergence of the stevedoring labour force (in Section III), the next section discusses key characteristics of British traditions in colonial society. In particular I will point to the deepening of capitalist economic relations on the position and role of labour organisations, focusing on cultural and ideological elements of British traditions. Section III turns to the issue of labour organisation in stevedoring up to the 1850s. The final section concludes the chapter.

II. Institutions, Social and Cultural Forms

I have argued that early capitalist development on the waterfront in Britain was shaped by the state, through the corporate status that organised labour and capital - porters and trading companies. Capital drew on existing labour market practice and labour process organisation which initially gave workers some social and cultural autonomy from the immediate effects of capitalist domination. Guilds, merchant companies and Fellowships exercised a degree of autonomy. Local customs, obligations and culture engendered group solidarity and social integration, but it also divided workers by organisational position, economic function and skill status.

This autonomy was however increasingly delimited by the social form of capitalist relations. Pre-capitalist political and cultural practices provided the conditions for the expansion of capitalist domination, both in terms of extensive and intensive development (seen in the emergence of the
stevedoring gang). This transposition of practices and institutions is a major theme emphasised in this thesis. In this social process, practices and institutions are seen as both mutually conditioned and potentially contradictory within the trajectory of change. In terms, societies encompass and combine different modes of production, where tensions are triggered by mutual interaction and internal contradictions of each. Each of the fissures thereby created, form the conditions for friction between sources of authority and control. The balance between different sources of authority and control which define the limits of capital. No universal blueprint exists as the tendencies in any given social form work through their own logic and contradictions in boundaries set by alternative social forms.

In Britain, then, worker autonomy was limited by capitalist development. In response porters sought to guard their position by fellowship regulation and practice precisely when capitalism spread its influence through British society. As noted in the last chapter Fellowships limited the incursion of capitalist authority into 'the lower orders' but were unable to cope with the effects of the first industrial revolution. After 1800 they were often bypassed (eg in the West India trade), or while some maintained porterage it was more in name than practice (eg Billingsgate until 1894).

These organisational forms of direct workers depended as much on political institutions, as they did on the nature of the labour process and division of labour. Added to this are the modes of association, communities, institutions, celebrations, symbols and other conditions of existence that supported workers. But the political context was a vital condition for the generation of workplace authority by workers themselves and the categories of craft, guild, fellowship and so on provided workers with a socially recognised economic function. There were regulations over the labour market, engagement practices, working conditions, allocation of tasks, in short over the stages of the employment relation (see Figure 2.4) and labour process. When the political regime of the pre-industrial Britain was transformed both the integrative function and oppositional potential of corporate organisation was undermined. The allocation of social position, or insertion into the 'labouring classes', corporate status lost its authority and efficacy. So did the traditional patterns of social and industrial protest. Few legitimate organisational avenues for the expression of discontent, protest and opposition were open to workers - local resistance, public disturbances and riots prevailed over 'organised' protest. The dismantling of corporate institutions required, in Tilly's terms, new repertoires of collective action.

This came into relief as the changing social and economic conditions during the industrial revolution, when a new pattern of worker organisation, and protest, was needed. One view sees the customary pattern of open and tumultuous protest transferred into the industrial arena, most colourfully termed 'collective bargaining by riot' by Hobsbawm. Open and violent protest still requires a basis in social continuity. The core aspects of this new pattern were local organisation in civil society and a reconstructed skill in the workplace. Its institutional expressions varied, but centred on the benefit or trade society, mechanics institute, adult education, the 'co-op', the Lodge, the Church, even the 'pub', and autonomous regulation in the workplace, albeit under pressure as 'new rules of the game' emerged. Taken together, these developments were constituted by 'informalism' that spanning local, communal and community relations and workplace/group work control.

The ideas of social position and hierarchy - that lay behind corporate Fellowships - were
crucial aspects of the organisation of British society. These ideas were transferred to colonial Australia. The dismantling of the Fellowship left few institutional supports for the legitimacy for worker authority, apart from custom. The *quid pro quo* of corporate regulation for low rank was broken. For capital, labour had been cut from its prior means of subsistence, the land, and freed from the restrictions of corporate organisation. The vacuum of legitimation, particularly in the extraction of effort, that is the conversion of labour into labour power.

For Marx and Braverman, this was a subordinate consideration. For these writers, labour was rendered 'free' by force only to face the coercion of the market that compelled workers to sell their labour power. Whereupon they entered the 'hidden abode of production' and were continuously subject to the despotic command of capital or its hired underlings. Marx did however note the problem of legitimation for the state in reconciling the political ideology and practices of capital.

The argument here is that although production is central to the understanding of structural change, such change cannot occur without changes in ideas, modes of thought, or 'mentalities' which constitute certain conditions of existence of production. That such changes must occur is an integral part of structural change itself, but they are not necessarily generated in that arena. In other words, the position and role of the 'lower orders' cannot be seen as tied directly to their role as workers. Ideas about the lower orders formed a part of a larger configuration of discourses current in Britain during the industrial revolution, a configuration of ideas that underwent significant change in the 1800s. Of central concern are the role of labour and the nature of industrial authority. I will turn briefly to these issues.

The notion of a social structure as a hierarchy infused with a moral order was common in British society at the turn of the nineteenth century. Governor Bligh held this view of early colonial society. In answer to a Select Committee question on "the different classes of society in Botany Bay" he outlined six levels; the military and civil administration, the two highest, with common labourers and convicts at the bottom. The question and his measured reply indicated prevailing conception of society held by those occupying the higher levels.

The order of the colonial hierarchy was clearly influenced by its status as a penal colony. The hierarchy rested on two central planks of the 1700s, namely, one's relation to the state (military or civil), and to land (owner, tenant or landless). Convict status was merely a local adaptation. This general view of the social structure has a number of consequences for the argument here. The low status of common labourers was not far removed from that of convicts given that convicts often did stevedoring work. I will say more about this below.

Conversely, merchants held a high social position, as in Bligh's hierarchy, for in British society of the period they had a close relation to civil government, which rested on a long history that went back to the merchant guilds. Furthermore, until the turn of the nineteenth century merchant activities depended on, and were subordinate to State mercantilist and strategic policies. The close association between commerce and (imperial) civil administration remained, and the (respectable) merchant was the social equal of officers in the higher echelon of civil administration, particularly in the colonial context. Landlords and merchants often held positions in civil administration, Campbell for example was a magistrate and naval officer, Blaxcell acted as secretary to the Governor.

The service and public administration attributes accorded merchants were reflected in the
way their commercial activities were seen — as based "on a wide and sound knowledge of markets and commodities [rather] than on an appreciation of local profits and scarcities." The merchant therefore stood apart from the trader. As 'trading' was a plebeian activity merely securing profits from fortuitous circumstances. Moreover, in the colonial context trading was often associated with dealing, that is, retailing, a business activity of still lower status. Dealing was associated with shopkeeping and, more morally damning, with 'pedlars' and 'extortioners'.

Not surprisingly Governor Macquarie's policy of admitting emancipists into 'society' was met by a storm of protest. It clearly violated the social hierarchy and soon precipitated the emergence of the 'exclusivist' group. The latter included only the "more wealthy and respectable portion of the proprietors", who shunned any contact with ex-convicts. 'Respectable' here had become synonymous with leading citizen or even powerful person. This group of proprietors were instrumental in the formation of the Bank of Australia, in competition with the Bank of New South Wales, for this reason.

By the 1820s the free colonial merchants re-established a position of high status they thought as their rightful position. Consequently the gulf in social status between the labourer and the merchant (particularly as shipowner) reinforced the separation of commercial interests from direct production and the labour process. Paradoxically this quest for status authority left the industrial arena open to the continuation of older forms of organisation. That is workers were left an ideological space for the relatively autonomous development of labour organisation. The greater the commitment to an ideology of commercial and landed gentry the greater the resistance to the idea of intervening in the labour process. In practice this bolstered the autonomy of shipmasters, wharfingers and merchants' agents (often ex-masters themselves) in dealing with ship and shore stevedoring labour.

For the labourer lacking a craft or skill no ready means to a status position was available, both in terms of function and moral standards. The close association of the common labourer with convict status in Bligh's hierarchy emphasised the brutish nature of labouring work. The worst convicts were assigned to government road gangs and chain gangs to undertake labouring work. Regulations for the northern penal settlements for example suggested that the "worst description of men, must be given the labour of loading and unloading, and removing heavy weights". Not surprisingly workers engaged in government or private stevedoring work were tainted with similar moral conceptions. Moreover, the language of order and discipline was most used in connection with labourers, and the 'lower classes'. The preoccupation with convict discipline, and labour discipline generally, was the result of the search for a new form of authority to 'order' behaviour, or 'orient action'. Factory discipline or despotism was imbued with a form of authority based on a status society where protest, complaint or non-compliance was immediately defined as ill-discipline.

The large status gulf between the upper class (including merchants) and labourers was reflected in the discontinuous organisational structure of production and the consequential absence of a co-ordinated or unified control-system. This in turn was reflected in the system of authority exercised over the labour process. Again Bigge commented,

With respect to the other superintendents and overseers in the service of the government, it appeared to me that the higher classes were too much occupied by interests of their own to attend to...
Even superintendents were of the lower orders. However recent research has questioned the view that convict labour in general was poor or inefficient,^25^ the point to be emphasised is that the control—systems over work were largely undeveloped, particularly before 1830. Bigge saw this as common to government service and a large proportion of private assignment, reporting that only the "more opulent" settlers provided constant work for convicts or sufficient resources for incentive payments above the basic required by government regulation. One ex-commandant of convict settlements in Newcastle and Port Macquarie (in the 1820s) admitted that no management system for convict settlements existed while he was in command.^26^

In sum, the social gulf between merchants and labourer, particularly the unskilled labourer who worked in stevedoring and associated functions was large. The influence of traditional British ideas of social position and labour organisation was strong in the colonies. This is not surprising given the lack of institutional connection between the actual labour process and commercial capital.

**III. Stevedoring Labour Force & Early Colonial Labour Market**

In this section I will examine the development of the labour force and nature of labour markets in the early colonial stevedoring industry. I will argue that despite the effects of convict labour, the capitalist character developed early in the colony's history. The small population of the colonies, their very but high rates of growth, and uncertain population growth uniquely shaped the labour market. Labour attempted to reproduce the structures of British labour organisation and to secure advantages from local conditions in this development.

The shape of authority and control over labour fashioned under these conditions, depended heavily on the opportunities at hand, such as strong governmental authority and the use of legislation or regulation as well as pragmatic control in the workplace. Employers recognised that to secure work effort from convicts and others a practical accommodation with the worker was required. But, authority was still tied to idea of status position and the subordinate role of labour in society. In this context casual industries, such as the waterfront, had particular problems.

1. **The Growth of Stevedoring Labour up to the 1850s**

The size of the labour force employed in stevedoring is difficult to determine accurately for it had a number of characteristics that forestalled a clear industrial identity. This fact also prevented any institutional collective organisation of labour, although examples of collective action have been recorded.

In the first years the Sydney Cove colony saw goods landed on shore by small boats from larger vessels anchored offshore. The work on board ship was initially performed mostly by seamen^27^ — breaking out cargo and discharging over the side — since overseas vessels in 1810 averaged over thirty men, sufficient to work cargo. Governor Phillip soon had several 'flats' (small boats) built to transfer goods to shore. The use of flats and later lighters, transferred much work to shore labour, particularly when small wharves were built in the early 1790s.^28^ Larger ships continued to depend on unloading onto lighters or barges. Nearly half a century later, methods were the same in the early Melbourne settlement. Passengers were landed at 'The Beach' (ie Port Melbourne) "put out by their respective ships' boats on that part of the ... beach ... nearest to Melbourne, whence, they trod ... about a mile and a half ... to ... 'The Falls'."^29^
1. **Convict Labour**

   Convict labour in Port Jackson did stevedoring work in three main ways; as part of their work on small government or private boats used for government transport around the locality; second, as members of the Town Gang attached to the dockyard and finally, as ancillary to other carrying work.

   Colonial employment returns in 1801 listed 33 convicts employed on boats and other vessels in Sydney and Parramatta. A year later, in May 1802, this number expanded to 64; 19 on boats and 45 on other colonial vessels. By the early 1820s some two dozen small government vessels operating in Sydney Harbour and the Parramatta River employed a total of 120 convicts. Twelve boats with 52 men, transported lime and timber to Parramatta stores, and three boats with about 12 men worked in supplying the dockyard. Similarly convicts worked on boats loading lime, wood and coal at Newcastle and boats on the Tamar River at George Town in northern Van Dieman's Land.

   In Newcastle convicts worked coal seams and loaded it on vessels, as coal deposits were deemed to be possessions of the Crown by Governor Hunter. Later, private coal shipments were licensed on the payment of dues based on a standard hundredweight (44 kg) measured basket, regulated by the Government for loading coal ships. Government and private lighters and small boats used convicts for loading and discharging in Sydney harbour, a practice commented on by Commissioner Bigge. These vessels transferred cargo to various wharves around the harbour and environs. Cunningham reported that when he arrived at Port Jackson in 1826, a "numbers of boats soon surround[ed] the ship" with goods for sale and offering to land passengers. Such boatmen, who were not all convicts, landed passengers and goods to various parts of the harbour.

   Colonial and government vessels were also loaded and discharged by the Town Gang stationed in the Dockyard. About 70 men worked in the Dockyard in 1824. Many were craftsmen such as shipwrights, sailmakers, coopers and so on. Yard labourers assisted these men, built quays and did general carrying, as well as being "made to be useful" in stevedoring. They worked in chains. But the numbers assigned to this work was small, probably less than 20 men. Men in the Gaol gang also did carrying work, although this gang varied markedly in size and was disbanded for a period in late 1820s and early 1830s. Men convicted of crimes in the colonies were also sentenced to perform this work on ships in Sydney Harbour as well.

   In some cases the government restricted the use of convicts for stevedoring to minimise the problem of convict escapes. For example, in the northern penal settlements, such as Moreton Bay, and in Van Dieman's Land, government regulations confined loading and discharging work to the ship's crew.

   Finally, a large number of convict labourers were employed in the Commissariat Store Gang and approximately 200 were attached to the Carters' Barracks. Men and boys were marched from the carters barracks to the dockyard and lumber yard for work. There were 29 carts and about 70 men employed in the "carriage of materials from the dockyards ... to the different buildings [around Sydney"] associated with government buildings alone. Government stores were also located at Parramatta and Windsor which were accessible by small ships and boats. The convicts working in these establishments engaged in carrying, storing and stacking work and the carters worked around the settlement. All this work again included employment on and around the waterfront. In addition
convicts were permitted to offer for employment at the end of Government workday at three in the afternoon. It is certainly that some merchants employed such labour.39

The cessation of transportation to the mainland east coast in 1840 removed convicts from the waterfront there, but they continued to work in Van Dieman’s Land. Convicts continued to be employed on vessels which travelled between small settlements on the island, they worked on wharves, in stores and in carrying goods to and from wharves. Table 4.1 illustrates the range of stevedoring and related work performed by convicts on one day (30 June 1846).

Table 4.1 Convict Labour and Stevedoring: Port Arthur 30 June 1846  

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gang</th>
<th>Men in gang</th>
<th>How Employed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No.1 boat</td>
<td>7 men</td>
<td>unloading the &quot;Swallow&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No.2 boat</td>
<td>5 men</td>
<td>trip to head of Long Bay</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No.2 Garden gang</td>
<td>39 men</td>
<td>8 men discharging, bagging, &amp; loading potatoes from the &quot;Swallow&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wood gang</td>
<td>70 men</td>
<td>8 men carting 4 tons of firewood to the wharf 1 man splitting and wheeling 4 tons firewood from the wharf to Penitentiary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ration boat</td>
<td>4 men</td>
<td>conveying rations and stores to Pt. Puer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wood Is. gang</td>
<td>6 men</td>
<td>employed in a boat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Miscellaneous</td>
<td>1 man</td>
<td>store porter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1 man</td>
<td>wharfinger timber yard</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Derived from Return showing the Number of Officers, etc BPPs, 1843–1847 [IUP, Crime and Punishment, Transportation, Vol 7, 1970, pp.594–596]

This range of stevedoring and related work was also performed by convicts in Britain, that is colonial practice merely replicated those in Britain. The main difference, however, was that the greater risk of escape in the colonies limited its use here.40

2. Private Sector

In the private market, small boats began soon after settlement to operate in Sydney Harbour, on the Parramatta and Hawkesbury Rivers. They provided the same type of service as small government boats – unloading vessels and the transport of cargo to small jetties and wharves around the settlement41 and often employed ex–convicts. In the registration returns of 1801 more than 50 men were employed in working colonial vessels, growing to over 100 men by 1806. Each small vessel was worked by only a handful of men, usually three to six.

Larger numbers of men were employed in the sealing industry, particularly in the period 1800–1810. King estimated that over 180 men were employed in this industry in 1804, including about 60 by Campbell.42 Campbell reported employing 128 men in this work, and other trading, in 1810. Probably more than 200 men engaged in this type work by this time,43 including at least some stevedoring work while in port. The proportion of the men employed by Campbell in stevedoring or related work was probably less than fifty percent. He also employed casual day labour, probably as vessels arrived, or as stores work required additional labour.44 Bligh referred to these activities when he reported on local employment that "a number [were] employed in fisheries and coasting vessels".45

The wharves and stores reflected a network of agents and local merchants which existed by the 1820s. Agents were able to conduct all the relevant commercial functions, such as handling bills of lading, hiring labour, maintaining a stores labour force and so on. Macmillan concludes that by 1820 most ships that entered Sydney or Hobart had all their cargoes handled by local merchants, rather than by the captain or supercargo.46 Numerous advertisements in the Sydney Gazette of the
time listed agents and the master as handling freight and passage inquiries. Nevertheless most merchants in Sydney and other settlements maintained stores close to the wharves, and appointed agents to supervise day-to-day operations. Campbell for example appointed William Smith his Sydney agent in 1800. Smith supervised the discharge of vessels among other duties. Campbell also had agents in other parts of the colony, Rowland Hassell at Parramatta and Thomas Bigger at Hawkesbury, who received goods to be trans-shipped to Sydney for loading. The British merchant, Alexander Spark, built a considerable and varied business after his arrival in Sydney in 1823. His diary entries showed he was the agent for 6 vessels in port at the one time in 1836 and acted as agent for 15 vessels in 1837, 18 vessels in 1838, and 22 vessels in both 1839 and 1840.

The Parramatta commissariat store permitted "boats to go alongside and have their cargoes hoisted up into its capacious granaries", and also used convict labour for stores work. A cursory view of the Sydney Gazette of the 1820s and 30s also shows lists of several stores with goods on offer. Although many sales were for smaller traders and dealers engaged in retail business, they and larger businesses created labour demand for carrying services. Larger agents also served as engagement centres for seamen. It is more difficult however, to identify direct hiring of stevedoring labour.

As the port grew, the men employed the fleet of small vessels and labourers in general lumping work formed a casual labour force around the waterfront. This type of casual work was also undertaken by skilled men. For example James Harris, an ex-convict shipwright, transported to Sydney in 1802, when put 'off store' was able to make a living based on casual work on ships and in boat building yards. He stated that, "[w]hen I worked on board ships, I earned ten shillings a day and provisions on board of most ships."

The Darling Harbour wharves were used for the weekly Sydney market on Thursdays, and thus became known as Market wharf. The many colonial vessels attracted to the market also attracted day labour to unload produce and other goods. One mechanic reported,

To it [market wharf] come great numbers of market boats to unload the various produce of the settler's farms on the Parramatta and Lane Cove rivers .... The boats also that come from up and down the coast, outside the harbour, unload here. Amongst the chief cargoes to this wharf is timber, of which great quantities always lie stacked upon the quay.

This section of the port around market wharf became identified with local and coastal shipping and overseas trades were handled around Sydney Cove.

One index of the expansion of stevedoring work that accompanied the development of local shipping discussed in chapter three was the construction of wharves and jetties. By the 1820s a considerable network had been constructed. In addition to the dockyard wharf, or King's wharf, on the western side of Sydney Cove there was the government wharf; there were two stone wharves at Cockle Bay (Darling Harbour); a stone wharf on the eastern side of Sydney Cove; a large wooden wharf, for vessels up to 100 tons, on the Hawkesbury at Windsor; a wooden wharf for vessels up to 50 tons on the George's River at Liverpool; a stone wharf at Newcastle among other smaller private jetties. In 1826 Cunningham described the Darling Harbour as a location where "mercantile wharfs [sic] and warehouses ... were fast rising". Merchants such as Campbell built their own substantial wharves and stores which were used by a number of merchants. Squires wharf, on the Parramatta River handled local merchandise and Solomon Wiseman, a former emancipist shipowner who settled on the Hawkesbury, built an extensive house, operated a ferry and held
several lucrative government contracts. The prominent merchants Alexander Berry and Edward Wollstonecraft had "a flourishing and extensive" establishment at Shoalhaven. James Davison built a wharf at Pitt Town and operated a punt. Similar developments occurred in other ports along the New South Wales coast, in Van Dieman's Land and other colonies as they were established.

3. **Stevedoring Labourers**

To identify the number of men engaged in stevedoring work and related stores and carrying work is difficult, but by the 1820s they would have numbered in the hundreds in the local trade extending around Sydney, Hobart and Port Dalrymple (George Town and Launceston). It is likely that the men used on the boats mentioned above (including convict labour on government boats) did most of the work on these vessels, but little of the privately employed day labour by the 1820s. The increase in trade and goods around the wharves in the early 1820s prompted Bigge to recommend that convicts should not be employed on colonial vessels or housed in and around maritime districts because of the greater opportunities for escape. However, as I have indicated above, convicts continued to work small vessels in Van Dieman's Land into the 1840s. Certainly the views of several merchants, such as the exclusivists, did not encourage contact with convicts. With Robert Campbell, who prided himself in employing only free men, and William Walker, who believed that convicts should not be stationed in Sydney, the number of convicts employed in stevedoring would have been small.

Ships crews also performed work, mainly ship work, in the settlements just mentioned. Given the poor facilities in small outports crews performed virtually all the work. For example, at Port Macquarie, cedar was loaded in the following manner, "large vessels lading with cedar lie at the anchor until their cargoes are completed by rafts floated out to them." In many smaller outlying penal settlements, regulations specified that the crew perform loading and unloading work. It was the larger settlements where larger overseas ships were moored alongside the wharf that allowed more scope for shore-based workers. In addition, a labour force was attached to stores work and general carrying in mercantile and wharf districts.

The question of the status of stevedoring workers is difficult to determine in the first fifty years of the colony's existence. I pointed out the unique nature of casual work on the waterfront in chapter two. Did workers form a continuous market attachment to the industry or were they marginally attached, as floating casual workers? This question can be answered by a consideration of the range of tasks performed and workers associated with central functions. On board ships, it certainly the case that men working on routine local, and even coastal, vessels were relatively continuously employed. Overseas vessels carried crews large enough to perform shipboard stevedoring tasks. But, as I have shown, stevedoring was only one part of their work. Lightermen and boatmen were a more central group and if they owned vessels were clearly continuously attached. They however engaged floating casual workers. On shore, merchants who owned stores certainly employed some permanent workers, probably with additional casual workers. Furthermore cartage and porterage work was required by merchants, traders, auctioneers and retailers. One "trader" noted that 20 or 30 labourers were waiting for employment at an (unnamed) wharf and complained of the, "dreadful losses sustained, by so many idle fellows being allowed to remain on the wharf." A dozen of these men were offered employment loading carts with wheat.
Cunningham reported that in the mid-1820s the Government wharf in Sydney was a place "where carts and porters ...[were] generally on the lookout for jobs." Moreover on market day, "file after file" of loaded carts would be seen proceeding to the market place off George Street. There was also an "abundance" gigs to be hired in Sydney at 15s per day. An emigrant mechanic was also struck by the "rows of drays and carts" on market day. Although carts were owned and used by small farmers in surrounding districts, carts for hire were clearly available. Some of their trade at least, would have been on wharves and adjacent sheds and stores. Floating casual workers worked in these areas. Whether these floating casual workers were the same workers over a period of time will be considered below.

The relative proportion of continuous casual wharf workers to floating casuals cannot be determined. It would seem that continuous workers were a relatively small proportion of the labour force, since no worker was reported in the such a category in the 1820s. The New South Wales Census of 1828, did not list any person who identified themselves as a wharf labourer/lumper or porter, although labourers were plentiful. This lack of identification with this specific class of labouring is not surprising. Three reasons, consistent with my argument can be offered for this; first, stevedoring had not yet developed sufficiently in scale to allow labourers to follow it on a relatively continuous basis with adequate earnings. Not only the irregularity of shipping but also the seasonal nature of many cargoes added to variability of labour demand. Second, stevedoring was not yet differentiated from the pool of tasks required of seamen and shore based workers, such as carriers, porters, carters and general labourers. In Britain, as I discussed in chapter three, unskilled porters were continuously attached in the larger ports. Large ports, state recognition and claims to a specialism were all absent in Australia. The third reason flows from the first two, that modes of informalist organisation had not taken sufficient root in this class of work to allow an institutional organisation of labour. This was the case for all workers before about 1830, craft or not. But craft workers clearly possessed a social identity as mechanics.

Seasonal cargo had a significant effects on many ports, particularly those based on hinterland primary production. Even Sydney was markedly affected by the wool clip, with labour demand high during the wool season. In Sydney contemporary observers reported in 1860 that, "[d]uring the wool season they [wharf labourers] are busily employed; but at other times they are hanging about the corners of the streets looking out for a day's or for an hour's job", or again, "at this [wool] season the prospects brighten, the wool comes down, ships arrive, which creates a large amount of employment." Clearly the same effects existed decades before, particularly as wool exports expanded from the late 1820s. Seasonal variability of work undermined workers' continuous market attachment to the industry.

Shipping expanded in the 1830s and with it the maritime labour force and numbered about two thousand workers in 1841 in Sydney. The relative size of the maritime industry and labour market in Hobart was comparable to Sydney. Water transport was important for both economies at this time. In addition as shipping arrivals grew it was likely that two dozen, or more, ships were in Sydney at any given time. Hobart too became a busy port as an established home port for whaling and sealing, as well as commercial vessels. Free settler's boasted that Van Dieman's Land possessed a fleet of 141 vessels 1845. Moreover, the main shipping route from Britain followed
lower latitudes which made Hobart the regular first port of call. In the late 1840s a continuous
labour force was reported to exist in the ports of Hobart and Launceston. The ports of Port
Phillip, Brisbane, Fremantle, and Port Adelaide were small, although Adelaide and Port Phillip
developed quite quickly after settlement. Brisbane was closed to commercial vessels until declared
free in 1840. Fremantle languished in this period, and did not become the major Western Australian
port until the 1890s when it displaced Albany as the main port of call for overseas vessels in the
west.

These ports provide examples of the growth of lighterage services. In Port Phillip, larger
overseas vessels moored in Hobson's Bay and lighters were used to transfer goods up the Yarra
River to the Melbourne wharves. Finger piers appeared later in what is now called the Port
Melbourne and Williamstown areas. But lighters remained in use to move goods to Melbourne
even after the construction of railways to these piers. Similarly larger vessels were unable to
navigate the Brisbane River and while moored in Moreton Bay they discharged cargo into lighters.
These then transferred the goods up river to Brisbane and Ipswich. Lighters plied the Swan River to
Perth from ships moored off the Fremantle coast. Albany was the major Western Australian
overseas port as bunkering coal was readily available and Fremantle lacked facilities. Port Adelaide
was in a somewhat different situation since Adelaide was some twenty kilometres inland. Lighters
only operated from what is now Outer Harbour to Port Adelaide. A canal to the city was planned
but never constructed.

The point stressed here is that the number of shore- and ship-workers in these major ports
increased up to the 1850s as did coastal and overseas seamen. At the start of the gold rushes the
development of local, coastal or intercolonial and overseas shipping had reached a point at which
hundreds of workers were engaged in stevedoring work, yet the work was not yet an identifiable
industry. The question is why?

2. The Social Context of Marginal Labour

Stevedoring had not yet developed an industrial identity. The occupations were not
sufficiently differentiated or stabilised for sustainable labour organisation to develop. Three main
conditions contributed to this; first the nature of the labour process, second, the structure of the
labour market and the influence of convicts, and finally the difficult growth of the organisational
conditions for workers to assert authority in the industry. I will discuss the first two points in this
section and devote section IV to the problems of labour organisation.

1. The Labour Process

I have shown in chapter three that cargo in Britain was generally in a form that could be
worked by small teams. The low level of technical development and the differentiated nature of
production allowed several sections of labour in stevedoring to develop. This was also the case in
colonial Australia. Even where convict labour was used, the number of men assigned to any given
task was small, usually from about ten down to three or four, as in Britain. Simple co-operation in
team-work was the dominant form of organisation. Co-operation between teams, or joint team
work, was still rudimentary. The aggregation of teams into gangs of 20 men or more seen in Britain
had not yet appeared to any large extent in the colonies.

Indeed small team work was very common in the early colonial period in both skilled and
unskilled work, for convicts and free persons in government or private employment. Although
the gang (few men up to 300–400 men) predominated in the organisation of convict labour, especially in government service, this was driven by administrative and disciplinary imperatives and not production methods.75

Furthermore, in practice, the flow of the stevedoring labour process described in chapter two operated more or less separately depending on production and employer. First, many of the larger vessels (usually ships of over 150–200 tons) remained anchored off-shore where seamen performed discharging and loading operations over the side and stowage in the hold. Second, men in boats or lighters moved the cargo to the wharf and unloaded it there. This was the work of boatmen or lightermen and any casual workers that they wished to employ. Third, labour was used on the wharf if the ship was moored alongside or to land goods from lighters. Much of this work involved manually carrying cargo from the lighter, boat or ship along a gang plank. In addition such casual labour might then transfer goods to stores or directly onto the means of transport (cart, drays or other) of the consignee. This appears to be the area of work referred to by the trader which I have mentioned above. No mechanical devices were used in this work, as hand trucks and trolleys were not yet in use. Barrows were used in some coal loading. Early attempts at bulk handling first appeared when the Australian Agricultural Company in 1831 installed a gravity loading skip chute in Newcastle to speed up coal loading.76 Fourth, men were employed in wharf side stores, which as noted earlier were often owned by merchants, and may have worked on the wharf on ships’ cargo that was handled by the merchant acting as an agent.

Each of these sections of, what is today the transport and storage industries, occupied various aspects of the stevedoring labour process. That is, the job territory of stevedoring was dispersed and in practice, stevedoring was a series of separate labour processes, each conducted as part of a separate but linked process. Each was a relatively autonomous unit, whether shopkeepers, small traders, medium to larger merchants, self-employed carters, small shipmasters and boat owners, owner–operators, warehouse owners and so on. Most important for the argument here, is that the stevedoring labour process was part of a discontinuous production process, consisting of a number of largely autonomous, but overlapping, labour processes. No co-ordinated or unified control–system existed, as the authority of each aspect was specific to each component of the production process as a whole.

In this phase of merchant capital, the processes, methods and organisation of production had not yet assumed an economic importance of commercial activities. Production, and concern over efficiency which required planning, monitoring and adjustment features of an elaborated control–system had not yet developed. Control was dispersed (into the separate labour processes just described) and owed more to customary practice that calculated rational action. An advertisement for Port Adelaide’s first store for example announced that the “Stores ... [were] now ready for reception of all descriptions of goods.... rent charged at the customary rates in other Colonies.”77

The conclusion is that the production process was dispersed, relatively irregular, consisting of a number of associated labour processes – that is, a discontinuous organisational structure. Thus authority was dispersed and lodged in each labour process. Each of the four relatively separate sections outlined were too small to develop a continuous institutional existence in the period up to the 1850s.78 The small population and geographical distance between them reinforced this as did the constant shadow of convict labour. In this context it was difficult for largely unskilled workers
2. The Labour Market and the Influence of Convicts

The early colonial labour market was dominated by convict and ex-convict labour and was a major influence on the labour market. Here I will be concerned with the effect of convicts on the growth of the characteristics of a capitalist labour market and specifically on stevedoring labour.

Technically no labour market should exist in a strictly penal colony. Convicts were unfree and under the direct authority of the penal administration. They were required to perform tasks as directed under guard. However, to curb the financial drain on the British Treasury it was required to be self-sufficient and the return to Britain of emancipists was prohibited. Thus the colonial administration had little alternative but to turn to private production and labour market. Agricultural production was permitted by settlers, officers and ex-convicts and they were granted land to this end. Moreover, convicts were assigned to settlers to reduce government costs for the subsistence of convicts. By 1800 there were a few hundred 'free' workers in a population of over five thousand. Most of the free population were ex-convicts, and most of the rest were skilled workers or settlers. Thus the potential private labour market was well over a thousand by 1800.

Added to this were ticket-of-leave convicts and convicts permitted to work for wages after official government hours of work. They could also work small plots of land allocated for their own use. In practice, many assigned convicts worked as day labourers for employers or masters to whom they were not assigned. The extent of this illegal practice cannot be ascertained, although many settlers were prosecuted. It existed for two key reasons; skilled convict workers were in demand and were 'shared' with both settlers which gave the convict higher earnings. Conversely the costs of an unskilled, or unco-operative, convict could also be shared. Furthermore, government overseers and superintendents often cooperated with settlers and allowed government workers to work illegally during regulated hours.

Butlin concludes that all these components contributed to a part-time or 'fringe' market growing in significance and with the characteristics of a free market. Ex-convicts were employed in general labouring and stevedoring work and formed part of the private sector work I discussed above. Under these conditions, the recognition and stabilisation of stevedoring was difficult since its marginal status was linked to the moral turpitude of the waterfront and the association with convictism.

Convict labour had an impact on the colony until the 1850s. The proportion of convict labour varied over the first four decades. Their percentage of the population fell from about 70 percent of the original arrivals to a low of about 30 percent in 1805, increasing again to almost 50 percent in the 1820s as transportation increased in the wake of the Napoleonic wars. The proportion of convicts in the labour force given their age structure was higher than free immigrants. However as free immigration rose after 1830 the proportion of convicts fell - to be about 6 percent in the 1840s in New South Wales. In Van Dieman's Land the figure remained high until the 1850s.

The use of convicts in urban areas was largely confined to government work. But the majority were assigned to rural work, particularly after 1810, and formed a key component in the flowering of the pastoral economy twenty years later. Finally, the cessation of transportation to Sydney in 1839 also ended the assignment of convicts to private employers. The increase in convict
arrivals in Van Dieman's land followed the cessation in New South Wales but then encountered the depression of 1843–1845. The result was specific problems for free workers there. I will discuss this point below. Only a few thousand convict arrivals in Western Australia occurred after 1850, as convictism fell by the wayside.85

The use of convict labour on the waterfront clearly presented problems of security. Indeed the general restrictions on shipping discussed in chapter three were a result of these problems. The formalisation of port procedures began under Governor Hunter when Port Regulations were issued in September 1800. To minimise escapes and theft convicts needed the authority of the Governor, the officer in command or a magistrate to board ships, loitering near wharves was prohibited, guards were posted on the wharves,86 overseas ships had to be searched before departure and similar regulations. The result that even without employing convicts these procedures delayed vessels and raised freight costs. Thus the procedures were criticised by Bigge, although he did recognise their necessity and so he recommended convicts be simply prohibited from maritime areas in the towns. Moreover, he recommended that the colony be recognised as a free settlement and convicts be kept apart from residents.

A further problem associated with convicts was that they were assigned for a particular period. Therefore the employer had to keep them employed on a continuous basis to cover the cost of subsistence, and then make a profit from their labour. Since an essential feature of casual stevedoring labour was continuous labour availability in the context of irregular demand the possibility of the use of convict labour was low. They could not be profitably used only in stevedoring, particularly with the added risk of pilferage. The cost of continual supervision was prohibitive in the private sector. Where, as I have shown, convicts in government service performed stevedoring work they were under routine penal supervision (in the dockyard and other locales) and were assigned to other tasks when no stevedoring work was available.

Skilled workers could market their skills or enter self-employment whereas the unskilled were more dependent on market opportunities. Recent research confirms this in relation to unskilled convicts. They retained unskilled status and were less likely to be employed in the same (or similar) occupation as in Britain when they arrived in the colony.87 They therefore bore a disproportionate cost in terms of occupational change in the new colony. Workers employed in carrying, porterage and stevedoring in the colonies were less likely to have had similar experience in Britain. The traditions and customary practices associated with such work was therefore less likely to be transferred to the colonies, at least in the first few decades.88

These factors indicate that the number of serving convicts working on the wharves for private employers was unlikely to be as high as the unskilled nature of the work would first indicate. Therefore, employers probably relied on free labour. However, the presence of convicts on the waterfront constrained the market as free workers were generally reluctant to engage in work identified with convicts. This sort of constraint on the market appeared to have been relatively widespread, as the shortage of labour, particularly casual labour and agricultural labour, was a constant complaint of employers. Despite the fact that most convicts were assigned to rural areas and occupations, labour shortages in the countryside were widespread. These shortages threatened to constrain the development of the pastoral industry and the introduction of assisted immigration in the early 1830s was a direct result of pastoralists' concern.
The existence of a labour market is not equivalent to a free market. The examples given above indicate that a significant sector of the labour market was covert, marginal or undeveloped. Skilled workers often operated small workshops and settlers worked their own land (or were tenant farmers) and did not enter the labour market as wage-workers. Many convicts chose leisure, or work on their small plots in preference to wage-labour in the periods outside regulated hours. Major Edward Macarthur, reported that there was a "very small quantity of free labour" in the 1820s. In reference to those who did enter the labour market there were numerous structural, legal and customary barriers. First, the dependence on agriculture and the low level of productivity meant that a large proportion of the labour force was tied to rural production. In a similar manner, the security needs of a penal colony meant that there had to be a large public sector, particularly the coercive apparatus of the state. These two sectors of the economy accounted for about two-thirds of gross domestic product in the first two decades and much employment. Transport also had a prominent role given the paucity of land transport.

The second decade of the colony saw this expansion reflected in the contribution of distribution to GDP. It accounted for between 10 and 15 percent of domestic product between 1797 and 1805. The consolidation of the colony until the 1820s saw this figure drop to an average of approximately 9 percent, rising again in the 1830s to over 10 percent and rising further to 10–15 percent of GDP in the 1840s. Moreover, shipping technology remained relatively static up to the 1850s, with only a few small steam vessels coming into service. Almost half of them were less than 100 tons and three-quarters were less than 200 tons but they were equipped with unchanged stevedoring technology. Therefore, as tonnages handled over the wharf increased the labour force increased in approximate proportion, that is expansion was labour-intensive. As in other colonial sectors, economic activity rose but not productivity.

Shipping was also particularly sensitive to the phases of the economic cycle with large swings between high and low labour demand. The increase in convict transportation in the period 1816–1820 brought about the first wave of unemployment in the colony, which included convicts and free workers. The recession of the late 1820s signalled the cycle of expansion and contraction characteristic of the capitalist economy and labour market. Maritime and waterfront occupations were often severely affected by this cycle due to the disposability of casual labour. Crowley states that even by the 1830s workers without a trade fell into a pool of casual workers who were employed in a variety of jobs. This included wharf labouring. Such workers were generally engaged by the day. This undermined the growth of continuous attachment of the labour force.

By the early 1840s, the number of casual or intermittent workers in the labour market of this sort probably increased, certainly in the buoyant conditions of 1838–1841. This included the floating casuals on the waterfront mentioned above, since it was one of a range of general labouring jobs open to unskilled men in the colonies. Where possible men moved into more secure, better paid, and higher status jobs. The labour shortages in Sydney and New South Wales through the 1830s and up to the onset of depression in 1842–43 also saw a flow of new immigrants. Recent immigrants could enter waterfront work with little experience and relative ease and then move on. Finally, there was a marked degree of movement between seamen and shore work in maritime employment. Opportunities on shore (and on the local vessels) were attractive to seamen, particularly overseas men, indicated by the constant complaints of owners and master of desertions
in this period. Colonial maritime legislation was used extensively to stem this tide but its success is questionable.

In sum, there are a number of factors which indicate that the flux of casual labour in the labour market was evident on the waterfront. The flux was an important factor in halting the development of a clearly identifiable labour force in stevedoring during this period. A low proportion of labour had a continuous market attachment (correspondingly a high proportion were floating casuals). The short recession in the late 1820s and the deep depression of 1843–1845, both had a major detrimental effect on casual waterfront labour.

In the early decades wage levels in agriculture were, at least nominally, set by government regulation. However they appeared to be seldom followed in practice, but rather operated as a minimum rate. Many workers received payment in the form of board, goods or other arrangements under the 'truck' system. This system was accepted by workers, although to what degree is difficult to estimate. It was easier for employers to use the 'truck' system, particularly in rural areas.

In large part the inadequate monetary system until the late 1820s contributed to this system. For workers, money wages had to be spent on necessities, but where workers were confined to specific districts (ticket–of–leave men) or isolated on properties, or forced to buy goods at inflated prices from employers', money was not necessarily a significant attraction. From the employers point of view the provision of goods (or those sold at inflated prices) had only a tenuous reference to real market price, (some landowners had workers making clothes for others or paid in various goods) and goods bought in bulk were less costly to provide to workers than money wages (goods such as sugar, tea and tobacco). This was of benefit to workers. In the early 1820s there were a range of currencies in circulation in the colony, including Commissary receipts, Spanish dollars, British sterling, Bank of NSW notes, merchants orders and bills and others. The reform of the monetary system progressively removed most of these practices in the labour market, at least in the urban areas. The crash of the 1840s severely dented confidence in private orders and cheques. The truck system (and its abuses) was used through the nineteenth century but was viewed with suspicion and confined to newer and outlying rural areas.

A key point is that the 'truck' system contained ties between the master and worker that went beyond the simple 'cash nexus' of the capitalist employment relation. The range of potential calculations for the worker were generally wider than in the case of money wages, if for no other reason than that the degree of precision was lower. Furthermore the payment of convicts had paradoxical effects.

Convicts were entitled to rations and accommodation by government regulation. However, employers could not directly discipline convicts, they had to provide incentives to increase work effort – usually additional payment in the form of goods, and often money as well. This was an important aspect of the labour market. The government regulation of the amount of rations (ie. income) and discipline (ie. effort) set a standard of, what Nicholas calls, the maintenance wage at a higher level than the customary subsistence wage in Britain and in a relatively fixed form. This was particularly the case after the 1816 regulations which set convicts wage at £10 (plus rations) per year for additional labour whether performed or not. This is a level which, I would argue, served to maintain a floor on wage levels and made possible wages raises for workers in favourable circumstances. I will return to the issue of wages below.
In an economy where a significant proportion of the population are engaged in little better than subsistence agriculture it is not surprising that barter would be an important medium of exchange.\textsuperscript{98} Certainly the craft and rural traditions of eighteenth century Britain were not far from the surface. Most convicts came initially from urban areas in Britain, but were likely to be only first or second generation urban dwellers and industrial workers. Indeed the pressures of industrialisation precipitated crime in Britain could at least potentially be escaped in colonial Australia through agriculture or petty artisan production. Skilled workers showed a strong preference for independent craft production although demands for land and land reform continued to be an important motif in the cultural and political milieu of workers through most of the nineteenth century.\textsuperscript{99} The locally born males displayed preferences for apprenticeships or maritime employment rather than labouring. In particular rural work was often viewed as degrading because its association with convicts (and the abuses of the truck system).\textsuperscript{100}

The ideological separation of the free individual and the corrupted convict, serving or emancipated, was strengthened by the harshness of the conditions and the burdens of religion. A large proportion of convicts were Catholic and many were Irish.\textsuperscript{101} Even the 'respectable' emancipists, who I have discussed in relation to shipping and commercial activities, were excluded from positions of influence and authority.\textsuperscript{102} These considerations had a restricted effect in the first few decades, but they did provide the conditions for the cultural exclusion of the 'lower orders' that I have discussed above.\textsuperscript{103}

Finally, the close association between convictism and the lower orders of society flowed into the legal framework under which employment contracts were framed and enforced. Master and Servant legislation enacted in the colonies closely reflected the association of convicts and military authority and the hierarchical view of social strata. Consequently many of the provisions of the legislation were unusually harsh, even in the view of the British government. The freedom and rights granted to the ordinary worker were restricted and further constrained room for action of workers in the labour market and in the labour process. The degree of freedom in the labour market was thereby limited.

3. Summary

In sum, the dispersion of the range of stevedoring tasks into associated labour processes inhibited the development of a recognisable stevedoring labour force for much of the period under discussion here. This rested on the nature of commercial capital and the structure of shipping. In addition the colonial labour market was shaped the colonies' penal status and that convicts provided a major source of labour power. The state necessarily had a large role in the early decades particularly in terms of security needs on the waterfront, which were reflected in port regulations, and wage setting. The British traditions of labour independence was reflected in the marked reluctance of free workers to work alongside convicts, or in occupations identified with convicts. Indeed there was some resistance of workers to entering the labour market at all where alternatives existed. The legal environment provided the state and employers, particularly in rural areas, with additional powers that served to limit labour autonomy and mobility.

The infrequency of early shipping, labour shortages and periodic economic downturns up to 1850 all undermined the formation of a waterfront labour force which could be characterised by a continuous market attachment. Although the influence of convict labour began to wane in the last
decade, the characteristic cycle of expansion and contraction of the capitalist labour market affected
casual labour adversely. The bulk of waterfront work could be described as floating casual labour,
combining the low status of day labour with the marginal status of the waterfront.

IV. The Social Conditions of Collective Organisation

In this section I will examine aspects of early colonial society which provided the
preconditions for the emergence and shape of collective organisation of wharf workers up to the
1850s. Emphasis is placed on the form in which organisation took place in relation to wages,
industrial action and the genesis of local social and communal organisation. First I will outline the
argument.

The political context of New South Wales and Van Dieman's Land differed from Britain, but
embraced the same concerns. As a penal colony the state had direct and unmediated powers and
state regulated fellowship and guild forms of labour organisation was absent. As I have shown,
fellowships had markedly declined in Britain as the industrial revolution took a tighter grip on all
pre-existing patterns of social organisation. Industrial forms of protest in Britain came under
intense political and legislative attack. The Combination Acts of 1799 and 1800 banned the
growing incidence of labour organisation. In response labour attempted use older traditions and
develop new methods to maintain an acceptable social position. The basis of much of this
organisation grew from the cultural traditions of direct workers although not confined to this arena.
Indeed, there is reason to believe that the workplace became a focal arena for worker collective
action precisely due to the pressure on pre-industrial patterns of social integration and protest.104

Political and social changes which accompanied the industrial revolution, recast the 'natural'
hierarchy of the older pre-industrial order. This left direct workers, who were embroiled in the
process of class formation105, with no legitimate ideological space in the new order. Even those in
dominant positions had to contend with the effects of stripping away entrenched traditions, relations,
obligations and so on, that had served as the bonds of social integration. In this process of social
dislocation, 'the labouring classes' were forced to re-construct modes of practical action for the new
form of society based on customary standards of life and normative orders. For their part, the
dominant strata had also to deal with the 'control effects' of changes in forms of authority at the
societal level and in the workplace. Both were encumbered with the burdens of the past.106

This was the context in which the Australian penal colonies were established. The way these
issues were tackled had a major effect on the courses of action in Australia. This stretched from the
attitudes to, and methods of dealing with convicts, the rule of law and political institutions These
factors were linked to Britain and they played an important part in the processes of establishing new
patterns of social relations, particularly political power and industrial authority. Australia was in a
unique and ambivalent position in the nineteenth century. On the one hand British socio-cultural
traditions provided the context for industrial development and as a resource for organisational
initiatives. On the other hand the traditions were sufficiently weak to allow new institutional
arrangements to take root and develop more robustly than elsewhere. The primary element in these
changes was the configuration of political power.107

The cultural distinctions and social distance between the labouring classes and the dominant
strata deeply embedded in the old order, became a barrier to the exercise of authority in the new
context, and a cultural resource for direct workers. The 'potentialities' of the labouring classes, and their propensity for 'disorder', became problems and could not be successfully addressed by the dominant groups. They lacked the organisational mechanisms and theoretical wherewithal to tackle this 'problem'. This applied particularly to the state, which lacked the institutional apparatus to deal with these issues effectively. The French Revolution, had only exacerbated the fear of the lower orders in Britain and gave the relation between classes the appearance of a military campaign, that included the strategic stationing of troops in towns (to lower industrial conflict), use of spies and informants and so on. The state took rigorous measures to quell public and industrial dissent. The Combination Acts (1799 and 1800) and common law prohibition of a range of organisational practices of labour illustrate this reaction. It was against this background that most convicts (to the 1840s) and free immigrants alike came to Australia.

The cultural traditions of both the dominant group and the lower orders were transferred to Australia, illustrated by the reference to merchants and labourers earlier. In terms of skills and regional origin, convicts were generally representative of the British working class as a whole. The group that was dominant in the colonies, however came from the lower middle or middle orders of English society, and differed from dominant groups Britain.

The problem of an undeveloped state apparatus was not immediately apparent in the Australian colonies. As a penal colony it had a high ratio of military personnel to residents and state surveillance of convicts was in theory extensive. In practice as I have discussed, the dispersed settlements, meagre resources, poor productions, labour shortages all diluted the efficacy of surveillance of convicts and opportunities for free workers. Moreover the removal of discipline over convicts from the direct employer unintentionally gave convicts a degree of latitude to engage in workplace bargaining over the returns for their labour. Moreover, although discipline was delegated to magistrates, who were often employers themselves, the content of the discipline was determined by state regulations. Many of these regulations drew more heavily on past traditions in than on the needs of the emergent capitalism. I have mentioned that the master and servant legislation was markedly more severe in Australia than in Britain, but here too the enforcement of particular labour contracts drew heavily on the past.

As mentioned the 'truck' system was used widely in early colonial society. It was characteristic of the web of non-economic ties between employer and labour. The unit of time for which wages were calculated also indicated the nature of the organisation of labour in the first half of the nineteenth century. I will therefore turn first to a discussion of day–labour.

1. Day Labour

Day work, and the 'daily wage', was the customary unit of work and payment in the early colonial period, both in terms of hours and level of returns. As noted labour was not always, or even pre–dominantly paid in a money wages. Nevertheless returns (in whatever form) were the main material point of contact between the labouring classes' and dominant groups in the social distribution of income in a status ordered society. Although this was generally the case in early Australian colonial society, the state regulation of convict labour entailed important differences from Britain. I shall examine the working day and early wage regulation.

1. **The Working Day**

The customary working day was dawn to dusk, which was approximately a twelve hour day,
but with breaks, it was closer to ten hours. Both the regulation of working hours of convicts and the working-day in the private labour market reflected this.

The fact that the day remained the unit of wage-labour for the whole of the period under discussion was important. This customary standard was not challenged or changed by the state or private employers. Furthermore, the basis of calculation of effort remained within the framework of day-work. Hobsbawm has pointed out that the criteria on which typical work output in each trade was based varied according to physiological considerations, technical, social, moral, economic and historical factors. Some were more or less universal, in that they were accounted for in some measure for output in all classes of work, whereas others were related to particular trades, occupations or even geographical areas. The important point is that these criteria and standards were based on practice, became embedded in custom and were collectively enforced. In short, workers retained authority in the introduction and use of such criteria. The influence of British traditions in this area was keenly affected by the practical circumstances that confronted settlers, the civil administration, convicts, employers and workers alike.

In the early period of settlement the demands of the harsh environment and for cost savings by the British government, mentioned above, affected the customary standards of work. State involvement in the regulation of convict work affected the relation between work effort and returns for labour. It did not destroy the form of the criteria used, but provided the preconditions for later changes. Physiology, climate and incentive, were considerations emphasised in early state intervention in the effort/returns calculation. Before I turn to the effects of state intervention in this area, the question of why intervention occurred needs to be addressed.

First, since the colony was under pressure to be self-sufficient, the need for convicts to work enough to do this was a major task. Second, and underlying this immediate problem, were the effects of the judicial relation of ownership. Under British legislation the crown owned the labour of convicts, and therefore had an interest in gaining an 'acceptable' return for the labour in Australia. By contrast, in pre-independence America, the British government sold the use of convict labour to its eventual users which effectively relieved the government of problems associated with labour utilisation. Under the assignment system, noted in Chapter Three, the colonial state either employed convicts or temporarily assigned them to private settlers on condition that latter paid maintenance costs of the convict. The state therefore retained an interest in securing adequate work output to cover maintenance costs of workers, whether employed in government gangs or assigned to private employers. The state was more concerned with labour issues, and therefore developed a closer relation with private employers over such issues than was the case in the United States or Britain.

The kernel of the changes in the general effort/returns relation is best illustrated by convict labour. Circumstances forced the state to recast customary work criteria to address practical problems. It had to ensure the maximum work output for the minimum food/time input - a rudimentary cost-benefit problem. The physiological relation between food consumption and hours/output of labour was therefore an immediate and practical criterion given the harsh conditions. This was not a criterion consciously articulated in Britain in this form, although individual and collective controls on effort intensity are a constant element of labour organisation. State regulations extended to all convicts, including those assigned to private employers. The concern to maximise output influenced private settlers. At a minimum settlers had
to provide specified rations to convicts, regardless of convict output and then attempt to realise a profit. On many occasions small settlers returned convicts to the government as the first condition could not be met.\textsuperscript{122}

The effects of regulations differed for various convict groups. The shortage of skilled workers, whether convict or free, discouraged state intervention in working practices or methods of such workers, wherever they were employed. Skills provided these workers with additional leverage in their dealings with employers. It was convict labourers that created the greatest difficulty.\textsuperscript{123} The problem of output became synonymous with discipline as dominant groups had little or no precedent to guide their actions.

2 \textit{Regulations, Wage Setting and the Maintenance Wage}

The Government regulation of hours and rations for convicts was, not surprisingly, based on the unit of a day. The regulations were the first appearance of official industrial relations in the colony. The hours and rations (including clothing, bedding, medical attention etc) regulations became an important codification of an 'acceptable' level of returns for labour, in relation to a state imposed definition of physiological subsistence.\textsuperscript{124} The effect was to set a minimum, or what Nicholas termed, a maintenance wage. On the other side of the employment equation stood convict effort/output. The use of time work gave convicts a bargaining tool of significant leverage. A system of task work, or the establishment of output norms, was attempted in an attempt to standardise and measure output, the problem of setting appropriate norms proved intractable. This was particularly the case for outdoor gangs where, as Ovens stated, the, "quantities of work of outdoor parties being dependent on the weather, ... materials, ... skill, ... Implements, ... render it difficult to assign a Stated task"\textsuperscript{125} Many observers were of the view that convicts could complete allotted tasks in only a few hours if they so chose.

The largely invariant maintenance wage gave convicts a bargaining tool which, in contrast, was unavailable to slave or wage–labour. Employers were forced to bear the cost of implementing the regulations irrespective of the output by the convict. The more effort withheld the greater the cost to the employer, the greater the leverage effect. It was therefore more profitable for employers to offer additional 'indulgences' to convicts.\textsuperscript{126} Clearly the convicts' leverage was limited since the state retained disciplinary authority over convicts and refusal to work was subject to such discipline (for example, reduction of the quantity and quality of rations).\textsuperscript{127} There were logistical and economic costs in using the procedures, especially in rural areas.

The state found it practical to allow convicts to work on the open market (the 'fringe market' mentioned above) to acquire 'luxuries'. This provided them with goods and dampened discontent. The provision for convicts to work outside the regulated time was itself regulated in 1816 and set at £10 a year. This additional work became impractical when larger numbers of convicts arrived following the Napoleonic wars. Governor Darling introduced more detailed procedures in the 1820s for convicts in government employ and there is no mention of the convict money wage after 1823. Nevertheless many commentators observed that government convicts appeared to do little.\textsuperscript{128} This was a situation where labour responded with low effort in the absence of other alternatives. But assigned convicts continued to extract further returns for labour until the cessation of assignment in 1838.

The effects of the maintenance wage were most sharply felt in the private labour market. It
provided the floor for wage bargaining for both convict and free workers. As early as the 1790s reapers demanded higher wages prompting complaints from employers. The military government responded by regulating wages for a range of agricultural work. Wages were set by task (e.g. clearing an acre of scrub, reaping an acre of wheat) and were fixed by reference to the customary day wage current in England based on a customary working day. Hunter also established a system of quarterly wage fixation by local boards of employers. It triggered constant complaints of high wages from employers because the English standard used by the board was artificially low and employers were forced by workers in practice to pay market wages. These were nominally high by British standards.

The regulated day labour rate for unskilled workers was 2s. 6d. According to Coghlan this wage level was set at subsistence, but was exceeded from the time it was set. In the urban areas, this was unquestionably a maintenance wage for labouring (and so wharf labouring) in the first decades of the colony. The wage approximated the cost of a convict, estimated by Commissary John Palmer to be between £36 and £40 per year (2s. 3d and 2s. 6d. a day for a 6 day week). But the market wage was in excess of this.

The merchant and waterfront employer Robert Campbell, complained to Governor King in 1803, that without access to spirits wages were forced up, stating that "the present daily wage...[was] seven shillings and sixpence to the mechanics and four to the common workman." In 1812 he reported that in the past he had paid 7s a day for labourers but this had later dropped to 5s. Commissary John Palmer, also a shipowner, noted that it was not possible to get workers for less than 4s a day. Bligh, in evidence to the Select Committee on Transportation, argued that regulation of agricultural work was separated from urban areas, stating that the "prices of labourers in agriculture were settled ... but I would never interfere in the prices of mercantile concerns except the barter of spirits."

Custom wages may have been limited wages in Britain. Moreover the equivalent money wage in colonial Australia was significantly higher, consistent with inflated prices outlined in chapter three. Coghlan's view seems pessimistic, in that his definition of subsistence was somewhat spartan. The official wage in the private market, was likely to be below the equivalent subsistence (money) wage in Britain. The level of the maintenance wage for convicts took advantage of cost reductions for the purchase of bulk items, not available to workers in the private market. Thus the 'truck' system (at about two-thirds goods and one-third money) was attractive in spite of all its abuses. The market wage, on the other hand was above normal wages in Britain, although by how much depended on factors such as fluctuating market price, availability, geographical location, poor housing, labour demand and so on. But it is clear, that the difference was not proportionate to the high nominal wages. The fact that wages were above the State regulated level indicated the influence of capitalist market relations in the new colony. The pressure for incentives to convicts (and free men) to secure profits overshadowed the idea of punishment. Indeed it was largely for this reason that the British government set up the Bigge inquiry.

Collective enforcement of wage levels by workers, labour and skill shortages, high profit rates for larger employers (and officers) and most importantly, the regulated maintenance wage, all had effects on the wage level. These conditions did not exist in the same form in Britain. In Britain a variable 'subsistence' wage was thrust into this role and from the standard of living debate in
British historiography it seems clear that the standards of subsistence fell in the course of the industrial revolution.\textsuperscript{136} This did not occur in colonial Australia. When wage levels were threatened, more through unemployment or the over supply of labour from immigration than convict labour as such, the maintenance wage provided a floor.\textsuperscript{137} Crowley estimates that the colonial standard of living was constant between 1820 and 1850.\textsuperscript{138} Certainly the level of the maintenance wage remained constant – in Van Dieman's Land it was set at rations, clothes, accommodation, medical care and £9 per annum in the 1840s.\textsuperscript{139} The relative difference of the maintenance and market wage level in say 1800 and the 1840s is difficult to establish, as the basket of consumed commodities was not strictly comparable, but it appears that there was little change.

Contemporary observers reported that convict rations were superior to the normal diet of the British labouring classes.\textsuperscript{140} This is confirmed by recent historical research on convict diet. Thus workers in Australia were taller and healthier than those in Britain.\textsuperscript{141} Indeed even in Britain prison rations were better than the diet of ordinary English labourers.\textsuperscript{142} If this was the basis of the maintenance wage and market wages were higher than in Britain (where the maintenance and market wage were largely equivalent) the conclusion is that there was a higher standard of living in the colonies. Yet the difference was not as great as the (money) wage differentials presented by employers would indicate, nor the assumptions of many writers.

Given the increasing dominance of capitalist relations, unemployment was a major source of disruption to income and this affected labourers and particularly casual labourers more than mechanics in colonial society. The depression of the mid-1840s was the most severe, although I have mentioned other periods. Unemployment in 1844, at the height of the depression, has been estimated at 2000 (including dependents this amounted to over 10 percent of the population) in Sydney and 2000 in Van Dieman's Land mostly probationer convicts.\textsuperscript{143} In the wake of the gold-rushes a depression set in from mid-1856. Public sector cut backs, a slow down the economy and trade saw unemployment rise and wages fall, but only from the higher levels which were a result of the gold rushes. Again the most severely affected were labourers and casual workers. One observer summarised the situation, "from want of permanency of employment the wages, even were they in other respects satisfactory, are not sufficient to enable a labouring man to keep his family in comfort".\textsuperscript{144}

3 Custom and Wages

I will summarise the argument so far. The point I wish to stress is that workers' standard of living was not as important as the workers' understanding of it in the colonies. The level of official wages of workers was first set by the understanding of employers and the civil administration of the British standard – both wages and the day unit. It was set at the convict-based maintenance wage. The higher market rate – how much higher cannot be accurately determined – approximated the workers assessment of customary standards as they applied in the colony.

Underpinning this was the basis on which the state determined the maintenance wage. In the colonial context, the official rate was based on physiological considerations, and floor under the colonial wage structure. This minimum was at a higher level than the (variable and falling) subsistence wage in Britain and provided a fixed comparative point for bargaining market wages. From the workers perspective there was a need to allow for contingent variations in prices.\textsuperscript{145} A key point is that wage levels were still set by reference to customary factors, where the economic
variables were either artificially contrived or prone to sharp variations. The initial use of the truck system adapted customary standards to this context to determine the returns to labour. Money wages remained legitimate if it permitted a mode of life considered by workers to be appropriate to their trade, social status and moral worth. Two examples best illustrate parameters of this calculation.

One example, involved a trade society in the 1830s when immigrant competition was applying pressure on their trade. The other concerns an individual at the height of the gold rush wages boom in 1853. The Compositors Society declared in the preamble to its rules:

_that the present and prospective interests of the Trade require union: nay, inequality of prices, wilful misinterpretation of the scale, or the chicaneries of unjust employers can be applied. The chief aim of this union is the protection of wages of labour._

On the other hand as wages rose to unprecedented levels as a result of the gold rushes a recently arrived British journeymen engineer was reported to have remarked on receipt of his week's pay of £6, "I felt ashamed to take my wages" as they were more than three times their British equivalent. But as the witness pointed out this wage had to balanced against high prices. Often the colonial worker was worse off than the equivalent British worker. The point to be emphasised is that when the customary standards were undermined, as a result of manipulation of prices, falling wages or inflated prices, the breach of customs was assessed in moral and economic terms. Nevertheless, the primary trigger of collective action remained wages.

The customary category of the 'day', widely accepted by employers, was especially important for casual labour. The absence of the division into hours was an important condition for the maintenance of customary wages and authority in the workplace. First, it kept intact the day wage. It minimised the cost associated with job search and engagement such as travel to wharves, stores etc, forgone job opportunities, and waiting time. Moreover employer incentives for dismissal were diminished when hourly 'disposable' labour was not constantly available. Finally, delays associated with poor co-ordination of the flow of goods, equipment breakdown and other contingencies were less likely to borne by labour than employers (whether these be masters, company agents, merchants, stores/warehouse owners, carters or others employing casual waterfront labour).

In later years the pressure of capitalist accumulation was to challenge this customary and naturalistic categorisation of time. The length of the working day and the hourly rate later became major issues for waterside workers and the labour movement in general.

The wage was also the central contact point of the direct worker and the employer given the absence of calculative control systems mentioned earlier. Therefore, it is not surprising that wage disputes predominate in early industrial relations – although the concept of industrial relations in itself a creation of succeeding forms of relation between direct workers and employers.

Shipowners as employers remained distant from the ordinary wage-labour, although the master was closer. This resulted from the pattern of development of capital in general, and stevedoring in particular. In this case the authority of the employer was mediated by a web of custom and organisational relations. Thus authority incorporated social and cultural aspects into the economic relation and both parties were enmeshed in the conceptions of master and servant.

2. **Industrial Action**

The conditions that forestalled the recognition of stevedoring industry also affected industrial
There are few reports of industrial action by stevedoring workers before 1860. Nevertheless the few reports that do exist are instructive and deserve close examination. They provide important links for the argument here.

A wage dispute by wharf workers was first recorded in the colonies in Sydney in 1823. Strikes over wages by wharf labourers were recorded in Sydney 1840, Port Adelaide in 1846, Launceston in 1849 and 1852, Yarra men in 1853 and by stevedores in Sandridge in 1857, and wharf labourers and boatmen in Fremantle, Western Australia in 1839. Petitions were presented to the Governors of Western Australia and Tasmania in 1843 and 1850 respectively. The Tasmanian petition was concerned with the issue of the arrest of men seeking work on the waterfront in Launceston, which grew out of the 1849 strike.

The first Sydney dispute and Launceston dispute best demonstrate the central features of collective industrial action in this period. Wharf labourers objected to low wages and payment method in Sydney in 1823, and no other action is reported to the height of the boom in 1839-40. About 20 to 30 workers protested at the 'truck' system. This system was more unstable in casual industries since employment was on a daily basis in the context of fluctuating prices for goods. The shifting terms of the exchange created antagonism, since the customary calculation of 'fair' returns for labour was constantly undermined. As prices rose or declined so did the terms of the exchange which destabilised customary standards.

A trader complained that 12 men refused employment (by another person) at 5s per day, which in the writer's view was generous. Indeed it was reported that, "not one man was ALLOWED to undertake that work at that very liberal pay." A reply noted that men normally accepted "a Dollar" (ie colonial 5s, with a sterling value of 4s 4d) a day but this time refused knowing payment would be in "rum, or some other article at common price" where the price of goods had recently fallen. Clearly a collective expectation of acceptable returns for the working day existed and was enforced collectively. The reply also insisted that "the labourers will, most gratefully solicit employment and most zealously endeavour to deserve it," if paid in money.

The context of this incident indicates that the increase in trade and particularly imports, created an oversupplied commodity market resulting in price falls which undermined the implicit wage bargain. Under these conditions, workers preferred money payment, in 'dollars', despite its fluctuations in value. Indeed many merchants also complained of currency fluctuations. It is notable, in the light of later history, that this dispute occurred in buoyant trade conditions and general labour shortages.

The suggested strategy to overcome the refusal of labourers to accept the 'truck' is instructive. The trader asked, "would it not, ... be advisable for the Merchants and Traders to solicit Government, to licence a number of Ticket Porters for the Wharf, and to regulate the pay they ought to receive?! Not only did this trader see state regulation of the labour market as a means of restricting the labour supply and regulating wages, but also as a means of "stopping the dreadful losses sustained" by workers congregating around the wharf. The workers sought to enforce a customary wage level and at least one merchant advocated state regulation of the wharf work based on the traditional British practice in the industry (albeit a practice that was in decay). There is no evidence that this appeal was acted on.

In 1849 Launceston wharf labourers, employed loading ships for London, struck for a wage
increase of six pence a day to 3s 6d. The colonial economy began to improve from 1847 and wages rose. The employers refused the labourers' demand and employed probationer labour (convicts paid a specified, usually low, wage) in their place. So despite favourable economic conditions the overstocked labour market allowed employers to readily replace unskilled labour. Six months later, some 50 Launceston wharf labourers, with the support of employers, petitioned the Governor in protest at the arrest of three wharf labourers on loitering charges. They had been convicted of intent to commit a felony and sentenced to three months hard labour. The labourers claimed this amounted to harassment. On investigation the Governor accepted the police magistrates advice that the men's employment was infrequent, and therefore little justification existed for them to remain in the vicinity of the wharves. On this basis, the Governor rejected their petition in early July. Two months later a complaint against the use of probationers surfaced, this time on the Hobart wharves. This complaint was voiced by a labourer at a meeting of the Hobart Town Trades' Union. The speaker pointed out that the use of probationer labour threw the free workers who usually followed work on the wharves into unemployment and also repeated the complaint against police harassment made by Launceston wharf labourers.

There are two central sets of issues that come to light in these cases. One was the general significance of wages, both the existence of the day-wage and the fact that wages were the central issue of the actions, or at least the initial actions. The second concerns the particular problems of waterfront work, which applied elsewhere as well as on the special circumstances of Tasmania. These issues concern the substitutability of waterfront labour on the one hand, and the mutual dependence of masters and men on the other. These factors are linked to the informal structure of authority relations explored in later chapters.

Wage rates for wharf labourers changed little from the 1820s to 1850. Casual day work was consistently above the official unskilled labouring rate and it was maintained through the collective enforcement of workers. Unskilled wages in general remained relatively constant at approximately 4s. to 5s. a day, until the 1850s. The Launceston disputes do, however, indicate the effects of convict labour (the probationers) in conditions of an overstocked labour market. At 3s. a day wharf labourers were below average wage levels, but above the maintenance wage of probationer labour at about 1s. 6d. a day.

Tasmania was in a unique situation in the late 1840s the percentage of convicts remained high (almost 30% compared to NSW 6%). The Tasmanian economy was unable to absorb this inflow of labour, especially as convict labour was seen to be inefficient. Employers with assigned convicts were under pressure to place them in work. Under these circumstances, then, it is not surprising that convicts found themselves working on wharves, loading ships.

Wharf labour being largely unskilled labour was easily replaced or substituted by labour from alternative sources. In the absence of favourable labour market conditions employers could easily defeat industrial action, by substituting labour. The cost to employers was relatively low. Nevertheless, there was a cost, for as I have argued in chapter two, 'unskilled' labour still uses an array of competencies which increase productivity. These competencies were valued by employers, but the extent of this was limited by the ease of labour substitution relative to the cost of production stoppages. In the Launceston strike alternative labour was readily available through the presence of a relatively large pool of convict labour. Costs incurred during stoppages for sailing
ships were moderate, as these ships routinely spent a high percentage of time in port (four or more months in many cases), either for stevedoring operations or repairs. If the ships’ crew was used in key components of the stevedoring labour process — the more skilled work of rigging (and stowage) — the routine manual operations of lifting and carrying (or lumping) could be done by the most inexperienced labour. Speed had not yet attained economic importance in the labour process, but continuity of operations was desired. Moreover the stevedoring labour process was non-mechanised, manual and slow. In the Launceston case the reduction in productivity was more than offset by lower wage costs for convicts.

The Tasmanian disputes also reveal what appears to be paradox. At one moment employers use substitute labour and the next they expressed support for a wharf labourers petition to the government over alleged harassment. These points to the tensions in the waterfront labour market and wage—relation. Employers require readily available competent labour which is organised outside the purview of the employers authority. They need workers to make themselves available when needed. Moreover, the dependence on experience means the same workers are best, which requires continuous labour market attachment. Labour supply must be structured beyond the labour market through the organisation of direct workers themselves and employers are partly bound to this organisation for competent workers. Thus employers’ supported the practice of workers lingering around the wharves in the anticipation of employment. A strike at Sandridge in October 1857, demonstrated the limits to this. One hundred stevedores claimed 12s. for an 8 hour day. The employers easily found substitute labour. This use of strikebreakers was a continuing danger for waterside workers.

In summary a number of points can be made. First, evidence shows that workers without recognised skills (or industry) could take industrial action. Second, action was almost exclusively centred on wages. Third, the day wage was the universal unit of labour. Fourth, the unique structure of labour demand, that is simultaneously irregular yet continuous, creates a measure of reciprocity of immediate interests between master and worker and also the conditions for the deterioration of mutual relations. The short duration of employment through repeated engagements, the ready substitutability of labour and so on, become potential points of antagonism. Employers oscillated between co—operation with workers and harsh disciplinary action, between the Launceston and Sandridge examples.

3. The Foundations of Worker Organisation

The status hierarchy of the early 1800s included a moral dimension, which constructed social identity in a polar opposition and the 'lower orders' were tainted. Convicts were contrasted with free men, craftsmen with labourers, colonial born with British born, women as damned whores with 'god's police', and so on. Such contrasts, in turn, provided the conditions for the growth of relatively autonomous worker organisation in which craft workers are a primary example. Unskilled workers were also capable of developing organisational patterns that served similar functions, given favourable enabling conditions. Such organisation was more dependent on favourable supports than craft workers. Indeed, both craft and unskilled workers depended upon the political apparatus and political practice — separated only the degree of dependence.

As pre—industrial conditions of existence weakened during the industrial revolution, workers had to rely on adapting existing cultural traditions or create new forms of social and political
support. I will argue that the main foundation of old and new social supports lay in local, communal and solidaristic organisation, that sustained practices and rules embedded in the workplace. Craft workers were better equipped to accomplish this, but labourers relied on the same strategy. Wharf labourers were no exception. The creation of new institutions based on known traditions and practices played a paradoxical role. They were instrumental in providing a social position for working people, but by virtue of this became inadequate to maintain that position. Workplace organisation and communality were isomorphic and mutually reinforcing, a relation all but severed in the present day.

Three primary conditions that are required to sustain this mutual reinforcement. These are based on Tilly's mobilisation model\(^{162}\) but I am here concerned with workplace organisation and not the conditions for all types of collective action. First, there must be an expansion of an economic function that allows a sufficient number of workers to have a continuous occupational attachment. There must be a identifiable category of workers, that is the 'category' condition. Second, there should be in the labour process a sufficient continuity to build and sustain a group identity. That is, the network or groupness condition. This can be based on interpersonal obligations and workgroup solidarity. Third, there needs to be means of identification and insertion into the wider society. This provides the social foundation of legitimation. With the decay of older political forms which sustained this role I will argue that local communal organisation based on custom autonomously generated new modes of association and legitimation. I am here concerned with the roots of this process, which underpinned the informalist pattern of industrial authority that will be discussed in chapter six.

1. Labour Market

In stevedoring work the occupational categories were still largely tied to other labour processes. The category condition is more clearly seen in this work as continuous attachment to the labour market. As I have shown earlier in the chapter, the work was not generally recognised and continuous market attachment was weak. The evidence indicates that some workers did display continuous market attachment, but this group was likely to be small and unable to develop a formal institutional expression due to the conditions that I have discussed in section II above. By the 1850s all of the larger commercial centres (which had established merchants and traders) had developed a stevedoring labour force where some proportion displayed continuously market attachment. The quest to establish a separate industrial identity and defined job territory flowed, in part, from the widening of continuous market attachment that took place after the 1850s.

An important consideration is the location of these industries and so labour market demand, especially those sections of maritime work that employed seamen and stevedoring workers. I showed in chapter three that ports in Britain established elaborate forms of labour organisation, where the infrastructure such as wharves, warehouses, tacklehouses, stores, lodging houses, hotels and so on where generally close to the central areas of any of these merchant cities. Irregular but continuous labour market demand and the lack of urban transport technology (porters carried goods) meant that for both workers (proximity to workplace) and employers (lower transport costs) it was advantageous to have port facilities located close to workers housing and markets. In addition, political, financial and technological considerations all pointed to the central location of port
facilities. The political factor were tied to the regulation of trade, customs, labour and so on which only covered the territory within city or municipal limits. Financial arrangements depended greatly on proximity to financial sources where risk was a consideration. Financial dealings were based on interpersonal relations, trust and contacts made within a particular social milieu. The vulnerability of ships and cargo to the sea and weather made river estuaries superior for port facilities, in addition to clear advantages for defence against foreign powers, privateers and pirates.

In short, the port area of any merchant city was very close to the commercial centre of the city. This pattern was repeated in the larger ports of colonial Australia. The labour market in Sydney was geographically limited — it was a local market. I will examine some effects of this on communities later in the chapter.

In order to obtain work labourers in this central location in Sydney often sought employment in a number of jobs, such as masons' labourers, bricklayers' labourers', porters at stores, general labourers, pick and shovel men, and wharf labouring. Two witnesses at the Select Committee on the conditions of working classes pointed out in late 1859 that "a good number" of labourers were depended on wharf labouring work, or at least were dependent upon "the Corporation and ... wharf work". The direct tie of workers to particular employers on the waterfront was probably not well developed at this stage for the reasons such as the irregular arrival of ships, the large effect of economic downturns and the seasonal nature of work. For example during the gold rushes colonial harbours were overcrowded with ships, but in the ensuing recession there were few ships. One contemporary observer, in Sydney, stated, "I have never seen the harbour with so few ships". The gold rushes left dozens of ships in Geelong and Melbourne unmanned, as seamen rushed to the gold fields, as waterfront workers undoubtedly did as well.

I have pointed to the fact that the smaller ports of Hobart and Launceston had developed some continuous market attachment by wharf workers, at least enough to spark collective action in defence of the job territory. Indeed this was indicative of the local, small-scale, autonomy that was to be a major aspect of the development of the informal pattern of industrial authority in the second half of the nineteenth century. Port Adelaide, Newcastle and later Fremantle, Rockhampton, Townsville and Cairns were to develop strong wharf labourers organisation.

In sum, continuous market attachment of labour was relatively undeveloped and as a result the structuring of the labour supply and engagement was weak. The irregular nature of shipping, the effects of depression and later the gold rush undermined the long term development of any great measure of influence over the operation of the labour market. Nevertheless it was probably the case that in practice worker influence in the labour market was stronger than appears in historical records.

2. Labour Process

On average local and coastal vessels remained in port several days, and often much longer. Overseas ships were worked over a period of several weeks in the first few decades. Port facilities were poor or even non-existent and therefore all stevedoring work was manual and slow. Speed had not yet become a vital factor in the labour process. Given these conditions it is not surprising that day labour was the main unit of work and payment. In fact it was likely that in many cases a set price was paid as a contract or as 'task' work, but in this case wages would still be calculated on the basis of work normally performed in a day, and so a notional day wage.
There is no evidence to show that men worked in larger gangs as in Britain at this time. Small teams (about 3–8 men) or a number of teams working near or in sequence with each other was the main form of work organisation. It is likely that these men would develop close interpersonal and cooperative relations within the team. This would extend to relations between teams, technically in terms of the co-operation and co-ordination between teams and socially as network relations between them. These team relations were cemented through the tie between income and labour process. In Port Adelaide ship workers were often employed on the 'shares' system, that is a co-operative principle in which each member of the team receives a share in proportion to either the labour input or the size of the share in the team. This system was used on the British docks as discussed in chapter three. Indeed it was threats to this system that prompted the formation of a formal wharf workers' organisation in 1865. The Port Adelaide Workingmen's Association was formed for "the protection of men resident in the Port and neighbourhood".  

The point to be highlighted is that it is probable that the continuity and solidarity generated in the labour process through the physical requirements of men working closely together and the economic interdependence of income distribution had existed in the years before the formation of this Association. Similar workplace networks no doubt developed amongst other groups of workers. Keep in mind that this association only organised ship workers and indeed expressed the intention "not at all to interfere with employment on shore." This organisation of ship workers was defined by geographical location. It is on this social foundation that claims to industrial authority rested. This is what Giddens terms high presence availability, or is more conventionally termed community. I will now turn to this aspect of labour organisation.

3. Community

The link between geographical proximity, that is 'localness' or locale and community is difficult to establish in historical analysis. Proximity is a necessary but not sufficient condition. The later identification between locale and community in waterfront areas provides a prime facie case that it was seen to exist. I argue here that the development of waterfront communities provided the basic social underpinning for both the labour market, that is the supply of competent labour, and the claims to industrial authority in the workplace. In part the role of communities as organisational resources for claims to workplace authority amounts to a change in the social (and economic) function of 'community', itself. Thus the concept should not be understood merely in the sense of the conceptual dualism of Toennies' *gemeinschaft/gesellschaft*. The conceptualisation here centres on the identity, linkage and role of communities in the wider societal structure rather then the *nature* of communal relations as such. At the moment I am concerned to point out that maritime communities formed an identity in local areas around the waterfront. There is sufficient reason to believe that identifiable areas developed characteristics associated with maritime employment quite early. The close association of sea-going employment and maritime shore work meant that local communities did develop before the 1830s, but developed sustainable internal linkages in this decade bolstered by economic expansion.

As I have previously mentioned, desertion was common, either to escape harsh ship conditions or earn higher wages on shore. The earliest associated maritime work was in ship equipment, discharging equipment, repairs, boat- and ship-building. Seamen and maritime
convicts did much of this work. Convicts in government employment performed this work, including ship-building, in the convict dockyard and other settlements. Early whaling and sealing provided shore work for men with some maritime skills. All these occupational groups provided the economic basis of a maritime community. Seamen were the largest occupational group and thus formed the core of the growing community.

As noted port facilities were generally close to the commercial centre of a city or town. In Sydney the waterfront areas included the Rocks, Miller's Point and the area immediately to the south-west, encompassing Clarence, Cumberland, Erskine, Gloucester, Kent, Margaret, Argyle, Sussex and other streets in that vicinity. Numerous boarding houses, lodgings and hotels were sited in this area, which was close to the wharves and stores of Darling Harbour and Sydney Cove. During the nineteenth century these establishments housed transitory workers and provided long-term accommodation for permanent workers. In Tasmania Hobart and a number of other towns saw maritime areas emerge. Two factors stand out, first Hobart was often the first port of call of ships from Britain after about 1820. Second, the whaling/sealing industry was a significant employer. Although shipping was limited up to the early 1830s, overseas shipping grew significantly in the 1830s and 1840s. In the 1840s, Tasmanian local shipping grew in importance, with Hobart boasting a fleet of at least forty-seven vessels serving the whaling industry and general trade, in 1846. Launceston had a fleet of eleven vessels. These ships created a crewing pool of over 600 men in Hobart and nearly 200 in Launceston. Using the same proportion of wharf labourers to total maritime employment as in NSW the minimum for Hobart would be 70 and 25 in Launceston. But the Launceston strikes reported above, indicated 50 wharf labourers were involved. Of course the existence of industrial action assumes sufficient workplace solidarity for collective action to occur.

In Port Phillip, the local geography dispersed the port into three areas; around the Yarra River, including those immediately south of the river and the south-western corner of the city; Sandridge on Hobson's Bay and Williamstown on the southern side of the bay, where overseas vessels berthed. Newcastle and Hobart had similar areas, while in Port Adelaide, Brisbane and Fremantle such areas were still in their infancy in the period up to the 1850s. Indeed Port Adelaide and Fremantle were the two examples of capital city ports which were some distance from the capital city.

The existence of hotels and lodging houses in these areas catered for both the recreation of the seamen and maritime workers and the requirements of ships masters. Practices such as crimping were widespread and profitable amongst hoteliers, boarding-house keepers and masters. However it seems that crimping, theft of wages and extortionate pricing, which were associated with waterfront areas were directed at foreign seamen. Coastal men avoided the known crimping houses. This is not surprising as many of the 2,000 men identifying themselves as coastal maritime workers were in relatively continuous employment. One commentator reports that Sydney boatmen frequented one establishment, 'The Sheer Hulk' in the Rocks. In Pt Adelaide at least, some boarding house keepers also engaged seamen for stevedoring labour and took out contracts for discharging ships at rates lower than customary in the port.

Accounts of life in the Rocks up to the 1820s and 30s describe disorder, lawlessness and drunkenness, inhabited by "the very lowest class, such as were derived from the lowest rank at
home [Britain]." But certain cultural patterns seem to have developed by this time. Indifference to convict status, prevalence of gambling, constables who routinely ignored the presence of escaped convicts and a sense of egalitarianism were key examples. One writer commented that some men were settled for years, "maintaining an excellent outward repute, being extensively trusted by merchants with goods [such as working porters, storemen] ... yet being finally discovered to be convicts illegally at large" These patterns indicate a measure of stability, albeit within a general mobility of maritime workers. Indeed Connell and Irving point to high levels of mobility generally particularly for labourers and in localities like the Rocks.

The desperate circumstances of many seamen attracted the concern of the clergy, led by Rev William Cowper, as well as masters and "respectable Inhabitants." The Sydney Bethel Union Society was established in January 1823. Modelled on existing British schemes, its goal was to introduce a regular Divine Service for seamen and acquire a floating Chapel. It was welcomed by some colonists, based on the success of those in Britain (1819 in London) and America. Such institutions often formed a central focus of emergent communities and demonstrate that the seamen 'problem' was sufficient to warrant attention of 'respectable' society. The moral impropriety of areas like the Rocks was one spur to such attention.

Another spur centred on seamen's workplace, that is on board ship. I am here only concerned with industrial action of seamen inasmuch as it contributed to the growth of community identity. The working conditions of seamen and their industrial position at sea were poor, particularly as masters were placed under more pressure. Industrial action by seamen was recorded 1806 in the colony, and seamen were always in danger of being accused of mutiny. Desertion, insubordination, and other industrial issues involving seamen were well known. The upsurge of industrial disputes and trade organisation that occurred from the late 1830s involved seamen. A strike in March 1837 by seamen and labourers, was followed by moves to establish the first Seamen's Benefit Society. More than sixty members were reported to have been enrolled in this organisation. Although it did not last, it indicated the form of organisation adopted by workers at this time.

Workers brought their skills and British traditions directly to the Colonies. Many watermen (operating small boats between ship and wharf) in Sydney in the 1820s were reported to have "formerly pld that vocation on the Thames" including one man who was well-known between Westminster Stairs and Greenwich for his shouts of "Overboard he vent, overboard he vent!"

Seamen's organisation was logistically difficult and therefore halting. However they were important since their competencies were used in stevedoring, they performed stevedoring work and many seamen became stevedoring workers. The maritime communities included seamen and shore workers and grew as the volume of shipping rose. Seamen often became wharf labourers when they no longer wished to go to sea. One contemporary commentator, John Speerin, observed in Sydney, that

Most of the men who live about Argyle-street, [missing text] street, and Miller's Point, are men who have been to sea, and who, having married in Sydney and got families, now work about the wharfs.

Moreover he reported that the many men who worked around the wharves lived in the neighbourhood of his business establishment in Lower George Street. These men undoubtedly
worked in merchants stores or as carriers as well. Therefore, the continuities and normative ties characteristic of maritime communities straddled a range of labouring work on and around wharves by the 1850s. The transition from sea-going to shore work was probably the source of waterfront labour supply at this time. These localities and practices seem to have been established by 1830s, particularly in the Rocks area of Sydney. Similar developments occurred in other ports, albeit on a smaller scale.

The concerns of employers of waterfront labour are also an index of the growth of the labour force and community. The merchants' Sydney Chamber of Commerce was formed in 1826. Merchants were concerned about seamen in the early 1830s which grew as the economic upswing resulted in the expansion in trade. In 1839 employers pressed the government to construct new wharves on the eastern side of Sydney Cove. In a memorial to Governor Gipps they argued that the eastern side was farther from, "the populous parts of the Town.... [and] the Western--side of the Cove on the contrary is wholly occupied ... by that class of the Community interested in Shipping." Seventy-seven merchants, shipowners and others added their names to the memorial. This indicated that there was substantial pool of employers of maritime labour in and around the western side of Sydney Cove. Many of whom were no doubt continuously attached to an industry. Moreover employers were sensitive to commercial issues, and engaged in collective formulation of their interests.

The demand for repair services outstripped demand by the late 1840s. The proposal to construct a dry dock at Cockatoo Island was pushed to fruition by the increase in demand during the gold rushes. Critically, demand for this facility arose not from the numbers of vessels, but the financial and time costs involved in 'heaving down.' One captain remarked a decade earlier that a dry dock refit was preferable because "the expense and delay of heaving down ... [was] so much greater than for docking". A private company, Mort's Dock, and the major coastal shipping company, ASNCo, announced in late 1853 their intention to construct the required facilities. They were completed before 1857, the year Cockatoo Island opened.

As noted earlier Sydney was, by the 1820s, "an important shipping port and business centre" and as such "land therein was valued according to its position." Land value rises in the 1830s exacerbated the problem of poor housing conditions in central urban and waterfront areas. The general working population could not afford houses, thus both mechanics and labourers lived in rented accommodation – such as boarding or lodging house rooms or as private lodgers. Of the 3,768 houses in the four localities covered by a Select Committee's inquiry into working class conditions only 12.7 percent were freehold. There were 285 lodging houses in these districts of which 236 (81.6%) were permanent occupancy establishments. Moreover, 151 families were living in one room in these localities, 96 of which were labourers or seamen. The housing was generally poor, very small, with little or no sanitation, poor water supply or ventilation. The high rents from the gold-rushes did not fall in real terms during the 1856–1859 recession. Complaints of excessive rents from commentators showed they accounted for more than half workers' wages, compared to the customary level of a day's wage or 15–20 percent in Britain. Most workers, particularly the unskilled, were dependent upon the private rental market for generally substandard accommodation at inflated rents.

Pressure of intermittent income is usually acute for casual workers, only alleviated in periods
of buoyant trade. In the late 1850s recession many wharf labourers were either unemployed or work averaged two days a week or less. Even mechanics in some establishments were working a three day week. Workers were forced to pawn possessions for food (grocers would take furniture in payment for supplies) and wives took in washing to support their families. Wharf labourers often could get washing from ships. Children collected bones, bottles and old rags to sell to pay rent and purchase food. These practices indicate established patterns of local organisation to deal with the effects of capitalist society. With little state support for workers and the lack of trade societies for unskilled workers, the social and economic position of casual workers was weak at the end of 1850s.

Social protest against unemployment saw several large meetings – attended by hundreds of workers – in Hyde Park and other places. These meetings indicated a sense of collective community. On this basis the first formal organisation of unskilled workers emerged in 1861 – the Sydney Workingmen's Association.

In summary, the scattered evidence points to the view that continuous labour market attachment to the waterfront emerged before the 1850s. Some employers supported worker practices congruent with their requirements. The daily wage appears to have been maintained, and wage levels were comparable with other labouring work, although annual earnings were low. Men also worked on some form of contract, such as a price per ship, or hold or a particular cargo. Evidence of wage demands, localised collective action, limited recognition – through sympathy action in strikes, petitions, contact with labour societies and in public meetings – points to organisational continuity of direct workers. The number continuously attached to the industry was probably in the thousands in all colonial ports. Sydney was a focus and demonstrates the role of the intermittent, unstable, 'floating' section of the waterfront labour market.

Finally there was an identifiable locale of maritime workers in which the seeds of community had already developed. This arena formed an important basis for the informal organisation and exercise authority in the workplace in later decades.

V. Summary and Conclusion

In this chapter I have argued that between 1788 and the 1850s stevedoring was a dispersed function and therefore remained largely unrecognised. A discontinuous structure of the production existed with a number of overlapping yet distinct labour processes. The consolidation of the industry was hindered by several factors; the small size of the colonies, the dispersion of settlements and sites of labour (wharves and stores), convict labour, the role of merchants, poor port facilities and labour market instability. Thus, stevedoring labour remained marginal, particularly where the work was distributed amongst several groups of workers. The large social distance between merchants and workers was matched by an 'industrial distance' through the dispersal of industrial authority in the discontinuous production system. Although water transport was vital in early colonial Australia, stevedoring remained relatively undeveloped.

These conditions also forestalled collective organisation of workers in stevedoring. The formal institutional organisation of the fellowship type was not possible, given British state policy and the status of the colonies. The concerns of convictism were predominant up to the 1820s, but capitalist development took root and deepened. Between the 1820s and the 1850s a shipping
business community clearly emerged, but the domination of merchants contributed to the diversity in stevedoring. Sailing ships maintained traditional skills, cargo volumes increased labour demand and the day wage maintained the integrity of the working day. These factors provided the foundations for the growth of local informalism and ‘society’ or ‘workgroup union’ organisation later. Small group and mutual association seen in the formation of locales, labour market practices and workgroups deepened in this period. The low status of workers precipitated collective attempts to change it. Institutional labour organisation did not emerge until the 1860s, but there were clear signs of the influence of British customs and traditions on workers and employers well before then. Chapters five and six turn to shipping and stevedoring after the 1850s.

1 Capital here refers to the form in which productive assets functioned as a source of employment – the formal subsumption of production under capital. Moreover, the organisation of both capital and labour was cast in essentially pre-capitalist and non-economic (i.e. political) institutions. These institutions could not accommodate the changes brought by the industrial revolution, but the forms of authority in existence continued and were the basis of the pattern of informalism in the nineteenth century.


4 Terms ‘the lower orders’, lower classes’ ‘labouring classes’, common in this period of rank order, gave way to labour as a collective identity – the lower class or ‘working class’ and ‘labour movement’ around 1770–1840. By the 1840s the terms working class and middle class were in common usage. See Raymond Williams, *Keywords: A Vocabulary of Culture and Society* (Fontana, London, 1976) pp.51–55; Foucault addresses the ‘re-ordering’ of the social relations of authority and power, see eg. Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*, (Penguin, Harmondsworth, 1979).

5 The central aspect of the change in conceptions of the lower orders revolves around two interrelated sets of ideas. First, notions of the determinants of social position. Second, the individualisation of the evaluation of social performance. Thus the status positions is transformed into a hierarchy of economic function on the one hand and on the other the internal collective evaluation of performance is transformed into the external evaluation of the individual. In this evaluation economic performance is paramount but by no means the only criterion. These changes are tendencies within a logic of modern society, structured by capitalist relations. On the logic of performance evaluation, see, *Classe Officielle, Inegalite et Injustice: The Achievement Principle in Work and Social Status*, trans. J. Wickham, (Edward Arnold, London, 1976).

6 Bligh’s answer was that “the first class is the Military; the second, the Civil; the third, the Settlers, in that class I include not only those from England but which are settled, and had grants after having received free pardons: the fourth class are called Landholders, they made up persons renting land, and I believe, including some ticket of leave men, the fifth class, common labourers; sixth class, ticket of leave men and convicts” Minutes of Evidence, PAC, 1812, p.35. Ten years later Bigge said, “first, of persons who have gone out to the colony in a state of freedom, either as civil servants, settlers and merchants,..., Second,... children either of free persons or convicts, and who have been born in the colony. Thirdly, those who after having been transported,... have become free by expiration of their terms of sentence, or remission,... Fourthly,... convicts... still subsisting; and lastly of those, whether free or convict who having been again convicted of offences in the colony, are suffering punishment in the colony...”, Bigge Report, Cmd 136, 1823, p.78.

7 Similar ideas (often centred on its penal nature) were expressed by others writers until transportation ended. Observers such as the surgeon Cunningham, writing in 1820, after many visits to the colony, described colonial society as “divided into circles as in England” with the exception that the “grand division,... of the free classes... [was] into that of emigrants,... and emancipists”, Peter Cunningham, *Two Years in New South Wales: A series of Letters*, 2 vols (Colburn, London, 1827; facsimile ed. Libararies Board of South Australia, Adelaide, 1966) 2, pp.116,118. See also Abbott and Little, *A Respectable Sydney Merchant*, p.2; Connell and Irving, *Class Structure in Australian History*, pp.33,62 discuss the status hierarchy of the colony and the ideological strategy of exclusion.


9 see Leila Thomas, *The Development of the Labour Movement in the Sydney District of New South Wales, 1788–1848*. (Australian Society for the Study of Labor History, Canberra, 1962 from draft of M.A. thesis [1919]) pp.12–13 for a similar view, although the emphasis on lawless, irresolute habits and he like, are unduly influenced by contemporary accounts, which are in themselves products of precisely the behavioural perceptions that flow from the status assumptions of the time.

10 see William F. Kahn’s “The Development of the Labour Movement in the Sydney District of New South Wales, 1788–1848”. (Australian Society for the Study of Labor History, Canberra, 1962 from draft of M.A. thesis [1919]) pp.12–13 for a similar view, although the emphasis on lawless, irresolute habits and he like, are unduly influenced by contemporary accounts, which are in themselves products of precisely the behavioural perceptions that flow from the status assumptions of the time.

11 previous chapter five, where porter labour was organised by the municipal authorities as a public service. Moreover I mentioned that fellowships were of a lower status to guilds. For an outline of conceptions of medieval society onwards, see Jacques Le Goff, “A note on tripartite society, monarchical ideology and economic renewal in ninth to twelfth century Christendom”, in idem, *Time, Work, and Culture in the Middle Ages*, translated by Arthur Goldhammer, (University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1980) pp.56–57.

12 see Leila Thomas, *The Development of the Labour Movement in the Sydney District of New South Wales, 1788–1848*. (Australian Society for the Study of Labor History, Canberra, 1962 from draft of M.A. thesis [1919]) pp.12–13 for a similar view, although the emphasis on lawless, irresolute habits and he like, are unduly influenced by contemporary accounts, which are in themselves products of precisely the behavioural perceptions that flow from the status assumptions of the time.
found wanting, etc. Thomas was not inclined to "a very abrupt change in its system, by a person who could not then be supposed to have very much knowledge of its [magistracy] interest" (p. 82). Lord's "want of education, and of feelings of self-respect, [had] on more than one occasion, exposed the magistracy office to contempt" (p. 83). Fulton's appointment was just acceptable, Redfern was rejected for, the suspicion of fraud, unacceptability to most officers in the 48th regiment (pp. 88–89), and injury to the office.

Cunningham, Two Years in NSW, [1827], 2, pp. 105; William Walker, (Sydney merchant and shipowner) stated that emancipists had little contact with free settlers (presumably of his status) except at public meetings. Moreover the emancipists had "balls and entertainments of their own"; in his evidence, Thomas De La Condamine (Aid-de-Camp to the Governor) stated that emancipists were "not associated with, or received into society by respectable inhabitants", Minutes of Evidence, Report from the Select Committee on Secondary Punishments [RSCSP], BPP Cmnd 276 Vol 7, 1831, Qs.992,993 p.65, Q.1155, p.72 [UP, Crime and Punishment, Transportation, Vol 1, 1899].

One such respectable person was Alexander Spark, an excisist and director of the Bank of Australia, see Graham Abbott and Geoffrey Little, The Responsible Sydney Merchant A. B. Spark of Sydney (Sydney University Press, Sydney, 1976) pp 1–2.

\[\text{[RSCSP, BPP Cmnd 276 Vol 7, 1831, pp. 65, 72]}\]

On 13 Mar 1806, "Several persons were apprehended on the evening of the 17th instant for riotous behaviour, some of whom were sea-faring men". Minutes of Evidence, Report from the Select Committee on Secondary Punishments [RSCSP], BPP Cmnd 276 Vol 7, 1831, Qs.992,993 p.65, Q.1155, p.72 [UP, Crime and Punishment, Transportation, Vol 1, 1899].

C. Cunningham, Two Years in NSW, [1827], 2, pp. 119,121 observed that colonial 'polite' society was more interested in formalities than in Britain.

Directions and Regulations for the conduct of the New Settlements at Moreton Bay, Port Bowen, and Port Curtis, Appendix, Bigger Report, Cmnd 448, 1822, p.181 [emphasis added].

Bigger Report Cmnd 448 (1822), p.58 [emphasis added].


Lt.-Col. Henry Gillman, Minutes of Evidence, SC on Sec Punishments (1832), Q.161, p.35, see also evidence of James Busby, Qs.280–289, pp.40–41 who points out that prior to the recommendation of the Report by Col. Morriset on Port Macquarie in 1828, being put into effect, "almost the whole management was left to their [commandant's] own discretion" (Q.289, p.41).

King, The First Settlement, pp.51,97 reported that it took two months to discharge the first three East India Company ships in Sydney Cove in 1788 by this method. The last of the transport ships left on 19 Nov 1788 after unloading. However, it must be pointed out that unloading was restricted by the absence of stores on shore.

Raven's (for scaling operations) was built in 1793, Campbell built a wharf soon after establishing his business in the colony, there was also the Government wharf near the dockyard and Kings wharf by 1810, see below, Rhodes, Pages of the Pacific, 1, p.118, Steven, Merchant Campbells", pp.40,54,84.


Cunningham, Two Years in NSW, [1827], 2, p.43.

1. Major J. Ovens to Goulburn (Sec to Chief Engineer) 10 Jul 1824, Enclosure No.1 Brisbane to Under-Secretary Horton 16 June 1825, HRA 1, 2, 658; Bigger Report Cmnd 448 (1822), p.27 where Bigge refers to the goul gang working in chains. Ovens makes no mention of this; Hunter established the gaol gang, where convicts worked with legged chained, in the 1790s, Minutes of Evidence, SC on Transportation (1812), p.21; Cunningham, Two Years in NSW, [1827], 1, pp.51–52, "At the colonial dock-yard ... all the government vessels loaded, unloaded and repaired; ... the jail-gang being usually tasked with the lading and unlading of vessels".

eg. Sydney Gazette, 23 Mar 1806, "Several persons were apprehended on the evening of the 17th instant for riotous behaviour, some of whom were sea-faring men". Minutes of Evidence, Report from the Select Committee on Secondary Punishments [RSCSP], BPP Cmnd 276 Vol 7, 1831, Qs.992,993 p.65, Q.1155, p.72 [UP, Crime and Punishment, Transportation, Vol 1, 1899].

No communication is to be permitted between the crews of the government vessels touching at the new settlements, and all the convicts there; and the vessels are to be loaded by their crews, and not by the convicts"[emphasis added] Directions and Regulations for the conduct of the New Settlements at Moreton Bay, Port Bowen, and Port Curtis ([sic], Appendix 7, Bigger Report, Cmnd 448, 1822, p.182; "The vessel is to be discharged and reloaded by her own crew, and not by convicts, except in the case of necessity ... Regulation 72, Regulations for the Penal Settlement Port Arthur, Enclosure No.1 Despatch Wilmot to Stanley, 3 Oct 1845, BPP, 1845 [UP, Crime and Punishment, Transportation, Vol 7, 1970, p.367] It was reported that government labourers unloaded oil and sealkins from the vessel, owned by Robert Campbell. This was no doubt a consequence of the fact that his brother-in-law, John Palmer was both the Commissary and Campbell's agent at the time. This was reported in the Sydney Gazette, see Steven Merchant Campbell, p.137 who also states that he had 126 free men working for him. See also Evidence Campbell, Minutes of Evidence of Evidence SC on Transportation (1812) p.100, other boats and men assigned to: grass cutting, government's barge, chief engineer's boat and other boats unrelated to stevedoring; Nicholas, "The Organisation of Public Work", pp.152,159.

Ovens to Goulburn 10 Jul 1824 p.659; Bigge puts the figure at 180 in 1819. The Carter's Barrack, located at Brick Fields on the edge of Sydney, housed men who worked with horse drawn carts and mechanics employed in associated maintenance work, Bigge Report, Cmnd 448, 1822, pp.21–22,27.

For example Campbell stated that such labour was available, Q. Did you find any difficulty in procuring free labourers? A. No, the Government people were allowed to work for themselves after they had performed their Government task, and there were a number of people to be hired, whose time of servitude had expired, Minutes of Evidence, SC on Transportation (1812) p.70.

For the considerable use of convicts for stevedoring, ships, barges and coilers, dockwork, carrying coals and moving stores see evidence of A. B. (ex-convict Dockyard hulls in Sheerness) Qs.388,389, p.50; Thomas Hawkins (First Mate hulls, Sheerness) Q.719, p.65; Col. J. T. Jones (engineer, Woolwich), Qs.974, p.74; Q.988, p.76; Oliver Lang (shipwright, Woolwich), Q.1032, p.78, Qs.1106,1112, p.82; Manners Wozese (ex-convict, Woolwich), Q.1136, Q.1213, p.86; Thomas Knight (ex-convict, Woolwich) Q.1465, p.94, all in Minutes of Evidence, SC on Sec Punishments (1832).

Such boatmen were known to attempt to exact unreasonable charges from customers, see the case of the Hawkesbury boatman, Sydney.
Chapter Four

Two Years in NSW.

How much a day did you pay for a labourer? AAt first 7 shillings, and latterly five shillings.

The Respectable Sydney Merchant, Diaries of Spark, in Abbott and Little, p.207; Coghlan, "Economic Growth of Australia, 1788-1821." (Melbourne University Press, Melbourne, 1969) chs 2.5-9; G. M. Dow, *Samuel Terry: The Botany Bay Rodschtick*, (Sydney University Press, Sydney, 1974); Bax, "Australian Merchant Shipping, 1788-1849," pp.258-259; Bax, p.259, quotes Captain Eastwick, who on arrival in Sydney on 24 Dec 1840 with a cargo of general merchandise from India, wrote, "...I called upon Mr. Lord, a merchant of the place, who offered me his assistance to dispose of my goods. This I accepted..." and also discovered that Campbell company ship and a government ship were due any day, indeed, the "Government or the Buffalo had between them the majority of the settlement in their debt for former supplies and the house of Campbell had almost all the remittance." Indeed the ownership of stores, in contrast to ships, was an important status distinction. Men such as Jones, Campbell, Berry, Spark, MacArthur and Wollstonecraft all owned stores, GrahamAbbott and Geoffrey Little, *The Respectable Sydney Merchant: A. B. Spark*, (Sydney University Press, Sydney, 1976) p.36.

Minutes of Evidence, *RSC', 1812, p.50, also cited in J. Baker to J. Healy, n.d. *ANU* E211/43, although Baker neglects to mention that Harris was a chief of ships.


Auctions and other sales of commodities were frequently conducted by Macqueen, Atkinson and Pritchett, Simeon Lord, Robert Cooper, Eager and Forbes, Robert Campbell, David Bevan, Roux (in Parramatta) and so on, these names taken from various issues of the *Sydney Gazette* in 1823-1825.

E.g. Macqueen, Atkinson and Pritchett advertised for 2 seamen for the *Laura*, and Joseph Underwood wanted a few seamen for the brig, *Wellington*, both in Sydney in 27 Mar 1823.

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Cunningham, *Two Years in NSW*, [1827] 1, p.177.

Sydney Gazette 13 Feb 1823 [emphasis added].

Cunningham, *Two Years in NSW*, [1827] 1, pp.44-45 [emphasis added].

Cunningham, *Two Years in NSW*, [1827] 1, pp.59, 72, 2, p.96.


*Census of New South Wales*, November, 1828, Malcolm R. Smith and Keith A. Johnson, (eds) (Library of Australian History, Sydney, 1985) although not all entries of persons listed occupation (or other categories). The census shows that occupational categorisation was still tied to possession of craft skill and in its absence only "labourer" remained. It could be added that in the Australian context the categories of overseer and superintendent, which tied authority and control, were important due to the existence unfree labour. The social identity of such positions developed later in Britain. Foster's view of the metamorphosis of workplace authority associated with the rise of the labour aristocracy, is a case in point. According to Foster this occurred in the 1860s, *Class Struggle*, pp.224-38.


This is a conservative estimate, as the average number of ships entered and cleared NSW 1835-45 inclusive was approximately 470 and many would work several ports in NSW, for example Sydney, Newcastle and later Port Phillip. If it is assumed that they remain in any given port (eg. Sydney), on average, for two weeks (a very conservative estimate, as most stayed twice as long or more) this gives a daily figure of about 18 vessels. Furthermore, if it is assumed that only two-thirds of those ships are worked on any given day with on average only 1 gang (of say 12 men, an approximate figure based on the discussion in chapter five) that gives approximately 150 men on average day.

As ports in the colonial era carried enough workers to cover peak periods (the floating casual proper), which usually overstocked the labour market by approximately 30% that would give a total of just over 200 workers by early 1840s. The figures are calculated from Appendix, Table A4.1. It might be added that these figures do not include local coastal shipping, ie. intra-colonial trade, which by the 1840s was quite extensive. Of the 2,130 free males employed in the shipping in the New South Wales Census of 1841, many would have been wharf labourers, probably 10 percent or more, this would give a figure at least equal to my estimate above. The estimate of a little over 10% is derived from the proportion of wharf labourers to total employment in maritime occupations (excluding owners etc) which was distinguished in later censuses. For example in Qld 1891 Census, the figure was 12.1%, and this was the first disaggregation of occupations I could find. At this figure there would be over 250 men in Sydney. NSW Census cited in Broeze, "The seamen of Australasia", p.75. By 1851 water transport in the colony was described in one government report as "an extensiveemporium of shipping, and a promising nursery of seamen."

*Report from the Committee on Immigration, NSW Parliamentary Papers*, 1841 (a large part of this
Many of these vessels had sail rigging and almost 4 out of 5 were paddle-steamers, figures see Appendix, Table: A4.3 and Table: A4.4. Butlin, “Contours of the Australian Economy”, Table 9, p.116-17. Nicholas, “The Organisation of Public Work” p.158-59. Nicholas and Shergold, “Convicts as Workers”, Dyer, “Public Employment and Assignment to Private Masters, 1788–1821”, Karskens “Defiance, Defeat and Diligence: Three Views of Convicts in New South Wales Road Gaags”

Nicholas, “The Organisation of Public Work” p.158 refers to economic imperatives. The shute was 13 feet above the high water mark and was connected to a nearby mining shaft by means of an inclined wooden frame. One ton skips came down the frame and the weight of the descending skips, which were attached and endless rope, hauled the empty skips back up to the shaft. This device used no external power source. Present day conveyor belts do a similar job and Newcastle and other collieries in New South Wales used the same type of device.


Advertisement by Mr. Oakden South Australian Gazette and Colonial Register, 14 Oct 1837 [emphasis added]

Unlike the situation in Britain where, porters, dock company labour, lightermen, stevedores and seamen all had clear and identifiable occupational identities and even corporate organisation (porters and lightermen). The proportions of the population and the labour force of convicts and emancipists are given in Appendix Table: A4.1. Although differences exist in the exact figures the magnitudes are similar, e.g. T. A. Coghlan, *Labour and Industry in Australia*, 4 vols. (Macmillan, Melbourne, 1969, first published 1918) p.47 gives the following figures for 1820 (based on the 1820 master), Population, 29,407, Percentage of Convicts and Ex-convicts, 64.4%, Percentage of Convicts and Ex-convicts in Labourforce, approx. 83.7%, assuming all convicts and ex-convicts are in the labour force no upper limit of 59 years old in either category.

However if one includes emancipists there were well over 1000. If Butlin’s figures for 1800 are used then the remaining 6.8% of the labour force who were not convicts or ex-convicts, totalised approximately 325 people (assuming that a negligible proportion of the convicts and ex-convicts are less than 12.5 yrs or more than 59 years of age). Note that Butlin gives the projected free immigrant population in 1800 at 425, 6.5% of the population (6.5% of the population were of convict background, all who had to be 12 yrs old or less), see Table IV, *White Human Capital in Australia 1788–1850*, Working Papers in Economic History, No.32 (RSSSS, ANU, Canberra, 1985) p.13. In September 1898 Hunter reported that some seven hundred men were off stores and had finished their time, Despatch No.26, Hunter to Portland, 18 Sept 1798, *HR4*, Series I, 2, p.24. This number would have increased somewhat in the following 18 months or so, giving a ‘private’ labour market of at least 1100–1200 workers of the labour force of 4500, that is about 25% of the labour market. Butlin’s figures of free immigration only gives one figure for 1788–1810 of 700, see “Contours of the Australian Economy 1788–1860” Table 1(b) p.59, (634 in his *White Human Capital*, p.13). By 1805 the convict population was 2,077 (Appendix Table: A4.2) and the labour force was 5745 (Appendix Table: A4.1) therefore the percentage of ‘free’ (ie. emancipant and immigrant) labour had grown remarkably, and reached almost two-thirds (64%) of the labour market. If it is assumed that the immigrant numbers were 700 then the emancipant proportion of the labour force was 51.5% and the proportion of immigrant (‘free’) labour was 12%, (this percentage was probably marginally higher for, by 1805 there were almost 2000 colonial born where only a small percentage would have been in the 13–17 yr age range and in the labourforce.

Butlin, “Contours of the Australian economy”, p.101. Some contemporary observers were of the opinion that many convicts were too indolent to seek additional labour. The problem of the absorption of labour by the economy also prevented convicts from obtaining work. This was especially the case in the period 1816–1819 when the large influx of convicts created the a wave of unemployment.

Over 80% of convicts were between the ages of 16 and 25 years and so their participation rate high, over 65%, Nicholas and Shergold, “Unshackling the Past”, p.8


Connell and Irving, *Class Structure in Australian History*, p.105 mention some forms of unfree labour, namely ‘exile–ism’ and indentured labour, which succeeded convict labour but these proved to be marginal.

Para. 6 “Merchants ... are to give a security of 200 [pounds]... not to take any convict ... from this colony ...”; Para. 7, “No convicts,... are to returned to the government. Q.50

supervision costs where not proportionately lower. Moreover the mass of surplus-value was lower. contemproary commentators agreed that convicts did only about half the amount of work as free labour, yet the maintenance wage and to minimise wage costs as one strategy to maximise profit, it is a doubtful proposition that this was the case for convict labour. Most contemporary commentators agreed that convicts did only about half the amount of work as free labour, yet the maintenance wage and supervision costs where not proportionately lower. Moreover the mass of surplus-value was lower.

Nicholas developed an index in which the random allocation of convicts to positions (ranged from 0, no match, to 1, perfect match) was issued to the effect that guards (centinels [sic]) on wharves would no longer take responsibility for goods which were placed on

white Human Capital in  Australia, 1788-1850, and

Worid Papers in Economic History, No.32 (RSSSS, ANU, Canberra, 1985) p.13. In September 1898 Hunter reported that some seven hundred men were off stores and had finished their time, Despatch No.26, Hunter to Portland, 18 Sept 1798, *HR4*, Series I, 2, p.24. This number would have increased somewhat in the following 18 months or so, giving a ‘private’ labour market of at least 1100–1200 workers of the labour force of 4500, that is about 25% of the labour market. Butlin’s figures of free immigration only gives one figure for 1788–1810 of 700, see “Contours of the Australian Economy 1788–1860” Table 1(b) p.59, (634 in his *White Human Capital*, p.13). By 1805 the convict population was 2,077 (Appendix Table: A4.2) and the labour force was 5745 (Appendix Table: A4.1) therefore the percentage of ‘free’ (ie. emancipant and immigrant) labour had grown remarkably, and reached almost two-thirds (64%) of the labour market. If it is assumed that the immigrant numbers were 700 then the emancipant proportion of the labour force was 51.5% and the proportion of immigrant (‘free’) labour was 12%, (this percentage was probably marginally higher for, by 1805 there were almost 2000 colonial born where only a small percentage would have been in the 13–17 yr age range and in the labourforce.

Evidence of Edward MacArthur, Minutes of Evidence, *SC on See Punishments* (1831) Q.1625 p.115; he also reported that free workers were only a small percentage of workers on his father’s estate. In 1824 only 36 out of 185 workers were listed as free the rest are convicts –excluding women and children; John Palmer, Commissioner, and sealing entrepreneur and sometime shipping agent reported that settlers were in difficulties due to the lack of labour, *SC on Transportation* (1812) p.61. Another explanation of labour shortages, by Nicholas, “The Convict Labour Market” esp. p.119, places emphasis on the fact that employers were driven to demand more labour under conditions in which the economic returns (appropriation of surplus-value) were greater than free labour due to the larger difference between the (maintenance) wage and labour output, than the market wage and free labour output. While it is true that employers will seek to minimise wage costs as one strategy to maximise profit, it is a doubtful proposition that this was the case for convict labour. Most contemporary commentators agreed that convicts did only about half the amount of work as free labour, yet the maintenance wage and supervision costs where not proportionately lower. Moreover the mass of surplus-value was lower.

Butlin, “Contours of the Australian Economy”, Table 9, p.116–17

Butlin, “Contours of the Australian Economy”, Table 9, p.116–17

Many of these vessels had sail rigging and almost 4 out of 5 were paddle–steamers, figures see Appendix, Table: A4.3 and Table: A4.4

Q.48 Is not, can you say from your experience, a fact that we are subject to periods of mercantile depression as well as of unnatural exaltation? A.Yes it is Q.49 And such periods will always be accompanied by a want of employment among the working classes? A.Yes Q.50. And when the mercantile affairs are depressed the labouring classes will suffer? A.Yes, evidence of John McLerie Minutes of Evidence, *RSSCWC*, 1860, p.3

There were floods of the Hawkesbury River which meant that settlers were unable to maintain the assigned convicts and many were returned to the government.

"From this [truck] system, labour does not cost the employer so much as if he paid in specie [money] because form the sugar, tea, and so forth, disposed of to the labourer, the employer has a good profit, while as long as the labourer can be served as cheaply by his employer as by a shopkeeper, he has no cause for complaint", Cunningham, Two Years In New South Wales, (1827) Vol 3, p.87

Cunningham writes that "the young men of low rank are fonder of binding themselves to trades, or going to sea, than passing into the employ of settlers, as regular farm-servants. This no doubt arises partly from their unwillingness to mix with the convicts so universally employed on farms partly from a sense of pride; for, owing to convict being hitherto almost the sole agricultural labourers, they naturally look upon that vocation as degrading...", Two Years In NSW, (1827) Vol 3, p.55

eg. Governor Hunter's reference on numerous occasions of the troubles or the Irish, eg. Despatches, 18 Sept 1796, 10 Jan 1798, 15 Feb 1798, 18 Mar 1798.

In other words, the repertoire of collective action of direct workers began the historical transition to a "modern" pattern. In this process the industrial strike (centred in production) has become a major (collective) action type available to the 'labouring classes'. The point to be emphasized is that the strike can be seen as an innovation of capitalism, (as distinct from any number of types of protest action in the workplace existing through history), see Tilley, From Mobilisation to Revolution, pp.159-66, and Edward Shorter and Charles Tilley, Strikes in France, 1830-1868 (Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1974)


The unique importance of these changes, and the transition of modes of production in general, is that dominant groups have to re-construct their own position in the new order in addition to transforming the role of subordinate groups. Of course the dominant groups themselves are not the same as in the older order. The importance of the transition in the form in which the issues are faced and dealt with cannot be underestimated. One example is E. P. Thompson, "Time, Work-Discipline and Industrial Capitalism", Past and Present, No 38, 1967, pp.56-97


The emergence of this type form the central theme of Foucault's work, eg Foucault, Michel, Discipline and Punish, (Penguin, Harmondsworth, 1977)

Indeed the role of the state as an apparatus of surveillance had been increasingly recognised in the sociological literature, see Anthony Giddens, Contemporary Critique of Historical Materialism, Vol 1, (Macmillan, London, 1981); Michael Mann, "State and Society, 1130-1815", in M. Zeitlin, Political Power and Social Theory, (Jai Press, Greenwich Conn., 1980) pp.165-208. In terms of industrial relations, Foster, Class Struggle, pp.47-51; Burawoy, The Politics of Production, ch.3; P. K. Edwards, Conflict at Work, chs.4.5; Dominick Sinata, Capitalism, The State and Industrial Relations, (Croom Helm, London, 1982)


Nicholas and Shergold, "Convicts as Workers", p.82. Bigge Report,Cmd 445, 1827, p.75 describes them as "the lowest classes of labourers from the manufacturing districts of Great Britain, or from the populous towns", a description that underestimated the proportion of skilled workers.

It may be for this reason the grantees in Sydney, tried to be more genteel than in Britain, and workers sought to maintain their position, or even do better.

I use the concept of returns to labour encompass to money wages, the 'truck' system of goods, freedom from harsh discipline, lowered effort bargain for work and other forms. In capitalism, the domination of exchange-value means that money is the dominant form of remuneration, (but in other societies it could be gold, as in the Trobahand)." (eg. pigs, as in the PNG Highlands) and effort is subject to 'rational' calculation. Even the exchange of goods, outside 'fringe benefits' may exist covertly, eg see Ianson Dillon, "Peria, Pillage and the Fiddle: The Historical Structure of Invisible Wages", Theory and Society, Vol 4 No 1, 1977, pp.39-71 and Gerald Marx, "Dock Pillage", in Paul Rock and Mary McLachlan (ed), Deviance and Social Control, (Tavistock, London, 1974) pp.209-228

eg. Boggs was an expensive punishment as it incapacitated a worker for a time

Indeed the structure of distribution in the society retained many of the aspects of pre-capitalist society, where even income did not always reflect contact between social groups but was embedded in legal and traditional rights (eg. gleaning, grazing, fishing, use of common lands, wood fuel collection, rights of access across land - still in force in parts of the English countryside - and scores of other traditional local practices). See chapter three for British stevedoring.


Q. Whether he [free labourer] was working by the piece or by the day? A. The free people always work by the day; the convicts have a certain task to perform, which they can, if they work well, accomplish in two or three hours. A. How many hours in a day's work for a
free labourer? A. From six to six, Evidence of Robert Campbell, RSCPT, 1812, p.70; Evidence of James Walker (NSW farmer and wool grower), Minutes of Evidence, RSCSP, 1831, Qs.831–833, that working time is sunrise to sunset (6:30 am to 6:30 pm) for both convicts and free labourers.

118 Hobsbawm, "Custom, wages and workload", pp.118–19. The idea then, as today is often expressed as 'a fair day's work for a fair day's pay'. Hobsbawm specifically excluded work that was untraditional, or work which employed, untrained, raw, or coerced workers. Factory production and the increase in the length of the working day analysed by Marx was clearly the effect of the breakdown in the "9 to 5" work day, Marx, Capital, 1, ch.10.

119 Clive Behagg, "Custom, class and change: the trade societies of Birmingham", Social History, Vol 4 No 3, 1979, pp.456–66–67 the degree to which customary standards were codified is another (related) issue. Behagg argues that in the case of Birmingham, custom was only codified through the formation of Trade Society rules, which only became necessary into the nineteenth century as local (workshop) enforcement of customary rules began to be challenged, particularly through a legal system that consistently refused to accept the force of custom and practice. Hobsbawm, "Custom, wage and work-load", pp.113–14,121–22, discusses a range of labour organisational techniques used to break down of local custom and practice.

120 Governor Phillip complained in the first years of the little work that men performed with little food intake. State regulation of hours, ratios, and additional payments were amended on numerous occasions but the essential provisions did not alter significantly throughout the convict era. The first hours were from 5–9 am and 4–5:30 pm, HRA, 1, Vol p.612; The two blocs were converted to one HRA, 1, Vol 3, p.512–13.

121 It must be kept in mind that physiological considerations are chronically inculcated with socio-psychological determinants, see Baldamus, Efficiency and Effort, chs.5–7. Subsistence of workers and access to the means of subsistence by workers was a given in Britain. Employers assumed that workers would secure these themselves along with a wide range of other provisions, for example there own tools and even candles for lighting as they worked. There are numerous reasons for this, first and foremost was the fact that early capitalist production was small scale and close to rural areas. Workers had access to the means of subsistence and derived some proportion of their returns for labour in non wage–labour forms. I have discussed Marx's view of this process of divorcing workers from those roots. But the role of rural small scale (capitalist) manufacturing has been dismissed by other workers, eg. the proto-industrialisation school emanating from, Franklin Mendels, "Proto-industrialisation: The First Phase of Industrialization Process", Journal of Economic History, Vol 32 No 2, 1972, pp.241–261; Charles Tilly, "Did the Cake of Custom Break?", in John M. Meinman (ed), Conscientious and Class Experience in Nineteenth Century Europe, (Holmes and Meier, New York, 1979) pp.17–44; Piore and Sabel, The Second Industrial Divide.

122 Natural disasters, such as floods, often destroyed settlers ability to provide work for convicts and so the means to provide rations, and were thus forced to return them to the charge of the government, see eg. Bugle report, Cmd 444, 1822, pp.75–76.

123 Thomas, The Development of the Labour Movement, p.12 identifies skilled convicts as the centre of the opposition to "monopoly and extortion" (ie first of all employers) based on their economic power. This was indeed the case but recent research shows that the proportion of such skilled workers was less than half, and if some notion of a "labour aristocracy" is used then the figure drops dramatically to 14% at the most, see Nicholas and Stergold, "Convicts as Workers", pp.68–73 and idem, "A Labour Aristocracy in Chains", pp.102–105. And since skilled workers were able to secure greater returns for output, they relied on traditional definitions of their role as a defensive strategy. The problem of authority and control was more pointed in the case of labourers (semi–skilled or unskilled) as they had to resort to a wider range of practices to increase their wages and were more likely to run (to the civil administration and magistracy).

124 The hours and ratios were changed on numerous occasions (they were generally improved) in the first decades; for a more detailed investigation of ratios see Proceedings of the board of inquiry into system for the issue of rations, HRA, 1, Vol 11, 1917, pp.661–68.

125 Ovens to Goulburn, 16 June 1825, HRA, 1, Vol 11, p.654.

126 Ovens to Goulburn, 16 June 1825, HRA, 1, Vol 11, p.653.

127 Ovens to Goulburn, 16 June 1825, HRA, 1, Vol 11, p.86; see eg. Evidence of William Walker (merchant and shipowner) Q.963, p.64; Thomas De la Condamine (Governor's Aid-de-camp) Q.1127, p.70.

128 Agasiz and market wages in 1800 compared in Ovens to Goulburn, 16 June 1825, HRA, 1, Vol 11, p.653.

129 Ovens to Goulburn, 16 June 1825, HRA, 1, Vol 11, pp.358–59,748–50,834–36 for cogent comments on the fall in the subsistence wage from the 1790s onwards. This was the crucial difference between my view and that recently advanced by Nicholas. His analysis is based on a number of assumptions which were thus forced to return them to the charge of the government, see eg. Bugle report, Cmd 444, 1822, pp.75–76.

130 Ovens to Goulburn, 16 June 1825, HRA, 1, Vol 11, p.564. With board this wage was 1 shilling, HRA, 1, Vol 4, p.186.

131 Coghlan, Labour and Industry in Australia, 1, p.56–64. With board this wage was 1 shilling, HRA, 1, Vol 4, p.186.

132 For 1803, Memorial of Robert Campbell to Governor King 3 March 1803 HRA, 1, Vol 3, p.131 where he stated that the policy of restricting wages meant that those with no access to it could not get workers because they demanded to be paid in spirits or dollars and it was forcing up the price of labour. For 1812, Minutes of Evidence, RSCPT, 1812, p.70,63. Campbell either had to pay higher wages for labourers sometime between between 1803 and 1812 or in his 1812 comments was using the term labourer to cover any manual worker; see also the evidence of George Johanne (ex–Magistrate and Aid de Camp) reported that "people would not work" for the scale of "prices of labour" set by the Governor, p.74.

133 High, Minutes of Evidence, RSCPT, 1812, p.46.

134 About the level of subsistence, for unskilled labour, see Hobsbawm, "Custom, wages and work–load", p.115.

135 Labourers wages for stevedoring work was approximately 2x to 3x a day in Britain in the 1820s, (Q.986, RSCSP, Cmd 547, p.76) 1832, and in Australia it was 4 to 6x a day, that is approximately double the British rate. These are rates and not earnings and allowing for price fluctuations, greater instability of work and other factors, it is unlikely that the colonial standard of living was more than 20–25% higher than in Britain. The larger fluctuation of wages and prices in Australia was commented on eg. evidence of Thomas Spence (builder), Qs.997,1000, RSCSP, 1831.

136 Chs.5–7. Subsistence of workers and access to the means of subsistence by workers was a given in Britain. Employers assumed that workers would secure these themselves along with a wide range of other provisions, for example there own tools and even candles for lighting as they worked. There are numerous reasons for this, first and foremost was the fact that early capitalist production was small scale and close to rural areas. Workers had access to the means of subsistence and derived some proportion of their returns for labour in non wage–labour forms. I have discussed Marx's view of this process of divorcing workers from those roots. But the role of rural small scale (capitalist) manufacturing has been dismissed by other workers, eg. the proto-industrialisation school emanating from, Franklin Mendels, "Proto-industrialisation: The First Phase of Industrialization Process", Journal of Economic History, Vol 32 No 2, 1972, pp.241–261; Charles Tilly, "Did the Cake of Custom Break?", in John M. Meinman (ed), Conscientious and Class Experience in Nineteenth Century Europe, (Holmes and Meier, New York, 1979) pp.17–44; Piore and Sabel, The Second Industrial Divide.

137 HRA, 1, Vol 3, p.189–90,196.

138 For 1803, Memorial of Robert Campbell to Governor King 3 March 1803 HRA, 1, Vol 3, p.131 where he stated that the policy of restricting wages meant that those with no access to it could not get workers because they demanded to be paid in spirits or dollars and it was forcing up the price of labour. For 1812, Minutes of Evidence, RSCPT, 1812, p.70,63. Campbell either had to pay higher wages for labourers sometime between between 1803 and 1812 or in his 1812 comments was using the term labourer to cover any manual worker; see also the evidence of George Johanne (ex–Magistrate and Aid de Camp) reported that "people would not work" for the scale of "prices of labour" set by the Governor, p.74.
lower customary standards in the nineteenth century. There is little reason to believe that this would not have been the case in the absence of convictism in the Australian colonies, given the same level of labour supply. For as he correctly states the level of migration to Australia would have been low (and participation rates lower) and it was likely that the shortages would have kept wage levels high. But this characteristic would have been resistant and therefore temporary. See Stephen Nicholas, 'The Convict Labour Market', in

Chapter Four

137 Wages fell in the 1840s depression as unemployment rose and pressure on wages was felt in the mid 1830s as a result of immigration. Thomas, The Development of the Labour Movement, ch.1 and pp.19–20 is correct on two crucial points, first, in identifying the crucial role of convicts (although the emphasis on the skilled is too heavy) in maintaining returns for labour. Second, in her emphasis on the role of immigration in placing pressure on customary wage levels. However she does not go on to tie this to the deepening of capitalist relations and the later effects of unemployment.

138 Crowley, Working Class Conditions, p.244

139 Convict maintenance costs in 1843, M. Forster, Comptroller General's Office, Regulations of the Second Stage of Convict Probation in Van Diemen's Land, Dec 1843 and Regulations for hiring Probation Pass Holders, Dec 1843, Enclosure No 5, Despatch Wilmot to Lord Stanley, Jan 1844, BPP 1843–1847, pp.7,28, [U.P Crime and Punishment, Transportation, Vol 7, 1970, pp.197,198] The actual money cost of convicts from about £40 a year to less than £20 but this was largely due to large reductions in prices for the same rations and clothes, see for example the annual cost estimate, in Bi-pers Report,Cmd 448, 1822, in 1820 was £22 9s. 6d. (add £10 wage) that is approx. £32; in 1831 the same figure was £17 (James Busby, Minutes of Evidence, RSCSP, Cmd 276, 1832, p.67) in the 1840s prices fell by at least 50 percent so the maintenance wage costs also declined.

140 The naval surgeon Cunningham's description of convict rations is followed by this conclusion, "Numbers of the English working poor would doubtless be happy to bargain for such a diet", Two Years In NSW, [1827], p.11


142 George H. Wood, "Changes in Average Wages in New South Wales", The Naval Statistical Society, Vol 64, June, 1901, pp.327–335 whose analysis shows a constant level of wages from the early 1820s to the boom of the late 1830s and early 1840s.

143 Both quotes from 1. by "A Looker-on", Sydney Gazette, 30 Jan 1823. The dispute is cited in 1. J. Baker to J. Healy, n.d. ANU/NBA, E211/43 where Baker quotes an unrefereenced source that was the "custom ... for employers to give their men spirits or other articles, that was fixed was below that of the money wages that ought to have been paid."[emphasis added] Wage schedules issued by the government and wage rates cited in statistical reports regularly listed wages with board. Therefore it is not surprising that payment in kind was widespread, was seen in skilled work as well, and was common in rural areas, see Coghlan, Labour and Industry, 1, p.50,62,207. The garden labourers cited in Coghlan discusses the dispute in a chapter on free labour. It is also mentioned, but not referenced, in Connell and Irving, Class Structure in Australian History, p.57.

150 Both quotes from 1. by "A Looker-on", Sydney Gazette, 20 Feb 1823. The dispute is cited in 1. J. Baker to J. Healy, n.d. ANU/NBA, E211/43 where Baker quotes an unrefereenced source that was the "custom ... for employers to give their men spirits or other articles, that was fixed was below that of the money wages that ought to have been paid."[emphasis added] Wage schedules issued by the government and wage rates cited in statistical reports regularly listed wages with board. Therefore it is not surprising that payment in kind was widespread, was seen in skilled work as well, and was common in rural areas, see Coghlan, Labour and Industry, 1, p.50,62,207. The garden labourers cited in Coghlan discusses the dispute in a chapter on free labour. It is also mentioned, but not referenced, in Connell and Irving, Class Structure in Australian History, p.57.

151 From the limited data available from this period it appears that prices fell an average of about 15% from 1821 to 1823, Table 1, George H. Wood, Changes in Average Prices in New South Wales, 1820–98, Journal of the Royal Statistical Society, Dec 1901, p.662; the major problem was the inadequate monetary system, and this time there were more than half a dozen different currencies in circulation, Crowley, Working Class Conditions, pp.239. One contemporary observer reported that prices had fallen about 20%, Sydney Gazette, 6 Feb 1823.

152 a. 'Amid the clamours of the Colonists against dollars' and 'Dollars on the other hand will never cease to vary - hitherto they have been confined and therefore temporary. See Thomas, The Development of the Labour Movement, ch.1 and pp.19–20 is correct on two crucial points, first, in identifying the crucial role of convicts (although the emphasis on the skilled is too heavy) in maintaining returns for labour. Second, in her emphasis on the role of immigration in placing pressure on customary wage levels. However she does not go on to tie this to the deepening of capitalist relations and the later effects of unemployment.

153 The increase in trade prompted one prominent colonial merchant to write that 'from the immense shipments it appears as if the good people of England had anticipated the progress of the colony by twenty years', 1. Alexander Berry to Davison, 28 November 1822, cited in Abbott and Little, The Respectable Sydney Merchant, p.33

154 A Trade, Sydney Gazette, 13 Feb 1823 [emphasis added]

155 In Tasmania the figure was 29 percent in 1851 and 5.8 percent in NSW in 1846, see respectively Quinlan, Hope Amidst Hard Times, p.44–45; Launceston was busy centre of maritime trade before the 1830s, see chapter five above; Bach, A Maritime History of Australia, pp.38–9

156 Quinlan remarks employers were caught in what they thought was a dilemma, between cheap but inefficient convict labour and high wage free labour, see Hope Amidst Hard Times, p.81 (cf. the craftsman's view quoted above, fn.23). Not only was this the case, but there is some evidence to show that the Tasmanian economy was severely retarded by convict labour where most of it was placed in rural industries. Of this figures compiled by Butlin and Sinclair demonstrate Tasmania's poor economic performance, eg. in comparison with S.A. a colony of similar size. Some 24,280 free labourers left Tasmania in the period 1845–51, Coghlan, Labour and Industry, 1, p.450 and only 1082 arrived in that period, Butlin, 'Conditions of the Australian economy', Table 1(b) p.100. The statements by Denney in Oct. 1848, viz., that men would be 'compelled to leave the colony to seek ... employment', following the news that transportation to Tasmania would continue, had been the case for several years before then and indeed merely continued. Statements quoted in Quinlan, Hope Amidst Hard Times, p.83

158 At this time wool was packed in large bales that were not pressed (that is, into smaller and denser bales which allowed more wool to be
159... Argyle Street area, names such as,...

160... Industry, reached its height in the 1830s, in 1835, 35 ships and 155 boats were employed but within 5 years this dropped to 26 ships and... could be done in two ways. Either, attaching the bales to a sling to be dragged up a slip onto the ship and subsequently lowered into the hold or wheeled (even carried) up a gangway and into the hold. As the ship was loaded it would lie lower in the water which meant that it was progressively easier to load. In small ports stowage would be done by seamen and they would probably do it in the case of a strike.

161... the nature of the production process underlies much of the attitudinal responses in reference to the nature of the industry by both employer and waterside workers which I have found to exist to the present day. Both parties expression the view that the industry is "different" or "unique" but usually cannot specifically explain why they believe this. They may point to "history" or similar answers to explain their view.

162... the key point is the differential efficacy of cultural forms prior to the twentieth century. Thus components of an informal system of labour organisation was simultaneously more important but less visible. Thus as "mass" culture emerges and develops it becomes more visible but less embedded in specific expressions and thus less efficacious. For a somewhat pessimistic analysis of the demise of English working class cultural autonomy, see Frances Heam, *Domination, Legitimation and Resistance: The Incorporation of the Nineteenth Century Working Class*, (Greenwood Press, Westport Conn., 1978). For the role of cultural forms in resistance see E. P. Thompson, "The Moral Economy of the Crowd", *Past and Present*, Vol 50, 1971, pp.77-136

163... Seamen were prosecuted for desertion in the first years of the colony, eg. 

164... I noted above that task work was basic for the regulation of agricultural wages before 1800. Technically task work was related to the


166... Evidence of McLerie, Q.26, and Sporer, Q.2929, SC on Working Classes (1860) pp.2,168

167... "ships generally stopped five or six weeks there [Sydney], An Emigrant Mechanic,...

168... I noted above that task work was basic for the regulation of agricultural wages before 1800. Technically task work was related to the completion of a task, but unlike most piece-work it was not restricted by time, and was thus more like contract. Early references to task work in government employment was negative since superintendents had allowed convicts to complete set tasks and leave early. They could then offer for private employment. Hunter prohibited this as early as 1796, describing "giving out taskwork" as a "shameful neglect...

169... South Australian Advertiser, 22 Sept 1865 [MQ] As I have mentioned above wharf workers had been active in Port Adelaide in the 1840s so it is probable that the shares system had been in operation for some time before this date.

170... South Australian Advertiser, 22 Sept 1865 [MQ]

171... Seamen were prosecuted for desertion in the first years of the colony, eg. Sydney Gazette, 30 Mar 1806, 13 Apr 1806; R. Haning, "Fourpenny dark and six penny red", *Labour History*, No 46, 1984, pp.54-56,59 who reports that by the 1840s desertion was very common and that wages were in some cases double sea-going wages, desertion was common. Even after this date as well; Michael Quinlan, *Hope Amidst Hard Times: Working Class Organisation in Tasmania 1830-1859*, (Griffith University, June 1985, [also as Industrial Relations Research Monograph, University of Sydney, Sydney, 1986] pp.5,6,35,46-56 and idem, "Early Trade union Organization in Australia: Three Australian Colonies, 1829-1850", *Labour and Industry*, Vol 1 No 1, 1987, pp.69-71,78-79, Broze, "The seamen of Australia", pp.85-88; Issy Wyers, *With Banner Unfeld: The early years of the Ship Painters and Dockers Union*. (Hale & Iremonger, Sydney, 1983) pp.25-40 notes that in docking and ship repair, many of the skills needed were the same as or similar to seamen and so seamen who had jumped ship in many cases formed the nucleus of gangs of competent men in this short section of their industry.

172... Report from the Select Committee on Common Lodging Houses, (Sydney, 1876) and Report form the Select Committee on Seamen (Sydney, 1861) cited in Henning, "Fourpenny dark and six penny red" pp.56-7, although these reports refer to the late 1850s and the 1870s respectively, these areas were in existence by the 1840s in Sydney and Newcastle, particularly in the light of the growth of shipping from the late-1830s; Broee, "The seamen of Australia", p.85, argues these characteristics were probably in existence in the 1830s, which may have been the case for seamen, but I have argued that some continuity of work is needed for waterside workers to be able to secure a living from following the industry.

173... Macmillan, *Scotland and Australia 1788-1850*, p.192 gives the arrivals in Hobart for the years 1823-1830, which average 16 per year. It was planned that the vessels of the Australian Company of Edinburgh and Leith would spend two months in port in Australia unloading and taking on cargo. Much of the time would in fact be spent in securing a return cargo and waiting for cargo to arrive at the ship's side.

174... So much so that the Sydney authorities attempted to curb the influence of Hobart in this trade, Bach, *Maritime History of Australia*, p.39

175... M. Quinlan, *Hope Amidst Hard Times: Working Class Organisation in Tasmania 1830-1859*, Table p.28 who lists 41 ships in the Tasmanian 'whaling fisheries' only in 1846 including 13 foreign ships. The whaling industry reached its height in the 1830s, in 1835, 35 ships and 155 boats were employed but within 5 years this dropped to 26 ships and no boats remained (in 1839) and down to 18 ships in 1842 as the depression set in. A steady pick up occurred until the early 1850s. A Petition from Free Colonists [1845] put the number at 141 in the whole colony. This may well be an exaggeration by the petitioners to strike.

176... Henning, "Fourpenny dark and six penny red", pp.54-55,9-9 points out that hotels, drinking houses, lodgings and the like developed... may point to "history" or similar answers to explain their view.

177... I have mentioned above Brisbane was closed to settlement until the early 1840s, one writer even noted that even at the time of separation from NSW, (1859), "there was not a seaport town in the colony to the wharves of which a laden ship of 1000 tons could approach."., Coghill, *Labour and Industry*, 1, p.539. This is not surprising if a contemporary view is accurate; Tom Petrie wrote that steamers rarely visited Brisbane and when they did they "always anchored at South Brisbane just below the present [Victoria] bridge", C. Petrie, *Tom Petrie's Reminiscences of Early Queensland*,[from 1837 onwards] (Watson, Ferguson & Co., Brisbane, 1904) p.279

178... An Emigrant Mechanic, *Settlers and Convicts*, p.47

179... in Port Adelaide, South Australian Advocate, 11 Sept 1865 [MQ] and provoked conflict.

180... An Emigrant Mechanic, *Settlers and Convicts*, [1847], p.5

181... For early complaints of the evils of gambling, see Sydney Gazette, 15 Mar 1804, 1 by A Mortal Foe to Idleness and Chuck-farthing, advocates government action on waterfront gambling, "Among the lower orders, gambling forms the leading incentive to enormity, and...
should by all means be discouraged by every effort of the legislature" and stop the 'Little Chuck Farthing Mob' meeting for afternoons at the wharves (Chuck-farthing was a predecessor to 'two-up'). For Hobart, Norman cites several first hand descriptions of rough existence of the 'convict class' in and around waterfront hotels in the 1820s and in 1850, L. Norman, Pioneer Shipping of Tasmania, (Hobart, 1938) pp.84-90; Council and Irving, Class Structure in Australian History, pp.57-58; An Emigrant Mechanic, Settlers and Convicts, [1847], p.49

182 An Emigrant Mechanic, Settlers and Convicts, [1847], p.56
183 Council and Irving, Class Structure in Australian History, p.58
184 see Sydney Gazette, 23 Dec 1822, 2 Jan 1823
185 see I. from A Seaman's Friend, Sydney Gazette, 20 Feb 1823
186 Brooke, 'Seamen of Australasia', pp.87-8 points to a similar moral dilemma of the 'higher social strata' in their view of seamen, on the one hand 'tough brutes, little suitable for any decent working man's occupation', and on the other * philanthropic sympathy and even some admiration for the courage ... shown by individual sailors.
187 Sydney Gazette, 13 July 1806, 20 July 1806
188 Sydney Gazette, 21 Mar 1837, 17 Dec 1839; see Thomas, The Development of the Labour Movement, pp.30-31; Coghlan, Labour and Industry, 1, p.213
189 Cunningham, Two Years in NSW[1827], 1, p.43
190 evidence of John Speerin, Minutes of Evidence, SC on Working Classes (1860), Q.2940, p.168 [emphasis added]
191 Sydney Gazette, 1 Mar 1831
192 Therefore, they argued, a new wharf on the western side would be of "immediate advantage" to the shipping community 'as well as the Public at large ... [and] at the same time would be equally accessible as the Eastern side to the whole Town, and much more so to the Residents in the Northern and Western parts of it." While the term 'shipping community' primarily referred to employers, it was nevertheless linked to workers in the area. The memorial is printed in the NSWPP, 1839 [emphasis added]
193 But the use of memorials and petitions were also directed to industrial issues – particularly in respect to seamen, but critically were not continuous employers's associations seen later in the century.
195 J. Bach, 'Sea Communications Between Sydney and Melbourne Before 1860', Journal of the Royal Australian Historical Society, Vol 41 Pt 1, 1955, pp.14-15; Iszy Wyner, With Banner Unfurled: The Early Years of the Ship Painters and Dockers Union, (Hale and Irenonger, 1983). Cockatoo Is. was constructed using convict labour which lead to serious disciplinary problems, amongst other things, resulting in inordinate delays and serious inadequacy of Sydney's ship repair facilities. Employers learnt (by the onset of the 1850s) convict labour was unprofitable. It might be added that the private companies complained of unfair competition (through use of convicts) from Cockatoo Island.
196 Coghlan, Labour and Industry, 1, p.241
197 see Appendix, RSCSWC, 1860, pp.76-84
199 It is not possible to determine the rate of unemployment amongst wharf labourers. But labourers made up over 40% of the unemployed in the 4 Sydney districts and of this number less than one-third gained some employment, Appendix G. evidence of John McLorie, Minutes of Evidence, RSCSWC, 1860, p.54; evidence of John Speerin, RSCSWC, 1860, Q.2940, p.168
200 Evidence of William Cox, Minutes of Evidence, RSCSWC, 1860, Q.1278, p.70
201 For pawnbrokers and dealers, see evidence of Robert Appleton and John Speerin, esp. Qs.2886,2903,2923,2928,2936,2940-2942, Minutes of Evidence, RSCSWC, 1860, pp.166-68
202 Evidence of Samuel Mansfield, Minutes of Evidence, RSCSWC, 1860, Qs.2680,2681, p.154
Chapter Five
The Organisational Context of Stevedoring: 1860 to 1900

I. Introduction – Organisation and Work

The shipowner is the ultimate paymaster for the stevedore whether as direct employer or through contract. This chapter is concerned with the organisational development of Australian shipping and stevedores, and the technological context of stevedoring between the 1850s and 1900. It will show the manner in which change contributed to new 'economic' effects on stevedoring, or how the mode of domination of capital altered. The organisation of shipping production underwent subtle, yet clear and important changes in this period which created both possibilities and constraints, for stevedoring and workers.

The possibilities centred on the opportunities created for wharf workers to gain a measure of social recognition and employment stability which underpinned their informal authority over work. Occupational recognition required organisational, 'industrial', and social conditions for the 'trade' to form, since the 'trade' was the central organising principle of labour in this period. This chapter maps changes in the structural context which enable labour practices to operate and develop.

The constraints undermined the key components of informalism made possible by the organisational changes. The latter enabled the 'trade' to develop, but also the trajectory of change undermined the key features of the trade. The local and informal growth of a relatively autonomous workgroup – the basis of Price's 'unformal' pattern of industrial relations – was challenged by employers. The process entailed a reconstruction of the form of industrial authority and so the pattern of industrial relations in the late 1880s. Chapter six focuses on these issues.

In short this chapter and those following focus on an interregnum period. A period of rupture, or transition, between the modes of organisation characteristic of pre-industrial stevedoring and the formation of the stevedoring industry, in a separate and recognisable form.

I argued in the previous chapter that colonial conditions made early shipping unpredictable, forestalling the emergence of widespread formal labour organisation. Despite the call for corporate regulation (such as porters, stevedores and lightermen seen in Britain) none emerged. However, local organisation and action developed from a bedrock of informalism. Thus whereas in Britain the social (and economic) recognition of stevedoring preceded its 'industrialisation' as a specifically capitalist industry, waterfront workers in colonial Australia carved out a social niche, a 'trade' amongst the 'labouring classes' later – after the 1850s. The following chapter chart the transition from formal to real subsumption of labour process. The transitional period was faster and occurred...
as an informalist pattern of labour organisation began to take root in Australia and was therefore more tractable.

An understanding of the development of shipping is essential for, as one man commented, shipowners were "the paymasters, if such [sic] he may term the [stevedoring] employers, of the Port.... were only the medium between the shipowners and the labourers...". The shipowners, their ships and the organisational changes were crucial conditions of stevedoring. The 'medium' provided the environment for the development of local arrangements and practices characteristic of the informalism.

Recognition for stevedoring work came through the differentiation the work of seamen and shore labourers where the stevedore (ie shipworker) and wharf labourer fused to form the 'waterside worker'. The separation and attraction of work tasks was not a straightforward functional or economic differentiation. Technology did not 're-construct' the labour process (the constant revolutionisation of the means of production that Marx identified), rather organisational linkages with shipping altered the pressures on the waterfront jobs. Thus in this chapter, and later ones, I focus on the impact of organisational patterns and emphasise social organisation, practice and contestation in the 'industry' and its pattern of industrial relations. The variation in patterns of authority was a key effect. But as Price points out, the extent and scope of demands for freedom and control by masters and men in turn depended on a range of social, economic and political conditions. Freedom was not, and is not, an invariant category nor was authority.

Price linked the 'logic of general contracting' in building industry and the struggles for work control. Building was characterised by a low level of capital investment and mechanisation, small employers, and a casual and mobile labour force where contractors were dependent upon labour. Consequentially work methods and labour organisation were retained by the various crafts. Workers, particularly craftsmen, routinely refused to use mechanical tools for example. Hence building employers were in a more delicate position than employers owning factories. In short, building was a localised, small scale, labour intensive industry, dependent largely upon skilled labour with little or no mechanisation. Stevedoring in Australia displayed similar traits — small workplaces, localised, not mechanised and labour intensive work, where labour was not seen as skilled.

In the following section I will outline the organisational context of stevedoring work from the 1850s. Speed in transport became more important, ships became faster and larger with consequential impact on stevedoring. Section III examines the spread of shipping companies, also a key aspect of the 'industrialisation' of shipping.

II. The Expansion of Shipping and Stevedoring Production

In the previous chapter I argued that the gold-rushes weakened the autonomous labour organisation in stevedoring due to the disruption of workers going to the goldfields. This broke down the existing elements of continuous market attachment. Nevertheless, the Victorian gold-rush was the single most important factor in the increased the scale of colonial shipping in the nineteenth century. From this base the nature of shipping expansion changed, which was important for the recognition of stevedoring and the labour process. The shift from wood construction and wind power to metal construction and steam power reflected the industrialisation of shipping. The material basis of water transport production was revolutionised in a changing organisational context
characterised by indeterminism and paradoxical effects. This section considers these changes for the second half of the nineteenth century.

1. **Shipping Expansion**

This section examines the industrialisation of shipping measured by the volume, size and nature of shipping in the colonies, 1850–1900. It focuses on overseas arrivals, since this trade best illustrate the nature of change that affected all ships. It largely excludes the slower changes seen in smaller vessels. Thus average tonnage figures more closely reflected changes in ship size. Moreover technical changes first appeared in Europe and America and introduced in ocean going vessels, only later filtering down to coastal vessels.7

The volume of overseas shipping entering Australia dramatically increased in the 1850s. Annual arrivals more than trebled between 1849 to 1854; from under 1000 in the 1840s, to well over 3000. They then rose only slowly for 50 years after 1860 – remaining between 3000 and 4000 with only minor exceptions resulting from short-term cyclic effects.8 It took thirty years for overseas arrivals to exceed the 1854 figure. Yet the tonnage of overseas cargo handled and the average size of overseas vessels rose steadily – from less than 300 to over 1500 net tons. This was made possible by new ship technology.

Technological change in shipping was reflected in ship size stemming from innovation in construction materials, design and propulsion methods. Larger ships became technically possible and eventually economically viable. While clearer in overseas shipping these changes also affected coastal shipping. Table 5.1 outlines the change in the annual average of arrivals, net tonnage and size of overseas vessels. Thus the annual average (for the decade) of overseas ships entering Australian ports in the 1830s was 230 percent higher than the 1820s. Similarly the average total net tonnage was 181 percent higher. But the average size of vessels in the 1830s fell 20 percent from the level of the 1820s.9 While growth (total tonnage entering) occurred in all decades, both pre- and post–1850, the table indicates it occurred in **markedly different form**. Before 1850 the average size of ship was fairly static** and increases in tonnages handled came from more ships in use. The methods of production remained the same. In short, shipping expansion was extensive in nature.10

**Table 5.1:** Overseas Shipping, Tonnage and Average Ship Tonnage, Decennial Average Percentage Change 1822–1910*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Decade Ending</th>
<th>Average No. of Ships Visiting (% change increase)</th>
<th>Average Total Tonnage (Net) (% increase)</th>
<th>Average Ship Tonnage increase/decrease (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1839**</td>
<td>230%</td>
<td>181%</td>
<td>-20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1849</td>
<td>182%</td>
<td>154%</td>
<td>-9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1859</td>
<td>188%</td>
<td>396%</td>
<td>69%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1869</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1879</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>21%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1889</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>105%</td>
<td>72%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1899</td>
<td>-11%</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>43%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1909</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>59%</td>
<td>36%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* calculated as percent difference from average annual change over previous decade ** compared with average of 8 years ie. 1822-29

Source: calculated from Appendix Table A3.10 & Table A5.1

In contrast, after 1850 the nature of shipping expansion changed. The recorded increases in shipping arrivals were accompanied by proportionately larger increases in tonnages handled,
particularly in the 1850s and 1880s. In the 1850s arrivals trebled, but tonnages rose five-fold, and in the 1880s arrivals rose by less than one-fifth but tonnage handled more than doubled.

In the 1850s and 1880s average ship size (by tonnage) rose sharply — by 69 percent and 72 percent respectively. The average ship size topped 500 tons by the close of the 1850s, in contrast to less than 300 a decade earlier. Average size hovered between 500 and 600 tons between 1860 and 1880, then again rose sharply to over 1,000 tons in the 1880s. The increase in the size of ships (to over 1500 tons in 1900), accounted for much of the increase in the average total tonnage entering the Australian colonies. While these decades stood out expansion took place in all decades in the period. Overseas ship arrivals rose at a lower rate than total tonnage and average tonnage per ship (see Graph A5.1). In short, growth in overseas shipping became intensive in nature.

It should be remembered that I have shown this change by examining average sizes to demonstrate how demand for cargo handling services rose in this period. Ships of well over 1000 tons arrived the colonies in the 1850s, and in the 1880s ships of several thousand tons were regularly worked, including sailing (constructed of various materials) and steamships.

Both forms of shipping expansion intimately affected stevedoring. The operational and organisational dimensions of stevedoring had to deal with the increase in the number, then the size of ships and the resultant volume of cargo. Size and volume became important material conditions of the industry from the 1860s where the rate of change of these conditions exceeded the existing historical experience in either shipping or stevedoring. Hence industrial strains emerged.

In terms of the argument here, one further point needs to be made. Variations within the general pattern of extensive to intensive expansion provide a clue to the responses of the stevedoring industry. A closer analysis of the transition reveals two stages of development; first 1851 to the 1870s and second, post-1880. As I have previously shown the beginning of intensive expansion began in 1851 to 1854. But the average ship size then stabilised (see Table 5.1) from the later 1850s to 1870. This was the period when larger sailing 'clipper' ships became widespread. Average size then rose moderately in the 1870s. The stability in average size after the early 1850s resulted from combination of the technical limitations of wood construction in sailing ships and the uneconomic nature of steamships over long distances. Wooden sailing ships approached their limit as a means of production, but steam was not yet an economic technology for shipowners. Thus the increase in total tonnages in the 1860s (over the 1850s) was achieved by more ship arrivals. Average size only rose moderately in the 1870s when larger sailing ships used a 'composite' design (iron structural frames covered by wooden hulls) which extended the use of sail over long distances. Soon more efficient iron steamships entered the route. After 1880, the large increases in total tonnages saw equivalent rises in average ship size. Consequently the number of overseas arrivals rose only marginally and even fell in some years. That is, larger ships carried more cargo outward to Australia and loaded more cargo for the homeward journey. More efficient steam engines and stronger construction materials were used after 1880 which contributed to the persistence of intensive expansion in shipping.

Thus from the late 1850s to the mid-1880s sail remained an important part of the industry. The continued use of sail provided the preconditions for the growth of informalism, collective labour organisation and maintenance of traditional skills.
Intensive expansion also characterised intercolonial and local, intracolonial routes during this period and sail played a similar role. However here the changes were not as fast, or clear in terms of average ship size. In the colonial trades, the 1850s gold-rushes proved a turning point as well. The recovery from the early 1840s depression was underway by 1848, but the impact of the gold-rush was dramatic on shipping. Indeed it gave local capitalism an unprecedented expansionary boost, which was maintained for the much of the rest of the century. The expansion in economic activity, population and spread of new settlements all created a large demand for commercial transport services. With few viable alternatives shipping had a natural monopoly of coastal commercial and passenger transport, particularly over long distances.

Victoria illustrates the effects of the gold-rush. The increase in shipping movements was most dramatic, rising from 484 ships entering in 1849 to a peak of 2,596 in 1854. The annual average of vessels entering Victoria remained at the higher level of approximately 2000 per year until 1900. It replicated the experience of Australian overseas arrivals discussed above. Second, recorded vessel registrations rose from a handful before 1850 to a total of 583 for the years 1853–1854. The average size of these vessels rose by over 50 percent, from less than 70 to over 100 tons. Combined these factors resulted in greater demands on stevedoring as a process of production. Similar effects were seen in shipping throughout the colonies.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>NSW</th>
<th>Vic</th>
<th>Qld</th>
<th>SA</th>
<th>WA</th>
<th>Tas</th>
<th>NT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1886</td>
<td>3,005</td>
<td>3,048</td>
<td>1,327</td>
<td>1,170</td>
<td>343</td>
<td>1,191 *</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1891</td>
<td>3,107</td>
<td>3,258</td>
<td>765</td>
<td>1,527</td>
<td>307</td>
<td>1,359 *</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1896</td>
<td>2,745</td>
<td>2,660</td>
<td>894</td>
<td>1,741</td>
<td>1,016</td>
<td>1,140 *</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1901</td>
<td>3,084</td>
<td>3,071</td>
<td>825</td>
<td>1,406</td>
<td>902</td>
<td>1,407 *</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1906</td>
<td>2,992</td>
<td>3,171</td>
<td>909</td>
<td>1,554</td>
<td>698</td>
<td>1,649 *</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1911</td>
<td>3,519</td>
<td>3,413</td>
<td>1,139</td>
<td>1,689</td>
<td>809</td>
<td>1,700 79</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* includes shipping that originated from other states and was destined for another state

Source: Year Book of the Commonwealth of Australia, No.6, 1913, p.664

Turning to cargo volumes handled in the colonies, Table 5.2 and Table 5.3 show the number of intercolonial vessels and tonnages handled in each colony from the mid-1880s to the end of the first decade of the twentieth century. By the 1880s, ports in NSW and Victoria worked over three thousand intercolonial vessels, totalling some two million tons. Operations in the two most populous colonies of NSW and Victoria were clearly greater than in the other colonies.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>NSW</th>
<th>Vic</th>
<th>Qld</th>
<th>SA</th>
<th>WA</th>
<th>Tas</th>
<th>NT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1886</td>
<td>2,196</td>
<td>2,330</td>
<td>767</td>
<td>922</td>
<td>243</td>
<td>472</td>
<td>*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1891</td>
<td>2,931</td>
<td>3,085</td>
<td>570</td>
<td>1,488</td>
<td>506</td>
<td>723</td>
<td>*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1896</td>
<td>2,931</td>
<td>3,085</td>
<td>702</td>
<td>2,255</td>
<td>1,371</td>
<td>531</td>
<td>*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1901</td>
<td>3,887</td>
<td>3,995</td>
<td>986</td>
<td>2,490</td>
<td>1,951</td>
<td>918</td>
<td>*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1906</td>
<td>4,633</td>
<td>5,091</td>
<td>1,270</td>
<td>3,355</td>
<td>2,020</td>
<td>1,358</td>
<td>*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1911</td>
<td>6,528</td>
<td>6,193</td>
<td>1,695</td>
<td>4,313</td>
<td>2,682</td>
<td>1,623</td>
<td>130</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* includes South Australia

Source: Year Book of the Commonwealth of Australia, No.6, 1913, p.665

In this section I have pointed to the qualitative change in the form of expansion of shipping before 1900. Extensive expansion gave way to intensive expansion, in two waves, in the 1850s and
then the 1880s and beyond. The two waves are identifiable in their effects, yet in practice they overlapped. Prior to the 1850s a rise in tonnages entering the colonies was overwhelmingly due to the arrival of more sailing ships. The first phase of intensive expansion, the larger vessels were larger wooden sailing vessels, notably clipper ships. In the second phase, beginning around 1880, larger sailing vessels used new structural materials and new steamships. The latter offered the prospect of a continuous increase in the capacity of the means of production in shipping.

In world terms, sailing ships had been increasing in size throughout the eighteenth century, as I showed in chapter three. Sailing ship size in this earlier period generally meant larger crews, which later declined into the nineteenth century.

In the next section I will take a closer look at the effects of larger ships, steam engines and construction technology on stevedoring. Each of these factors was a material dimension in the industrialisation of shipping and had profound but different effects on stevedoring production.

2. Ships, Technology and Stevedoring Production

The question addressed in this section is, how did the nature of shipping expansion and technology affect stevedoring? The main effects were, first, that larger and faster ships created demand for a larger labour force. Second, this placed emphasis on stevedoring competencies as larger ships' holds had to be worked effectively. Third, steam engines were introduced in loading and discharging cargo.

Size, speed and power were the factors which revolutionised shipping and stevedoring between the 1850 and 1880s. The changes over these decades created the industrial basis of the sea-going water transport system. But changes in technological capacities were set in a social context - where organisational, economic and political conditions must be considered. Later sections in this chapter will consider the impact on stevedoring. Taken together these factors provided the conditions for the growth of an informal pattern of labour organisation - which will be discussed in the next chapter.

1. Large Sailing Ships: Context, Advantages and Effects

The two stages - covering the use of larger sailing ships and then steamships - in the transition to intensive development of shipping had different effects. Sail and steam had effects on stevedoring that are important for the argument here. Both types of ship were greatly influenced by changes in the market structure of shipping, the influences had different effects on stevedoring after the 1850s. For sail, the question is why did larger clipper ships emerge in the mid-1800s when much of the design technology was known for over two centuries? The major obstacle to the diffusion of the technology was British mercantilist legislation, such as the company Acts and the Navigation Acts, which suppressed commercial competition in many world shipping trades. Combined with commercial domination still using the partnership structure, this legislation gave British shipowners a monopoly in all Empire trades and retarded technical development in British sailing ships.

As I have described earlier the East India Co. regulations had an important impact on colonial Australia and the Eastern routes. Its ships, the 'Indiamen' on the Eastern routes were large, slow, overmanned and poorly designed. They were based on a barrel shape, poor dynamic features, inefficient rig design and little, if any, specialisation, since all ships had the same design. They were incapable of effectively competing against newer ships that entered the trades in the 1840s.
The lifting of mercantilist restrictions from 1790 through to 1849, when the repeal of the Navigation Act marked the end of the ‘deregulation’ process. World shipping was opened to competitive market pressures. The EIC monopoly ended in 1833, the year it ceased trading. The sharpest effects of the end of British mercantilism were seen in the Eastern trades.

The repeal of the Navigation Act "had the immediate effect of swamping British and colonial ports with American vessels." American ‘clipper’ ships, designed for long distance trades like the East, were larger, longer, sleeker, had better dynamics, were faster than their British counterparts and could be produced more economically than elsewhere. Improved rig design reduced manning levels to below the industry average. When added to the general decline in defence needs of merchant vessels the fall in manning was considerable. Thus, the removal of political impediments to shipping precipitated a surge of technological development in ship design. Significantly for colonial Australia, technological advancement was in sailing ship technology. From the 1840s to the 1870 steam was not a threat to sail.

However, the competitive advantage of American vessels was short-lived. A complex interaction of factors, such as ship size, materials technology, steam engines and so on, affected the pattern of world shipping and in the colonies. The continued use of sail and the rise of steam affected stevedoring in Australia from 1850 to 1900. They therefore bear closer inspection.

The shipping market changed as shipowners recognised the competitive advantages of speed in both cargo and passenger transport. The first commercial use of steamships in the early nineteenth century were restricted to short distances due to the cost and volume of coal fuel required. So Australia saw few overseas steamers arrive up to the 1850s. Steam technology and the speed of steamships only improved slowly. Thus the builders of sailing ships had time to address the threat to their position, particularly over longer distances. The American challenge also spurred British shipbuilders to build more dynamic sailing ships. They were successful and the American advantage in sail construction and design was short-lived. British expertise in sail, and later in steam ship production, enabled British shipbuilders and owners to quickly regain the initiative and retain dominance of world shipping until after 1900. Thus British shipping consistently account for more than three-quarters of all overseas shipping arrivals in the Australia colonies. The following discussion examines this process in more detail in order to show the pattern of inter-related conditions affected stevedoring 1860 to the end of the century.

The use of clipper ships and the spread of steamships best demonstrate the effect that I wish to stress. Turning to sail first. The China trade, the Californian gold-rush (1847) and then Australian gold-rushes, Australian wool trade, coal and similar trades gave American sailing ships a ready market for expansion in the East after mercantilist constraints were lifted. American technical and economic advantages in shipbuilding allowed them to gain an edge in international shipping for about two decades after the early 1840s. The Americans had a ready supply of low-cost resources – soft timber – design innovation with no design restrictions, faster production methods using cheaper labour. Ships had more efficient hulls with a lower drag factor, better rigging, and lower manning requirements. The New England yards built faster, larger and more efficient sailing vessels from the 1840s to exploit the China trade and other long distance routes. Although sailing ships of over one thousand tons had been technically possible for generations the
combination of size and speed in the new vessels was significant. The use of chains and steel wires in rigging meant that lines were stronger, more durable and lighter and enabled larger ships to have fewer sails, or fewer men to handle existing sails. Ships could sail closer to the wind, which increased their speed, with proportionately fewer crew.

The New England shipyards could not maintain the momentum of building and the British regained the lead by the late 1850s. The British quickly copied the hull design features of clippers, rigging and size. They used iron for the structural frame for strength and a hardwood hull for durability with a minimal loss of speed. This 'composite' construction was used first in 1851 and permitted the construction of larger and stronger sailing ships. The rapid deterioration of soft woods lead to a greater loss of speed in American vessels. Later new methods of protecting iron hulls emerged. By 1860 British sailing ships matched and some respects surpassed American technical advances.

British shipowners quickly exploited the economic advantages of their sailing ships even steamships for the succeeding decades. However, the opening of the Suez canal in 1869 marked the beginning of the end of the advantages of sail. Steam came into widespread use in the 1870s. Yet many large clipper ships still served beyond 1900 and sustained key elements of traditional stevedoring.

In terms of size, the American clipper ships were larger than conventional barrel-shaped sailing ships of the era. Recall that the average tonnage of overseas ships (arrivals) pre-1850 was less than 300 tons. In contrast American clippers were generally between one and two thousand tons, and often more. The larger vessels were unable to berth alongside port wharves and were worked by lighter at anchor. British clippers averaged over one-thousand tons, and given the British dominance of the Australian trade, they were a regular feature in Australian ports. The natural barrier of a wooden ship is approximately three thousands tons, but the speed advantage of clipper ships was significant. Sailing time from Britain to Australian fell from 150–180 days in 1788 to 120–130 days by 1840 due to better knowledge of winds, currents and general conditions. Lubbock notes that 120 days was considered "very good going" in 1840. But the clipper ships slashed the time to 70–90 days – a gain of up to 40 percent.

Taken together these technological improvements in design, materials and speed in sailing vessels changed shipping markets. Higher productivity saw world freight prices drop through the nineteenth century. In the Australian trade, homeward freights (Sydney to London) in wool fell from approximately 2.5 pence a pound in the 1820s to 1 or 0.5 pence a pound by the 1860s – a 60 to 80 percent decrease.

To summarise, the demise of mercantilist regulations and success the American challenge in shipbuilding and operations, significantly changed shipping in a little over a decade. Market competition increased, demand for passenger services rose and long term shipping revenue fell – all factors that pressured shipowners to limit costs. That is, more economic pressure was placed on ships as capital assets, or as an industrial means of production. Key measures of size, design, speed, load factor and turnaround time became increasingly important aspects of the shipping production process. The direct effects of these changes on the stevedoring labour process will be discussed later in the chapter.
2. **Introduction and Effects of Steamships**

One solution to the problems of size and speed was born in the industrial revolution – steam power. Steam promised increases in speed and cargo volume with its effective carrying power three times that of sail – that is, each ton of a steamship could carry 3 tons of cargo, for sail, the ratio was one ton of cargo for one ton of ship.\(^{35}\) Steam spread in European and American coastal (and river) trades from the early 1800s. The first trans-Atlantic route was established in 1838, which began the steamship challenge to sail over long distance routes. Yet it took over thirty years to overcome the technical limitations which made steamships expensive to operate over longer distances. In other words, during the first stage of intensive expansion of shipping, large, fast sailing ships had a cost advantage over long distance.

Early steam engines\(^{36}\) were inefficient and ships needed to carry large quantities of fuel for long distance travel. It was expensive because coal reduced the space available for revenue earning cargo and the weight of coal and excessive bunkering time cut the speed advantage of steam. Moreover no network of coal bunkering stations existed, and the fouling of iron hulls that slowed the vessel had not been overcome. The high capital cost and overheads\(^{37}\) of steamships was not offset by economic factors and thus they could not compete with sail over longer distances.

But the pressures on the shipping market propelled technological innovation in steam engines, ship design and materials that overcome these problems. By the 1880s steamships were well established in many long distance trades in the northern hemisphere,\(^{38}\) as they were in shorter distance trades a decade or more earlier.\(^{39}\) The Australian trade was unique in that the extreme distances gave large, fast sailing ships an economic advantage, particularly in high volume, low value cargoes (such as wool) well into the eighties. But they soon declined thereafter and the last clipper ship sailed shortly after WWII. While steam and iron construction meant speed and size to the shipowner, since they broke the natural barriers of wood of about 300 feet in length and 3000 tons in weight, economics undermined them. Ventures such as Millwall shipbuilder John Scott's 1859 paddle-steamer the *Great Eastern* (18,914 gross tons and 680 feet in length) built for the Australian trade, never travelled to the colonies. High coal consumption proved prohibitive.\(^{40}\) Only forty years later did vessels of this size reappear, despite Scott's demonstration of the technical capacity. In other words, steam introduced a new cost calculation for shipowners.

The large operational cost of coal fuelled steam propulsion could be then be offset by increasing ship speed and/or ship size. Steam engines were initially small, inefficient, lacked power which meant that more than three-quarters of their carrying capacity was needed for coal over long journeys. Combined with the constant fouling of ships' hulls, the speed of vessels was limited before 1870. Single-cylinder engines consumed about ten pounds of coal per indicated horsepower (IHP) per hour. This halved by 1850s and halved again by 1860. The compound steam engine, widely adopted in the 1870s, further improved engine efficiency,\(^{41}\) so that soon after 1900 fuel consumption fell to about 1.25 tons per IHP/h. And steel construction overcame much of the fouling problem.

Larger ships meant savings to shipowners due to lower marginal cost per ton. High initial capital cost could be offset by revenue gains from larger cargo capacity, lower manning and similar economies of scale. Thus steamships of over 1000 tons were rare by the 1860s, but in the 1870s
sizes from 2000 to 4000 tons were not uncommon in many trades. ships of this size were more common in Australia by the late 1880s and 1890s. One enthusiastic Brisbane observer boasted of the late 1880s, that "[s]plendid ships of upwards of 11,000 tons register ...[were] frequently to be seen loading meat, wool, and other station produce, alongside the South Brisbane wharves." and another "one saw 10,000 ton liners lying at the wharves discharging cargoes of manufactured goods from the marts of Europe and the East."

By 1900 ships of 6000–8000 tons were seen as typical for merchant vessels, and ships of over 20,000 tons were constructed. However few vessels of this size were in the Australian interstate trades. Vessels in the range 2000–4000 tons were typical. For example, the 16 new vessels acquired by the major companies from 1901 to 1904 averaged just over 2600 tons (excluding small lighters etc). At the same time the average size of the Australian Steamship Owners Federation companies was approximately 3000 tons. In overseas trades, a British inquiry into colonial shipping recorded vessels in the range of 4,000 and 18,600 tons. The latter, the Ceramic, was the largest vessel to visit Australia up to then, and could not load to full capacity as the Melbourne harbour was too shallow.

Early steamships also required many stokers to be employed. This new class of maritime worker kept operational labour costs for steamships relatively high, although offset by the decline in seamen on deck. Owners tried to cut manning on steamships as they did for sailing vessels. James Burns explained in 1891,

1. Would you state some of the reasons? [why crews are relatively smaller] The modern steamship does not require the amount of coal, and consequently the amount of labour, that the old vessels did. We study economy with labour, because it is our most constant charge, and the most expensive item we have to deal with. I know this, that with compound and triple expansion engines the amount of coal is lessened in a large degree, notwithstanding the increase in the size of vessels. By our economy in labour we are now able to run a ship of double the size with the same number of men, and the men will not be worked any harder than they were before.

2. President.] The real question is, does the use of machinery diminish the necessity of labour on deck? A great deal; because we have hydraulic lifts for what used to be done by manual labour. It does not take more men to keep a look-out on a big ship than it did on a little one.

With lower ship manning (or stokers who lacked traditional competencies), shore workers became more important for stevedoring work. Thus steamships aided the consolidation of shore workers, certainly by the 1880s. Lower manning, and seamen's claims for the 8-hour day had the same effect on sailing vessels in the later 1870s as well.

In sum, while steamships provided a solution to shipping production, several pitfalls emerged. Significant technical changes in engines and metallurgy were needed to make the potential size and speed of steamships economically viable. The process took several decades, and in doing so placed significant economic and organisational pressures on labour.

Australian shipping often experienced these changes years after overseas countries. The diffusion of technical developments in steam shipping was relatively slow. The capital and operating costs of steam were major deterrents during the 1860s and into 1870s. Large distances, small and uncertain markets, intense competition and seasonal effects were all greater in Australia than overseas. Local trades operating small vessels (less than a few hundred tons) generally lacked the resources for steam. For example, of the average of 75 vessels in the Port of Sydney in the early 1870s only a handful were steamships of an average size of less than one thousand tons.
Steamship registrations in Sydney 1834 – 1900 replicated the development seen for overseas vessels, albeit at a slower pace. Table 5.4 shows registrations, type of propulsion mechanism and size of steam vessels. Early wooden paddle steamers gave way to composite screw steamers in the 1860s and then iron screw steamers became more common by the 1880s. Only after the early 1880s were vessels of more than 1500 tons common. Almost 20 were on the register in the 1890s and the depression prompted a decline smaller vessels under 500 tons. Moreover registrations surged in three periods; 1953–1856, 1873–1877 and 1882–1886.*

Table: 5.4 Steamship Registrations, Propulsion and Size (Sydney 1834–1899)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Years</th>
<th>Number Registered</th>
<th>Type of Vessel Propul'n</th>
<th>Size (tons)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Paddle Steamer</td>
<td>200–499</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1834–1839</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1840–1844</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1845–1849</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1850–1854</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1855–1859</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1860–1864</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1865–1869*</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1870–1874</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1875–1879</td>
<td>138</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1880–1884</td>
<td>190</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>154</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1885–1889</td>
<td>136</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>110</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1890–1894</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1895–1899</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>73</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* size not given for one vessel in 1869

Source: Compiled and categorised from R. H. Parsons Steamships Registered Sydney 1834–1899 (Typescript, Adelaide, 1958)

Thus by the mid-1880s steamships were the core of Australian coastal shipping, despite the anxiety of owners such as James Burns (of Burns, Philp and Co.). Burns commented to Philp in the early 1880s that, "steamboats are a great worry and anxiety but I suppose we will get used to them after a bit." Three months later he wrote, "I am a bit timid about the steamship business and it wants [sic] a man like Sachs to push it through." Steam came to stay. In the same year, 1881, ASNCo sent its general manager Capt. Frederick Trouton to Britain to acquire half a dozen vessels, at a cost of more than a third of its capital – "the largest ever undertaken by the Company at any one time." In 1883, the Union SSCO. appointed Capt. Thomas Underwood as marine superintendent in London, to dispatch four vessels of 4000 tons each to Australia. A decade later Burns made the statements, on the advantages of steam to the Royal Commission on Strikes, cited above. Also the largest colonial shipping company, the Australasian United Steam Navigation Company (AUSNCo), the successor of the ASNCo, reported to its British owners that its existing fleet had to be replaced by vessels of "larger capacity and greater speed was vital to successful shipping operations in the colonies". Finally the dominance of steam was reflected in the overseas trades as well. In 1904 steamships carried 4.5 mill. tons, or 67 percent, of direct overseas shipping arrivals (excluding additional port visits and carriage of coastal cargoes). Overall by 1900 steam accounted for approximately two-thirds of Australia's shipping.

To summarise the argument so far in this section – the end of mercantilist restrictions on international shipping increased the level of world competition. This spurred technological
improvement and the industrialisation of shipping as well as long term fall in prices, or freight rates. The initial effects were seen in sail (from the 1840s to 1870) but innovation in steam shipping became dominant in the 1870s. The technical limitations (of engines and materials) were surmounted and steam penetrated the long distance trades. The opening of the Suez canal in 1869 marked a turning point. Together these changes amounted to the transition of shipping to industrial capitalist production. The ship became an instrument for commodity of transport, as shipping companies became common carriers. The new industrial production was measured by volume, speed and price. The initial high freight rates indicated a premium for speed. Technical change resulted from the increasing subsumption of shipping under the capitalist form of domination.

James Burns, a founder and principle of Burns, Philp and Co., summed up the new economic conditions of shipping after 1880 thus,

"we would have no chance of making a Company pay if we worked with antiquated ships.... They [ASN Co] did not keep pace with the requirements of their trade. If you want to induce passengers to travel you must have first-class ships; and then you want to combine with a large capacity for cargo, for that is where we make the profit."

The transition to industrial capitalist production in shipping extending over several decades and threw up opportunities and constraints. Traditional partnership shipowning became inadequate. The capitalist joint stock company enabled the scale of investment, planning and organisation to expand. In the colonies it first appeared in the 1830s, but the company form was not consolidated until the 1880s – a generation after Britain. For Australia the 1870s and 1880s were crucial for the extensive expansion of shipping which provided the enabling conditions for the recognition of stevedoring. As the scale of new shipping companies expanded so did stevedoring based on the consolidation of informalist practice. However, the demands of informalism and those of an industrialising shipping industry sat uncomfortably together.

3. *Steam Power and Stevedoring*

Shipowners focused on the technological improvement of ships and neglected cargo handling technology, particularly in Australia. Where new materials, design and power improved the size and speed of ships, this was no so for cargo handling. It remained largely a labour intensive operation. However the use of steam power in loading and discharging operations was a key exception. The steam winch revolutionised the speed of the 'hook' and so the labour process. It became a standard appliance for steamships and portable steam engines, known as 'donkey' winches, could be attached to the rigging of sailing ships and used for cargo loading and discharging.

The steam powered winch mechanised the hook in general stevedoring and resulted in a significant rise in the potential for productivity increases (phases 5 and 6 in Figure 2.1) The donkey winch quickly spread in the 1860s, particularly in larger ports – although not universally adopted. Rigging and slewing skills still remained, but steam significantly quickened the previously slow cargo movement on a gang plank or by manual winches. But manual materials handling on board and on shore remained the bulk of the stevedoring labour process. The quickening of *one* aspect by mechanisation then simply placed additional demands on the manual phases.

As ship's holds got larger so did the volume of cargo to be handled. With steamships using steam winches, the more elaborate rigging of the older sailing ships disappeared. Also innovations, such as refrigerated holds, resulted in a significant deterioration of working conditions.
in the 1870s, export of frozen meat began in 1882. Shipowners neglected components of stevedoring. Two key conditions were important for this; the funding of ports and shore facilities and the organisation of companies. I will examine these in the following section and section III respectively.

3. Stevedoring and Ports

As noted technological changes did not extend to stevedoring work methods on the conditions under which labour was performed. Port and shore facilities were poor and lagged behind technology in shipping. Stevedoring was left as a largely manual, non-mechanised labour process for the nineteenth century.

Colonial conditions contributed to the lack of shore facilities. The distance, size and the political decision making for infrastructure investment lead to minimal facilities, even in larger ports. This adversely effected stevedoring productivity. The distance to Australia kept sailing ships in the overseas trade longer than in several other countries. Within the colonies, large distances between small coastal settlements dispersed the centres of production and markets, resulting in an uneven pattern of shipping. Overseas ships had to call at four, five or more ports to discharge and load sufficient cargo for the homeward journey or depend on transhipment from small outports to larger regional or capital city ports. Both resulted in infrequent handling of low volume cargoes in most ports. In smaller ports, often small steamships were also unprofitable and sail more suitable. In short, long distances delayed the introduction of large numbers of steamships. This blunted the demand for quick turnaround by steamship owners and in turn slowed public and private port investment. The available investment was also spread over a large number of geographically dispersed ports, lowering investment in each.

In addition, ports reflected their development and role. In larger ports the constant arrival of overseas and colonial vessels saw scores of vessels in port at any one time. They often remained in port for several weeks, and many were small (less than a 100 tons). When anchor or berthed they were not all worked at the same time, but the flow of work was constant. Thus demand for facilities was higher. Where only one, or a few, companies offered services as in small ports, the development of adequate facilities was less economic bit they had to serve the local hinterland. Seasonal exports increased throughput but only low volumes of general cargo were handled in such ports. Appeals for government assistance were common, but government lacked funds for facilities that were routinely under utilised. Moreover, private investment was meagre because agents and companies also lacked resources for more than their own stores. Some larger regional ports (eg. Newcastle, Geelong, Townsville) were in a better position.

The development that did take place in the capital city ports combined government and private sources. Sydney in particular, relied heavily on private funds for wharf development although shipping interests petitioned the government for infrastructure construction. Facilities were thus barely adequate because ports lacked cargo throughput and available capital seen in ports overseas. The dependence on the state for investment opened the way for a significant political influence in port development, despite a paucity of resources of colonial governments at this time.

The political dimension was best illustrated by Adelaide and Queensland ports. Several government inquiries into Adelaide's port requirements were conducted from 1880 to the first world
war. They centied on the question of private or public ownership. The latter view prevailed. Queensland port development was chronically entwined with the hinterland development and politics. As a result ports sprung up all along the Queensland coast, which reflected the political strength of rural interests, rather than the economic and production efficacy of the ports.

Public control over ports in most colonies spread after the 1870s, as the largest colonial shipping company, ASNCo, began selling its wharves to the NSW government. Facilities in Sydney developed in fits and starts after the gold-rushes. Its rail infrastructure did not change much from the early 1860s until the 1880s. But as transport demand rose as a result of prosperity and rising population from 1873–5 new stores and warehouses were built in the western section of the port. In the ten years to 1883 new finger piers replaced older ones in Walsh Bay and Darling Harbour. In 1901 the Sydney Harbour Trust was formed, after more than a decade of delay by vested interests and government fiscal problems. The 1900 bubonic plague was blamed on the rat infested Sydney waterfront and galvanised public pressure for the Authority. In the west, Fremantle came under the control of a harbour trust in 1904.

What effects did distance, size and politics have on stevedoring and stevedoring workers? First, facilities were poor – small and inadequate wharves and no equipment – for stevedoring. Second, private investment was short-sighted – generally limited to direct wharfage and storage facilities, and uncoordinated warehousing. Government expenditure was often directed at dredging, lighting, and channel development rather then wharfage and storage. Third, regional political pressures in the colonies resulted in poor planning of any efficient coordination of port investment in each colony and between colonies. Fourth, cargo handling technology and transport mode interfaces were poorly served by the political structure and government policies. Rail extensions near or onto wharves and jetties were the only major concession to the interface between transport modes, albeit poorly coordinated. Road access to wharves was often very poor. In short, port facilities in general were poor and stevedoring facilities were worse. The 1900 Brisbane Portmaster’s report aptly described the situation.

Facilities, ... are, however, sadly needed, as frequent complaints are made by the masters of oversea vessels of the inadequacy of our wharfage accommodation, and the absence of all modern appliances for the rapid discharge and loading of vessels.

The portmaster recommended dredging to ensure all vessels remain afloat during all tides, and that more wharves and sheds, and "modern appliances for the expeditious loading and delivery of cargo" be installed. Notably he recommended that Lewis Hunter patent coaling cranes be installed, such as those in use in Cardiff and in New South Wales.

A similar story is found in Sydney. On the formation of the Sydney Harbour Trust in 1901, it was reported that, "practically the whole of the wharves were more or less in a state of disrepair, and that in most cases it was more economical to build new structures than to bring old structures up to date." In 1913 a British government report described Sydney cargo-handling facilities as inadequate. The only modern machinery was for bulk coal loading.

Bulk coal was a cargo that made investment in loading technology economic. Because coal handling combined homogeneity and volume throughput. Newcastle provides an illustration. The volume of coal exported from Newcastle allowed investment in loading chutes which first appeared as early as 1831. Although coal exports grew only slowly under the monopoly granted to Australian Agricultural Co., this was quickened by a competitive challenge from the Brown
brothers in 1844. An ensuring legal case eventually went to the Privy Council. Exports picked up
after the 1847 Californian gold-rush, but American vessels in this 'Californian trade' of the 1850s
were too large for the Newcastle berthing facilities. Lighters had to be used. Mechanical devices
introduced in off-shore loading operations were also unsatisfactory. Not until 1860 were coal
loading steam cranes erected on large purpose-built wharves and marked a qualitative change in
bulk cargo handling in the port. When the Wallsend Coal Co. claimed exclusive use, the NSW
Government was pressured to purchase and build facilities. Private facilities continued to be
installed by coal companies. In 1878 hydraulic cranes first appeared in Newcastle and by 1889 the
port was equipped with 16 cranes and several dozen straights. The port handled 21,000 tons in 1840,
but this rose to over 250,000 tons in 1860, more than 500,000 tons in the early 1870s and over 4
million tons at the end of the century. The economic key for mechanisation was large volumes of
an homogeneous cargo. But as I have shown, even here investment was uncoordinated,
inadequate, and insufficient to handle coal demand.

The position for general stevedoring in the colonies was worse since there were insufficient
volumes of homogeneous cargoes to justify specialist mechanisation. Most coal handling was for
bunkering and thus even coal was no more mechanised than a steam sling, until after 1900 in most
ports. One engineer observed a 9 man gang working coal in Melbourne in 1886 describing the
work as slow, "slovenly and laborious", over manned and lacking any automatic machinery and
suggested a mechanised "steam hand" to speed the labour process and eliminate 7 of the workers.

Economic expansion and steam shipping from the mid-1870s brought an extensive growth of
wharfage, stores and warehouses. In the decade from 1873 to 1883 Sydney saw the redevelopment
of Walsh Bay and Darling Harbour wharves and warehouses. Demand for casual waterfront
labour rose, but craft jobs in ship-building and associated work declined because steamships were
imported. In Sydney, for example, several old shipyards in the Darling Harbour area were closed to
gave way to wharf expansion. Steam power also created new occupations, such as stokers and
firemen on board and steam crane operators on shore, and expanded demand for others, such as
marine stewards and cooks to serve more passengers. Most of these workers were seen as
unskilled.

There are two points that are relevant here, first, in the maritime industry as a whole, the
proportion of unskilled workers to skilled workers rose. Second, the demand for wharf labourers
increased. Thus the conditions for the organisation of stevedoring workers were both
strengthened and weakened. On the one hand, labour recognition and demand strengthened the
position of unskilled workers. Small scale local employment produced a tendency for sectionalism
as workers tried to build specific skills and ties with employers as a protective device. For in the
larger market continuous attachment provided some security. On the other hand, their position was
weakened with more competition for work. Yet more broadly, the geographical dispersal of labour
into many ports combined with minimal investment in technology, served to divide workers. Thus
the creation of a market hierarchy and the large number of far flung ports forestalled the possibilities
for collective organisation on the waterfront.

In summary, on-shore technological development in stevedoring was generally poor in
colonial Australia. Geographical distance – from Britain and between ports – combined with the
number and small size of ports served to inhibit technical change. Both public and private investment in port infrastructure was inadequate. Public finances were stretched by regional political pressure from far-flung settlements for port services to access overseas markets. Finally the heterogeneity and small volume of cargo handled in most ports impeded private and public investment in stevedoring technology. Coal was a minor exception. Steam-winches had the largest impact. In this context, stevedoring remained based on manual operations between the 1850s and 1900 – possibly more so than in comparable ports overseas.

4. **Effects on the Stevedoring Labour Process**

Thus stevedoring work remained manual and heavy. The major development was the power driven winch which moved the hook faster. Equipped with bigger holds, larger vessels carried more and larger cargo, which meant that the physical boundaries of the working environment could potentially become the means of altering work methods and labour usage. In short, the technical limits of 'job territory' expanded thereby altering the social organisation of work. Both were introduced without reference to stevedoring workers. This section considers the effects on work organisation and the next main section turns to the company organisation.

Vessels of less than 300 tons had a restricted working space and therefore size of the labour unit on board. Lumpuig cargo along a gangway and working simple slings (ship's or shore tackle) were the main methods of handling cargo, and as seen in chapter three limited the size of teams. However in Britain gangs (15 or 20 men or more) appeared in the shore work of porters or dockers because larger volumes of homogenous cargoes, allowed specialisation. This was absent in Australia in 1850, thus large gangs did not emerge. But as technology placed pressure on small teams on the waterfront after 1850 larger gangs did appear.

Larger ships' holds removed the physical limits of the ships' hold. This was seen first in the overseas trades. Larger cargo packages was reported in the major port of Sydney in the 1850s. An 1859 petition by 67 Sydney merchants and traders complained of excessive leasing (wharfage) rates at the Circular Quay public wharves because of the method of calculation. The latter made "no distinction in regard to case goods, whether they measure a cubic foot or more than a ton". The existing method assumed smaller packages that had declined by 1860. Not surprising donkey winches were soon adopted to handle this larger packaging.

In general, more tonnage handled and larger packaging placed greater demands on stevedoring. With little or no handling equipment, heavier weights required more labour input – either via additional workers or labour intensification, or both. Also the demand for stevedoring competencies rose in many trades and fell in others. Several reasons account for this. Stowage skills for larger vessels were enhanced to ensure a minimum level of efficiency and safety. A stable cargo stow meant goods remained undamaged, and minimised the danger of sinking in the rolling and pitching of vessels in heavy seas. While shipmasters generally possessed the best knowledge of their ship's characteristics (eg. stability, behaviour under stress and so on) and instructed stevedores, the actual work was performed under the authority and supervision of the stevedore. Thus the stevedore required competencies in packing, stowage, and knowledge of cargo characteristics, their effects on other cargoes, ship characteristics and the general competencies described in chapter two.
In contrast, rigging skills declined as shore-based stevedoring increased. Rigging tasks fell to wharf labourers as the complexity of ships' rigging declined for steamships. On balance the major impact of this change was on the distribution of skill between wharf labourers. With greater cargo volumes and more wharf labourers, specialisation became more attractive, particularly after 1880, but it was in routine tasks. More simple shore work — carrying or trucking — resulted in the greater use of hand trucks (usually two-wheeled) in the 1880s. Overall demand for widespread sea-going experience and all-round skills of wharf workers fell by the 1880s and beyond, despite higher competencies required for rigging 'heavy lifts', for safe and efficient stowage on larger vessels and for the faster operation of the hook. The greater numbers of shore workers merely emphasised the low status of wharf work in the ranks of the labour force.

Steam winches overcame limits on speed and carrying capacity that the gangway or hand winches and windlass imposed. Sling load weights and speed over the side was now determined by technology not human capabilities. There was more pressure on men working under the hook, in the hold or on the wharf. Faster work or higher manning were the two options in deal with this change in the absence of cargo handling equipment. The need for labour intensification and cost minimisation meant that manning became more important in the industry. Even where mechanisation appeared to diminish heavy manual work, such as mechanised coal loading outlined above, the 'trimming' of holds (ensuring coal completely filled the hold, especially under the coamings) and coal bunkering (loading coal to fire boilers on board) were done by hand shovel. Coal handling in most ports still used manual pushing of barrows, carrying baskets and shovelling coal.

The final implication of larger vessels is that they placed greater time and economic pressures on shipowners. Faster loading—transport—discharge cycles for a ship increased the number of revenue cycles of a vessel over a given time period, since ships earned income while transporting goods, not sitting in port. The latter was recognised as a cost. Moreover, the sea speed of a ship became a variable economic factor, open to manipulation through technical and cost decisions. More powerful engines raised the speed, but also the cost in fuel consumption, and higher capital costs. Therefore shipowners had to assess particular trade/cargo requirements, ship/engine technology, optimum operational speeds and so on. Where sailing shipowners tried to keep holds full through high load factors 50 years earlier, the complexity of economic calculations for steamships increased after the 1850s. Yet, owners had weak administrative systems to undertake these tasks and often shipmasters undertook these functions within their operational domain.

But the pressure on companies to closely monitor and control costs and technical variable steadily grew.

The key point is that speed and turn-around time emerged as variable conditions of production to an extent hitherto unknown. This imperative also saw sailing times constantly fell for sailing ships as noted earlier— the Australia—Britain route falling from 130 days to about 70 to 90 days from 1840 to the 1860s. Steam and the opening of the Suez Canal halved this again. Importantly, decisions of technology and operational times were taken by shipowners, but their focus was on sea speed/efficiency rather than on the efficiency while in port. Stevedoring was seen as unproductive and unprofitable, and as only a cost. Given the lack of port investment and
technological change, shipowners resorted to pressure on stevedores to shorten the time taken for loading and discharging.

Looking at stevedoring costs we find that they varied by trade and company. Generally, labour costs were seen as particularly burdensome, clearly this resulted from the greater number of workers now required in the labour process. The cost of labour equated to wage costs since most employers maintained only rudimentary accounting records, actual labour costs were difficult to determine, much less assess. Neither James Burns (Burns, Philp) nor William Willis (T. and W. Willis, Sydney shipping agents and stevedores) could not estimate the proportion of labour costs, between mental and manual labour.95 Willis, Chairman of the Steamship Owners Association, reported,

1. How much of that gross expenditure [Company's £50,000 to £60,000 p.a.] in this colony would go towards manual and mental labour, in wages to men, salaries to officers, and to managers and clerks? [A.] That question I am afraid I cannot answer because it would take an actuary to go through the work and get it all out.
2. Can you give us what it would be approximately? [A.] I cannot give it even approximately.96

Some did undertake cost analyses. Table 5.5 shows labour costs, as a percentage of total company costs for AUSNCo., 1888–1893. Operating 25 to 30 ships these data cover hundreds of port visits. The company only listed labour costs for loading and unloading vessels, which overlooks some lighterage costs and a proportion of agents' commission. Stevedoring labour ranged between 8 and 10 percent of total costs, lighterage 6 to 8 percent and agency commission between 7 and 10 percent.

By comparison, the company's coal fuel cost was between 16 and 17 percent per year and provisions for the crew, at approximately 10 percent a year. Other costs were all of a minor nature. In sum, the two most pressing costs for shipowners were crew wages and provisions, which in 1888 amounted to a third of total costs, and coal, which averaged one-seventh. In 1888 the two made up about half of the company's costs, which were later to decline.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Labour Type</th>
<th>1888</th>
<th>1889</th>
<th>1890</th>
<th>1891</th>
<th>1892</th>
<th>1893</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Load/Unload</td>
<td>8.89</td>
<td>7.95</td>
<td>10.55</td>
<td>10.86</td>
<td>11.15</td>
<td>10.55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wages Officers &amp; crew</td>
<td>19.20</td>
<td>18.47</td>
<td>18.02</td>
<td>17.29</td>
<td>17.65</td>
<td>16.88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overtime (Officers &amp; crew)</td>
<td>2.05</td>
<td>1.71</td>
<td>1.82</td>
<td>1.26</td>
<td>1.30</td>
<td>1.06</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: compiled and calculated from AUSNCo. Report on the Working of the Company and Analysis of the Company Accounts, 17/10/1894, McKellar Collection, ML MSS 4548/Box 125 Item 363

Employers, either stevedores or shipping companies, had little detailed knowledge of productivity. Measures such as tons handled per hour per man, or tons loaded per day and so on appeared not to be recorded systematically. Undoubtedly supervisors had a working knowledge of a normal day's production, but this was not used to systematically improve throughput.97 The measurement of work rates became an industrial problem after 1900. The labour costs in Table 5.5 underestimate their impact on operational costs. Measured in these terms, labour rises to more than a half in coastal shipping companies and even more in intracolonial trades. In both cases a high proportion of operating time is spent in port moving cargo whereas in the overseas trades vessels spent most time at sea, with significantly lower stevedoring time and costs.
The relative neglect of stevedoring resulted in little investment. The focus on larger and more expensive vessels lead shipping companies to minimise revenue losses from additional time in port. Similarly the maintenance cost (revenue foregone) for time in dry dock was greater for steamships which lead to the construction of the ASNCo–Morts Dock dry dock in the 1850s. At the same time ASNCo maintained an engineering workshop of 200 workers in Sydney – facilities which were the faux frais of shipping production.

The colonial wool trade illustrates the pressures of size, competencies, speed and costs in stevedoring. Wool exports did not expand significantly until the 1830s and became a major export to Britain after 1840. The small vessels and high freight rates placed a premium on stevedoring skills (wool 'screwing', or stowage) to save space and raise freight income. The wool arrived by drays at the wharf, loosely packed and tied in bales. It was light and elastic making it easy to handle with 'hooks' and load. To save space it was compressed in situ, literally 'screwed' (through the use of the 'screw') into position in the hold, often so tightly that it threatened the ship's seams in transit. Wooden and composite ships were therefore always caulked before loading wool – another cost for sailing ships. Only competent men could ensure an efficient stow of the maximum number of bales, particularly as newer, larger and more costly clipper ships came into use, followed by even more expensive steamers.

The introduction of larger vessels saw freight rates fall as competition for full holds grew. To increase cargo sizes wool bales were later compressed by hydraulic wool presses, introduced in the 1860s. Wool bales were lashed with manilla, New Zealand hemp or hoop iron and then pressed as 'flats' or on end as 'dumps'. Eight to twelve lashings on each bundle that were called singles, doubles trebles or 'fourbles'. These had to be stowed soon after pressing as the dumps often expanded and burst. The compressed wool bales were denser and this enabled more to be stowed in a hold. The dumps of course were heavier and harder for wharf labourers to manipulate than ordinary bales. Also, co-ordination between teams on key aspects of the labour process (pressing, loading and stowing) became more important. By the 1880s larger ship holds saw gangs emerge – four or six man teams became 15 to 30 men wool gangs. The Patriarch loading wool in 1885 for example had 16 men in the hold, four men on deck and 15 men in the shed. While steam winches facilitated loading on board, the work in other phases of handling wool (the hold, wharf and sheds) became considerably heavier and harder. Finally, since wool was light vessels needed ballast or other cargo to ensure it carried sufficient weight to sail safely. Ballast was similarly used when homeward cargoes could not be secured. Ballastmen emerged as specialism. They were soon to disappear because steamships, by the later 1880s used water ballast that was loaded and discharged by pumps.

The example of wool cargoes indicates the links between larger ships, the scale of shipping, changes in the physical characteristics of the cargo and the nature of the work. Taken together these factors provided the material conditions in which the stevedoring labour force stabilised and endured increased demands.

Finally the institutional context of the labour process provided key enabling conditions. The early colonial wool industry saw the involvement of men like Macarthur in shipping as partners (or chartering vessels) to export wool. But by the late nineteenth century rural agency companies (Thomas Elder, Goldsborough, Mort, Parry, Dalgety's and others) handled shipping arrangements
and built wharf-side woolstores. Wool was received from rural areas, 'dumped' using stronger steel lashing that allowed it to be stored in readiness for a continuous loading and stowing process when needed. By the late 1880s steamships replaced most of the classic clipper ships and stevedoring operations became more co-ordinated and streamlined. So much so that little overtime was worked on wool ships, with the possible exception of the larger steamers.102 The time in port was thus cut from the six weeks, common before 1850, to two or three weeks at the end of the century.

Assuming the same time in port, the sailing speed of steamships greatly decreased production cycle time in shipping by cutting the round trip time to Europe by more than half from 1840 to the 1880s103 as noted earlier. By the 1870s 'time' in shipping became valued commodity in world transport as shippers turned to steamships over sailing ships, "convinced that the saving of time compensated for the [higher freight] outlay".104 Despite higher freight rates, the gains were greater in high value commodity trades due to the financial costs of tying up capital over long journeys. Moreover, passengers were attracted by speed. Burns Philp & Co., (Oceanic SS Co. agent) boasted in 1903 that,

> Whereas the first steamers occupied 36 days in making the voyage from Sydney to San Francisco, the fine vessels of the "Oceanic Steamship Company's" A. & A. Line have reduced the passage to 20 days.... Jules Verne's immortal "Round the World in 80 Days" is outdone by the system of Round the World tours inaugurated by the A. & A. Line and its connections... [which complete] the circuit of the globe in little more than 60 days.105

With new emphasis on shorter production cycles in shipping it was not surprising that similar demands emerged for stevedoring in order to integrate it into the shipping cycle. However, the investment necessary for this functional integration did not emerge in Australia over this period.

In sum the industrial context of stevedoring was characterised by the following factors. Technological changes in shipping saw larger ship coming into service, which resulted in more cargo carried by proportionately fewer ships. Both sailing vessels and steamships were larger and the latter became dominant before 1900. The expanded labour force worked on larger ships, larger holds, larger packaging and used steam winches which all signalled changes in the stevedoring labour process.

The rise in the number of waterfront workers allowed them to generate relatively autonomous forms of labour organisation, that was at the centre of what I have termed the informalist pattern – which I will examine in the next chapter. In the context of few technological changes, informal work relations was efficient for employers, since private employers were keen to maximise returns for few investments that they did make – as the actions of the Wallsend Coal Co. demonstrated. This points to an important material condition of employer support for sectionalism in the labour force. Workers became attached to particular trades, employers or cargoes. The employers gained workers with relevant competencies (not openly recognised as 'skills') that raised labour productivity. Moreover, the local focus of employer operational organisation was also seen in the use of secondary administrative offices on, or adjacent to, the wharves used by each company or agent.106

These changes pointed to the transition in the economic structure of capital in shipping – from small partnerships to shipping companies. The company form enabled the conversion of commercial capital into industrial capital, where shipping companies became common carriers, independent from the cargoes carried. This process included a change in the organisation and
operation of economic categories rather than an extension of pre-existing behaviour of the economic structure. It approximates Marx's schematic periodisation of capitalism, namely, the transition of formal to real subsumption of production under capital. The critical aspect is the conversion in the form of economic categories and the nature of their effects. The next section examines this growth of shipping companies in more detail.

III. Shipping Company Structure

The rise of the company form in shipping signalled the displacement of commercial capital and the consolidation of industrial capitalism in shipping. It resulted in the industrial recognition of stevedoring and stevedoring workers, although with limited capitalist intercession in stevedoring production itself. As I have argued above stevedoring grew in economic importance, but was seen as a cost to shipping. Two factors reinforced this perception; beyond the shipmaster there was traditionally no direct involvement with shore facilities by shipping interests.\textsuperscript{107} Second, shipowners lacked adequate organisational capacities to intervene in stevedoring. Therefore its function was not actively managed by shipping companies but was delegated to a plethora of agents, stevedores, and other interests contracted to provide stevedoring services. It therefore retained a marginal position in water transport, with little change in technology or working methods.

In this section I first discuss the organisation of company structure, with particular reference to integration and control functions; second, outline the pattern of company development in shipping and third, show the effects of this on the organisation of stevedoring.

1. Shipping Companies and Organisational Control

From 1860 to the 1880s shipping companies developed what I call co-ordinated control systems to replace the older discontinuous control-systems in shipping. The importance of a co-ordinated system lay in the establishment of boundaries for economic performance of each component process in production as a whole. The co-ordination of discrete labour processes into one production process did not reconstruct peripheral functions. The tendency of capital to reconstruct the production process occurred in the ship board labour process. Steamships created new categories of workers and types of work in many areas, but few changes took place in stevedoring. Change triggered by the economic imperatives of capital could not be accommodated through the existing pattern of authority relations. Authority on the waterfront and on board ships underwent critical alteration in the latter part of the nineteenth century – they will be discussed in the next chapter. Capital drew discrete labour processes more closely together and co-ordinated the interaction between them. This fell short of directly reforming or reconstructing each process. The capitalist form of production deepened but the content remained relatively autonomous in each particular organisation of labour. In this industrial and social space, informalist modes of labour organisation flowered in Australia. Informalism was built on the traditional forms of organisation, based on the British model, and it stabilised the use of labour in a co-ordinated control-system. The comparison with Britain in instructive for two reasons. First, informalism flowered later in Australia and in a more fluid context. Thus while old traditions shaped labour responses to work change, the context also offered an alternative path open for institutional development. Second, the later growth was during a period of co-ordinated organisation which resulted in weaker local
sectionalism than in Britain. Thus where the latter adopted a voluntarist collective bargaining, and multi-unionism on the waterfront more suited to localism, Australia developed arbitration and single unionism on the waterfront.

To recapitulate the argument on companies in chapter three. In the boom from 1835–36 to 1842–43 there was a marked rise in company formation where shares were predominantly held by merchants, representing commercial capital. Although companies were a financial innovation, in practice, they brought little alteration to the discontinuous control-system of the component labour processes. The characteristics of partnerships remained, although ships moved closer to common carriers as transport profit grew relative to commercial trading profits. Company formation declined in 1840s depression and after. The post gold-rush companies provided the conditions for a closer intercession of capital in the labour process, as employers moved to develop more adequate control-systems. This process was driven by valorisation and not any direct quest for control over, or in, the labour process. The company form created a new arena of production pressures to improve economic performance not experienced until after the 1850s.

After the 1850s gold rush settlements spread further north from Sydney, along the Queensland coast, and around the southern coastline to Adelaide and Eyre Peninsula. This resulted in the growth in demand for shipping. Merchants still played a part in ownership and financing of vessels, but larger companies became common carriers. Simultaneously demand for stevedoring and stevedoring workers grew.

Not surprising companies formed before the 1870s were small and were still linked to commercial trading (eg. Howard Smiths trading coal to Melbourne). The link with merchants lent many companies a marketable prestige and status. The principal shareholders held a strong influence over the companies’ strategic direction. As they grew managerial and operational authority expanded, albeit with significant control mechanisms over them. When the largest shipping company, the ASNCo appointed Frederick Trouton as general manager in 1866 he had to furnish "the usual Security of £2,000." Shipmasters and ex-Masters working as marine superintendents, had operational control of sea-going functions and some stevedoring work, and after steam was introduced, marine engineers had control over the engine room. In port, agents or their representatives, and masters or first officers had responsibility for shore operations and stevedoring work. By 1880 shipping companies became a major enterprises in the capitalist development of the industry. Their operations were based on the existing fragmented structure of production in transport although with attempts at unifying the disparate activities. I will look at this pattern in more detail.

The new joint stock company structure had two related effects. First, the discontinuous organisational structure was displaced by a co-ordinated structure as a developmental process in the second half of the century. Although uneven, the change was evident in the leading sections of intercolonial shipping. The second effect flowed from the first. From a co-ordinated structure emerged a control-system which increasing the pre-conditions for a specific focus on the industrial performance of production in shipping as a whole. As shipping was industrialised and became a common carrier, the production process and each component labour process came under review. However, crucially, the co-ordinated control-system could not provide either organisation techniques to reconstruct stevedoring performance, or a new structure to mediate the exercise
workplace power. In short, the industrial relations pattern of informalism was unable to deal with the structural changes of capitalism.

In the co-ordinated structure, the investor (as shareholder) was removed from direct influence in company operations as partners had been. But the share owner represented a new category of economic agents and was a source of pressure on company performance. Joint-stock companies separated company management from formal ownership, and provided the conditions for moves toward the integration and unification of the capitalist production process as a unit. The public company created a new source of surveillance on performance of managers in shipping that had not hitherto existed.

When for example the promoters of the Adelaide Steamship Co. placed the steamship *Flinders* onto the Melbourne route in 1875 they demonstrated the viability of the trade for the new company. The prospectus stated that this vessel would operate in this capacity until the arrival of specially built vessels to operate on the run. However, when the Chairman Robert Barr Smith withdrew the *Flinders* from the Melbourne run (and it returned to the Spencer's Gulf Co.) it cut the new company's source of revenue before one of commissioned vessels, the *South Australian* had arrived. Disgruntled shareholders soon registered a strong protest at the company's half-yearly meeting in late 1876. This pressure on senior shipping management from the shareholders was new. The key point is that the company structure provided the conditions for setting economic boundaries directly tied to the performance of the new entity.

The second effect was on operational performance, specifically the problems of measurement and monitoring. Few control methods and techniques were available to assess the strengths and weaknesses of systems, such as they were. The flow of information was slow, as they were dependent upon the mail. On occasions there was no information at all about parts of company activities. The dispersed worksites (ships at sea, wharves in many ports, warehouses, maintenance facilities) created problems of standardisation and systemisation, particularly as companies depended upon existing forms of organisation and delegation of authority. There were few difference between the operations at sea and stevedoring when companies attempted to coordinate activities, but were unable to direct them in detail.

As early as the 1860s the ASNCo. issued a manual of *Rules and Regulations, A.S.N. Co* to all shipmasters. It listed some sixty rules, with additions via circulars. Of the 71 rules listed in 1868, 35, or about half, covered administrative matters, 8 (11%) the care and comfort of passengers, 10 (14%) on safety and 18 or about a quarter, directly on operational matters. And even these were like exhortations than regulations. Examples are: weekly inspections of cabins, forecastle, water closets, etc., and the ship generally (Rule XIII, p.9); procedures for passing another company vessel (Rules XXIII, XXIV, p.11); and, that kerosene, oils were to be stowed on deck and the carriage of explosives was prohibited (Rule LI, p.16). The captain was responsible for "due performance" of officers in their duties and the "perfect order and discipline" of the vessel, officers and crew (Rule VII, p.5), including matters not covered in the regulations (Rule LXII, p.18). The commander had full authority of suspension, until the Board could review the decision (Rule VII, p.5). Yet officers were still required to "provide themselves [with] all necessary charts, books of navigation and Port regulations" (Rule V, p.5). No rules covered stevedoring.
Even the financial performance of companies was only loosely monitored by modern standards. A simple measure of return on capital advanced (historical cost) was used, but there were no modern managerial accounting or financial controls. The flavour of financial control can be seen in the following example. James Burns, referring to the preparation of accounts, commented to Robert Philp, in Brisbane, that he should "allow 10% depreciation I suppose. McIlwraith and his partner always talk about this being the correct thing per annum". Performance was often highly variable over time, following fluctuations of business in developing areas. In 1884 Burns Philp operated nine branches, mostly in Queensland, where return on capital ranged from 11 percent in Brisbane to 120 percent in Burketown in nine months, with a company return of 25 percent. Burns concluded that the result "shows ... that the new places with small capital pay much better that [sic] the older places with accumulation of capital." Table 5.6 illustrates the performance over time of the Burns Philp Brisbane branch from 1884 to 1890. The variability found here was common to all branches and time periods as a result of the market uncertainties and economic cycles found at the time. The inadequacies of control systems also contributed to the poor capacity to predict business results.

The volatility of the market also increased the potential for large profits, a feature found in many 'frontier' capitalist enterprises, and the high risk of failure and the resultant losses. The search for high profit rates meant that the capitalist enterprise, even with the acceptance and the spread of the company form, still retained some of the characteristics of partnership model common in shipping before 1850. That is, there was a possibility of large and quick profits based on the exploitation of markets (in this case, transport) not yet tapped by others.

The lack of effective control systems was reflected in the relatively few administrative staff employed by companies over this period. In the late 1870s the Adelaide SSCO employed ten office staff in head office to handle all clerical work, with only one bookkeeper and few clerical staff dealing with intercolonial customs. The traditional titles of secretary (general manager) and ships' husband (superintendent or operations manager) were also used. A decade later the Brisbane office of Burns Philp employed only 18 staff - a manager, two sales staff, an accountant and ten

Table 5.6 Profit/Loss Burns Philp Brisbane Branch, 1884–1890

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year (31 Mar)</th>
<th>Profit</th>
<th>Return on Capital (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1884</td>
<td>28.11</td>
<td>11.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1885</td>
<td>1176.07</td>
<td>114.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1886</td>
<td>104.11</td>
<td>47.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1887</td>
<td>(2916.15)</td>
<td>–</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1888</td>
<td>324.03</td>
<td>24.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1889</td>
<td>2209.05</td>
<td>50.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1890</td>
<td>(2711.09)</td>
<td>–</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Shipping in the third quarter of the nineteenth century was a 'natural' monopoly, given the undeveloped nature of rail or road transport. But there was sharp competition between companies. The competitors focused on price (freight rate) and cost rather than the economic performance of the labour process. In both cases the component labour processes largely remained dependent on customary work organisation and rules. The company form did however produce the conditions for setting overall organisational financial goals.

The lack of effective control systems was reflected in the relatively few administrative staff employed by companies over this period. In the late 1870s the Adelaide SSCO employed ten office staff in head office to handle all clerical work, with only one bookkeeper and few clerical staff dealing with intercolonial customs. The traditional titles of secretary (general manager) and ships' husband (superintendent or operations manager) were also used. A decade later the Brisbane office of Burns Philp employed only 18 staff - a manager, two sales staff, an accountant and ten
clerks (one shipping clerk and 6 clerks engaged in insurance and customs), three stores personnel and a delivery van man.\textsuperscript{123}

Philp pointed out to Burns that poor company reporting lead to complaints from its customer, the British India Co. He noted the Brisbane office sent weekly reports to Parbury, Lamb and Raff (BI Brisbane agent) and kept the managing agents well posted, but would send direct monthly reports to London if required. London sent Charles Leresche to sort out BI Co local arrangements and found Parbury, Lamb accounts in confusion and conflict between the agents.\textsuperscript{124} Philp admitted that Thursday Is. was a "muddle" with "no system" resulting in cargo being mixed up. The Howard Smith Co. head office had no records of local branch bank accounts, staff employed, salary levels or gross freights received and delivered – in short, it lacked adequate financial and organisational controls. For example, the Sydney managing director questioned why the Townsville manager drew £600 p.a. three years after the Board had limited executive salaries to £500. In 1885 the company introduced weekly branch reports of their finances and other key matters, and took control of branch salary decisions.\textsuperscript{125} AUSNCo general manager Macdonald only broadly reported company activities monthly to London in the 1890s. James Mackay approvingly noted in 1900 that "weekly messages" were an improvement.\textsuperscript{126} Macdonald only relied on infrequent reports of operational issues. Only data on ship movements and coal consumption were routinely collated. In short, unsystematic methods were common in all companies.

The key issue is that control-systems were technologically weak and biased to commercial issues, rather than operational performance.\textsuperscript{127} Production appeared to be almost invisible where shipowners had greater 'lateral' knowledge of markets and the intrigues of other employers, than 'line' knowledge of production. The company structure in this period was in a pre–unitary form.\textsuperscript{128} With little or no information on labour costs beyond the wage level, as noted earlier, market competition and/or economic downturns precipitated widespread calls for wage cuts.

The emergence of shipping as a common carrier, meant that transport had to generate profits, or in the case of stevedoring make an efficient contribution to profits. The commercial profits of the cargo transported could no longer disguise the production cost of transport. This raised the pressure for new methods of monitoring and improving economic performance. This pressure increased over the decades from 1860 as organisational changes uncovered costs. In short, shipping, through the organisational restructuring of economic functions, experienced a transition from merchant or commercial capital to industrial capital where the profit from production displaced the exploitation of disparate markets.\textsuperscript{129}

The relative invisibility of production contributed to poor industrial performance, particularly in the case of the stevedoring labour process. Men were hired by merchants, shipping agents, warehouse keepers, carrying contractors, shipmasters, wharfingers or even operated co-operatives. And stevedoring work was still performed by seamen, as part of their articles. Consequently numerous lines of responsibility for stevedoring performance created a diverse range of employment relations and workplace practice. The myriad of local and peculiar methods were difficult to accommodate in any centralised control-system, indeed these were a barrier to the emergence of such systems. No single line of authority, covering all stevedoring workers and
operations, existed. In short, the economic relations of capital were superimposed on a mosaic pattern of traditional stevedoring practice.

An exception was the long-standing direct line of responsibility for production on board ship. Not surprisingly this model of industrial authority was seen by shipping companies as appropriate for the waterfront in latter decades of the century. Shipboard relations were congruent with the hierarchical status of the traditional British notion of social structure. Indeed shipowners since the 1820s had increasingly sought to fix such relations in the legal status of employment in seamen's articles. This tradition lay at the heart of the reaction of shipping companies to the crisis of authority in the 1880s. The legal structure of employment underwent change around the turn of the century.¹³⁰

The economic and structural changes discussed in this chapter came to clash with existing (informalist) forms of labour organisation and industrial authority. Employers interpreted the collapse of the existing pattern in behavioural and attitudinal terms - as the agitation of leaders, tyranny of unions and lack of discipline in the workplace. The reaction of Robert Garn, superintending stevedore for a shipping agent, conveys the employers' view:

1. Your opinion clearly is that if Unionism is one of the causes of strikes the best thing to do is to get rid of Trade-Unionism? [A.] That is my firm belief.
2. Such difficulties as you have had you have managed to get over? Have you had any strikes for a long time? There was one in 1882.
3. What was that about? Just because the men wanted to do as they liked, and we would not let them.
4. How did you settle it? They had to come back on the same terms as they did this last time, in other words they submitted.
5. Would anything in the way of a conference have settled it? I do not think so.
6. You think it is a trial of strength? I do.
7. Would you have been willing to go to a conference? No I would not.
8. You looked upon it as a question of principle, and you would not submit to any adjudication? I would not.¹³¹

The change in the form of industrial authority these views represented will be the subject of chapter six.

2. Pattern of Australian Shipping - Companies and Trades

What was, then, the nature of the companies in the sections of the industry? More than 25 companies were formed in the colonies between 1861 and 1900 including many major companies in the industry (see Table A5.1) There was a steady growth in the capitalist company form of organisation. Only a few companies ran vessels overseas and no overseas companies were formed in this period.¹³² as British companies dominated most international routes. Eastern and Australian, and Burns Philp, (both engaged in limited trading in the Pacific) were failures. I shall now outline the characteristics of each shipping trade.

The companies fall into three categories - local, coastal or interstate, and overseas. Local shipping worked short distance trades in each colony. Coastal companies were those engaged in services between colonies (thus became interstate). Overseas companies (referred to as deep-sea at this time) were engaged in international overseas trades. Since overseas vessels called at several capital city ports in search of cargo, they often took on cargo between colonial cities to maximise the use of hold space.

Colonial shipping companies began as local companies in the 1830s as shown in chapter three. Local companies operated in intra-colonial trade between small ports, or outports that served
regional rural hinterlands. The companies trans-shipped export cargoes from these areas to larger ports, which were then loaded for export. The ASNCo. was by 1860, the major coastal shipping company. In general, local shipping was still the domain of small partnerships, small companies, indeed single vessel companies (involving the shipmaster) were common. These operations could not compete with the service, speed and reliability of larger and faster steamships. Local companies relied heavily on their crews to perform stevedoring in small and large ports, supplemented by local day labour when needed. In small ports the latter were commonly agricultural workers (or migratory workers), or those employed in stores and/or lighters. For example, in the 1870s, Robert Philp of Burns, Philp and Co. Ltd established wharves and warehouses in Townsville and a "large fleet of steam and sailing lighters was introduced to the port to cope with the transport requirements of Cleveland Bay." Regular scheduling was easier to establish over short distance trades and it allowed some men to follow the trade (especially where two companies served a small port or several companies formed a section of the industry in larger ports) and share the work with the ships' crew. But where small vessels handled small and diverse loads the investment in port or wharf facilities was low as noted earlier. The coal trades in Melbourne, Sydney, Newcastle and other ports and timber workers in Melbourne were exceptions. The owners of these vessels defended the use of crews in loading and discharging by pointing to the specialist competencies and flexibility that crews developed. Close working relations between seamen and wharf workers were more common in this section of shipping and in smaller ports. Moreover higher labour costs of these trades were offset, to an extent, by the fluidity of the organisation of labour in the labour process.

Interstate shipping was the second section of the shipping industry. The genesis of the company structure centred on serving local markets, given the small and sparse population and narrow economic base. But intercolonial shipping was quickly required to cover the distances between colonies in the absence of viable alternatives. The Hunter River Steam Navigation Co. reformed and renamed the Australasian Steam Navigation Co. in June, 1851 became the first and foremost coastal company in the nineteenth century. British capital was keen to invest in Australian coastal shipping before the 1870s as an industrial investment. The formation of the Queensland SSCo. by the Mackinnon group and the collapse of ASNCo to form the AUSNCo indicate British investment in coastal shipping. But most coastal companies in this period were Australian owned and held a prominent place in employer policy in the stevedoring industry, although not the direct employers of stevedoring labour in many cases.

The experience of the Adelaide Steam Ship Co. (ASSCo), illustrates a typical model of shipping growth and organisation. Alexander Elder, son of a Scottish merchant and shipowner, arrived in South Australia in 1839 aboard his father's schooner Minerva loaded with cargo to establish a business. His brothers William, a shipmaster, arrived a year later, and George in 1849. They established a thriving merchant, import, brokerage and shipowning company. George returned to London in 1853 to handle business affairs in Britain. Alexander and William entered a partnership with two other men, establishing the firm Elder, Sterling and Co. (joined in 1856 by Robert Barr-Smith) that engaged in development ventures in mining, farming and grazing. Wool
was the mainstay of the business. The business became Elder Smith Goldsborough Mort Ltd, rural merchants and agents in the 1860s.

Although essential to the companies activities, shipping remained subordinate to its commercial functions. When sailing ships became too slow for Thomas Elder, he pressed for a steamer service to the Spencer Gulf settlements to transport supplies in and export wool out of the region. Elder, formed a syndicate of woolgrowers, merchants and others in partnership (under the sixty-fourths system) using the Marion, under the command of Capt. J. R. Handsford Ward in 1855. It quickly turned a profit. Thus similar ventures were initiated by Elder and other prominent merchants where each ship was a separate 'company'. Four steamships operated in and around Spencer's Gulf and St Vincent's Gulf. Of the 256 shares in total, Elder and Smith held 49, Andrew Tennant 57, and Alexander McCoy, a shipmaster, 31 shares.

Importantly, the vessels' operational aspects were in the hands of maritime personnel under the authority of the shipmasters – notably Captains Ward and McCoy. The three small ships were managed by the only local 'steam packet agent' Herbert Evans and they totalled about a thousand tons. They were ship rigged and fitted with manual "pulley-haulay" winches and windlasses. The stevedoring competencies required were the same as for small local shipping all around the colonies.

The expansion of the company from local trades into inter-colonial services was a crucial turning point. Many had mooted a regular steamer service between Adelaide and Melbourne for years because the accommodation and freight rates on the small vessels plying the route up to the 1870s were seen as unsatisfactory. But the £60,000 capital needed for the venture was beyond the small circle of influential South Australian merchant and pastoralist shipowners. Thus a public company was floated in early 1875 and the new ASSCo. quickly put the steamship Flinders onto the Melbourne run in April. The company's full prospectus was issued later that year and set out plans to purchase two additional vessels in Britain that would be fitted with the "new-fashioned engines" (ie. compound steam engines) "which [would] effect a saving of about 50% in the cost of fuel, ... [and the] reduced cost of working will enable them [the vessels] to carry passengers and cargo at low rates, and thereby create a large trade". Investors took up over five thousand £10 shares by October 1875 in lots of one to three hundred. Major shareholders were pastoralists Andrew Tennant, W. Mortlock and Price Maurice as well as Barr-Smith and Elder. Capt. McCoy was appointed the ships' husband, initially supervising the construction of its vessels in Britain. This traditional position inserted the shipmaster into the management structure of the new joint stock company form.

The vessel the South Australian was completed in September 1876, and arrived in the colony 63 days later (58 days sailing time). Its arrival prompted the partners of existing four steamships in local service to restructure ownership. Each partnership was dissolved and the vessels passed over into the ownership of a newly established Spencer's Gulf Steamship Co. Ltd. It was closely associated with the ASSCo (they shared principal shareholders and company secretary) but the two companies operated in different shipping trades.

This type of development pattern, from local opportunities, later growth and then capital requirements characterised many other joint stock shipping companies after 1860. Howard Smith, Patersons, Huddart-Parker and the Melbourne SSCo all emerged from the Melbourne coal trade of
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The 1850s and 1860s, Burns-Philp from north Queensland and Pacific Island merchant trading, and the ASNCo from the original local NSW trade, to East coastal intercolonial routes. These companies and others (eg McIlwraith McEacharn, Gilchrist, Watt, and the QSSCo.) all became joint stock companies after 1870. ASNCo. was an exception as it was first established in the 1830s and was the sole survivor of first wave of company formation in shipping.

Overseas shipping was the third section in the shipping industry. It was dominated by British shipping companies in the nineteenth century. Wool exports and the goldrushes were the key factors that opened Australia up to overseas shipping. As noted earlier, the lifting the EICo monopoly saw a short-lived American challenge to British shipping. Through a combination of colonial mail subsidies and ruthless competition, P&O held a virtual monopoly on the Australian route from the 1850s to the mid–1870s. After Suez was opened in 1869, other companies entered the route, but the British companies of P&O, Orient Line, Shaw Savill & Albion, Trinder Anderson & Co. and Bethell & Co. that were dominant. Their control of steam shipping was strengthened through the conferencing arrangements set up by British brokers and companies. A cartel of thirteen British companies operated over 100 vessels to Australia just after 1900, including two companies still using only sailing vessels (in coal and wheat).

The larger size of overseas vessels meant that the tonnage handled and labour demand for each ship rose. This was particularly the case in capital city ports. It was not uncommon for overseas vessels to call at four, five or more Australian ports, although poor equipment in smaller ports limited their role in the nineteenth century. The agents that represented these companies in Australia where often those handling coastal shipping. In larger ports, the 'deep sea' trade was handled by separate agents. In smaller regional ports, local merchant companies often held a wide range of shipping agencies spanning all sections of shipping.

As a result developments in overseas companies had little direct impact on the company organisational structure of colonial shipping. British influence was felt more in the last decade or so of the century through the investment of the Mackinnon and Inchcape groups. Indeed overseas companies had no separate representative association until well after 1900. Finally, as I have noted earlier the distances of the Australian route required overseas vessels to spend much longer periods at sea than in port. Thus stevedoring labour costs were approximately 15 percent of operating costs, significantly lower than in the coastal trades.

In sum, from the 1850s to the 1880s the economic form of shipping changed – from the small partnership pattern dominated by commercial capital to larger company form as shipping emerged as an industrial common carrier. Several points flowed from this. First, the barriers to entry rose as capital requirements for ships were greater than for sailing vessels. The cost of ships rose from hundreds of pounds to thousands and then tens of thousands. Second, competition became acute based on freight and passenger prices. Thus industrial performance of transport services, was finally dissociated from trading profits. The key point is that the characteristic behaviour of the economic categories, namely 'the market' and 'competition' changed. That is, the effects of 'economic' categories altered as the social relations of production changed. The transition from formal to real subsumption of production under capital entails effects that extend beyond the simple mapping of the results of 'competition'.
Third, the new and expanded economic activity of industrial shipping remained depended on pre-existing modes of labour for stevedoring. The coastal companies operated larger vessels around more regular schedule of steamship services.\textsuperscript{154} The barriers of distance, treacherous seas, poor charts and navigation aids were lowered as ships became stronger, more powerful and reliable, and governments provided more navigation aids. As shipping became more predictable so did the demand for labour.\textsuperscript{155} Thus more stable conditions for the growth and expansion of formalist work organisation emerged.

The final point centres on the need for predictability. Larger and more complex units of capitalist production required more predictable methods of coordination, measurement and improvement of performance – that is capitalist rationalisation. Performance was not inevitably connected to the 'control' of labour in and of itself, but control of the accumulation process through the design of more systematic methods or control-systems. Yet these remained poorly developed due to the lack of organisational integration. Companies depended heavily upon the stevedoring services that were developing in colonial ports in which they operated.

3. Stevedoring Organisation

Stevedoring services were provided for overseas and intercolonial shipping by a network of local agents and contract stevedores, and master stevedores. Shipping companies contracted agents to load and discharge vessels, although larger companies operated stevedoring departments in larger ports. In the latter case an operational hierarchy emerged in some companies – wharf manager, or superintendent, wharfinger, foreman and assistant foreman – centred in most cases around the wide degree of autonomy of the foremen. Most were permanently employed, but assistant foremen were casual. Small coastal shipping companies also relied on local arrangements, often using seamen for stevedoring work, as I have shown above. This industrial structure allowed the relatively autonomous development of stevedoring to occur.

Agents often maintained lighters and other small craft for stevedoring and other associated work (coal bunkering, repairs, providoring and so on). Indeed some companies maintained extensive facilities for servicing ships, such as the ASNCo engineering shop in Sydney that employed some 200 men in 1860.\textsuperscript{156}

Overall no systematic management procedures developed for stevedoring production. With few or no internal control-systems shipping companies (and agents) engaged contractors for labour intensive stevedoring work. Agents managed the commercial interests of shipping companies but left stevedoring to smaller contractors. For example the Brisbane branch of Burns Philp did not directly employ any personnel for the management of stevedoring into the 1890s. The total of equipment – a horse, a few hand trucks and scales – held by the branch was valued at only £132.\textsuperscript{157} This epitomised the low investment in equipment, the correspondingly high component of labour costs, and the low priority of the stevedoring function. The next chapter will consider the nature of the network of relations that emerged in these links.

The organisational changes described above were important for stevedoring as they shaped economic conditions for employers as well as workers. From the mid-1850s into the 1880s the organisation of labour and work in stevedoring depended on informalism – that is local informal arrangements generally supported by masters and men. However as industrialisation deepened, informal arrangements became increasingly circumscribed and challenged. At the same time, local
workplace and operational arrangements suited shipping companies – one worker noting that they were a "convenience to ship-owners and merchants" in the "natural" development of commerce.\footnote{158}

Smaller crew sizes, larger ship holds, additional labour requirements and pressure on turnaround time pointed to the growth of shore based labour. Consequently operational authority passed to the shore based stevedore. In other words, production imperatives provided the material conditions for an expanded role of a shore based stevedoring and thereby the recognition of the stevedoring industry. The role of the master stevedore or firms in which a major part of their operations was stevedoring expanded – particularly in coal companies, and the wool, wheat or timber trades. Only coal companies provided investment in plant and equipment from about 1870 onwards, despite claims of thousands, even tens of thousands of pounds of investment in plant by some general stevedores.\footnote{159} This was questionable. Wharf labouring was hard physical labour, and increasingly so through the latter half of the nineteenth century.

IV. Summary and Conclusion

In this chapter I outlined the expansion of Australian shipping between 1850 and 1900. It indicated a transition from the dominance of commercial to industrial capital as shipping became a common carrier industry. This was accompanies by the emergence of the capitalist company and key technological changes in ships as the means of production. The joint stock company marshalled larger units of capital for investment in expensive steamships. It was also a new instrument for a more precise calculation of the performance of capital. It provided the possibility of more direct measures – through control–systems – of production performance beyond rates of profit. Initially few financial or operational control–systems were in place.

For stevedoring the early company structure provided the organisational and social 'space' to extend informalism. The coordinated organisation structure brought together a diverse range of labour processes under one production process located in many sites. It created the potential for the type of rationalisation that Marx called real subsumption. The potential was not realised between 1850s and 1880s as capital was largely unable to integrate the divergent labour processes.

This was the context in which capitalist organisational tendencies increasing pressured the economic performance of stevedoring. The pressure varied by the section of shipping. Local shipping worked smaller (sail or steam) vessels with a lower level of technology, fewer distinctions between sailor and stevedoring labour, and depended more heavily on personal relations. Coastal companies operated larger vessels, sought technological advance more keenly, required more labour and relied more on shore–based labour. Both sections felt the pressure of labour costs more keenly than overseas companies. But through the use of agents and contractor, the delegated authority over the labour process muted any significant rationalisation in stevedoring.

After the 1850s new designs, steam power and construction materials revolutionised shipping by lifting the technical limits on size and speed. Steam powered on–board lifting equipment mechanised the hook. Quicker cargo handling was combined with larger cargoes to increase the demand for unskilled manual labour. Stevedoring remained largely dependent on manual labour, despite a marginal increase in the demand for traditional competencies in working large sailing ships. The key point is that these changes reflected the capitalist dynamic in shipping which transformed the material conditions of stevedoring work. Capital simultaneously created the space
for an extension of a relatively autonomous development of workplace organisation, but this was paradoxically, inserted into a quickening capitalist dynamic. In short, capital provided the conditions for the growth of informalism, itself based on older labour and other traditions, but in doing so, also set a trajectory that was to challenge and subordinate the kernel of informalism. The next chapter examines these issues.

1. This should not be confused with the notion of a 'craft' although in common usage the terms were often used interchangeably.

2. Mr. John Finlay (who was not a member of the Association), to Port Adelaide Workingmen's Association, *The South Australian Advertiser*, 10 Sep 1874 [emphasis added]

3. The process therefore involved two opposite but complementary processes, what Dingwall calls fission and fusion of occupational territory. Work is not linearly differentiated as one aspect of the structural differentiation model of the development of modern society. It is subject to contrary pressures where work (as a cluster of tasks) is simultaneously differentiated and fused according to the pattern of economic and non-economic conditions. While it is certainly the case, this view does not go far enough to analyse the way in which the operation of the category 'economic' changes in the broader context, it does recognise the importance of the organisational input of direct workers to the structure of specific jobs and general occupational roles, see Robert Dingwall, "In the beginning was the work..." *Reflections on the genesis of occupations* (Melbourne, 1973).

4. *Price's use of the concept freedom covers two distinct and separate aspects. For workers the demand for freedom is a "part of a natural, eternal search for human freedom, for a mitigation of the domination over men's bodies and lives" which takes innumerable forms with greater or lesser degrees of consciousness. For employers, on the other hand, the demand for freedom was to protect themselves from the demands for control of the workers, in a politico-legal system which ostensibly gave them considerable 'control' through private ownership. In this context the demand for freedom was immediately a political axiom; around which the restriction of freedom centred, see Price, *Masters, unions and men*, pp.8,32.

5. See, *Price, Masters, unions and men*, pp.22-34, ch.2

6. Indeed, many characteristics of the building industry have remained into the twentieth century, although in general the technical basis has been revolutionised. Much of this also has to do with the way in which cost structures of building work have affected the demand for many aspects of buildings themselves. Two examples come to mind, carpentry and painting. In both of these trades there was a much larger demand for the 'more skilled' fine work, of door jambs, architraves, window fittings, arches, wood panelling etc. These skills were regularly part of most carpenters practices. In painting, the fine decorative work, (more associated with an artist today) was practiced by most painters. Today these skills are in little demand and so are rare. It is also not surprising to find that Stinchcombe used the building industry as an exemplar of craft based production well into the twentieth century, see Arthur L. Stinchcombe, "Bureaucratic and Craft Administration: A Comparative Study", *Administrative Science Quarterly*, Vol 4 No 2, 1959, pp.166-87

7. The long distances travelled by overseas vessels meant that, in general, smaller vessels did not engage in these trades. Since the changes that I am pointing to, occurred at the larger end of the scale, the result was that actual changes in size were more closely reflected in average tonnage figures, there was not a large number of smaller vessels which would depress the average tonnage figure. Moreover technical changes were first developed in Europe and America and introduced in ocean going vessels. For example, see F. Binde, *British Intercontinental Shipping and Australia, 1813-1854*, 1854, p.781, see Appendix Table A5.1 and Appendix Graph A5.1

8. This reflects the increase in the diversity in size of overseas shipping arriving in Australia that began in the 1820s with the lifting of the minimum size restrictions on colonial shipping under the East India Company charter, see chapter three

9. The decrease in ship size in the decades before 1850 were the result of political and economic (not technical) factors. The fall in average size recorded in the 1830s (and indeed in many years of the 1820s) was due to removal of the East India Company restrictions mentioned above. The fall in the 1840s was due to the depression (1843-1846) and the consequent fall in cargoes that meant that it was more difficult to secure homogeneous cargoes as British manufactured commodities came into the colonies. Indeed the depression in the colonies reduced the size of the colonial market for British goods as well. But the point is that in general the technology of shipping did not change to the extent that it did in the period after 1850. Indeed the fall in ship size in the 1840s depression can be contrasted with the experience of the 1890s depression, as indicated in Table 5.1.

10. This also pointed to the technical limitation of wood as a material of construction. The process of technical improvement in shipping - wood and sail-- which went back to the eighteenth century (and further), was coming to its limits. The rise in the load factor and the efficiency of ships (tonnages carried per deadweight ton) accounted for the bulk of the remainder of the difference. The effect of these factors and (size itself) varied in the two decades for a number of different reasons which will be discussed below, but the point is that in general ship size had become not only more significant but also more variable for the shipowner. I might add that in this period the physical and technical limitations of wood as a medium for ship construction were reached a point that I will mention in more detail below

11. The conditions for and the shape of the "long boom" of the second half of the nineteenth century are not in themselves of concern here, see W. A. Sinclair, *The Process of Economic Development in Australia* (Cheshire, Melbourne, 1976), N. G. Butlin, *Investment in Australian Economic Development 1861-1900* (ANU Press, Canberra, 1972 edn). But the economic expansion of the period provided the demand for transport in general and shipping in particular. It was this that shaped the economics of technical change in shipping in this period.

12. The population almost trebled 1850-60 with over a quarter of a million people entering between 1852 to 1857.

13. I showed in chapter three there had been three main phases of vessel fairs in use at the end of the sixteenth century. The Dutch fluteske design was a case in point. The design characteristics of the Dutch vessels had more in common with the clipper ships than the latter's immediate predecessors in merchant shipping in the early part of the nineteenth century.

14. The proximate conditions for this lay in large part in the nature of mercantilist regulation. The monopolistic company charter, delegated much of the responsibility for the running of the trade to those who tended to profit from it. This produced certain peculiarities in the company ownership structure and its measurement regulations which were largely responsible for the design features which I have pointed to.


16. The repeal of the Navigation Act is probably the most well known aspect of a movement of regulatory reform of maritime activities in the period from the end of the eighteenth century. Some other prominent aspects were: the establishment of open trading at Hong Kong (1842); amendments to the Tonnage Act of 1773 (1836) and amendments to the Merchant Shipping Act (1854), see Gerald Graham, "The ascendency of the sailing ship 1850-85", *Economic History Review*, Vol 9 No 1, 1956, pp.77-78
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19 British shipping was extremely important in world trade holding between 60 and 80% of world shipping in the 1800s. The abolition of mercantilist regulation up to 1849 was designed to further open markets and trade to British manufacturers and merchants as well as profit from British technical and infrastructural advantages in engineering and shipbuilding.

20 This marked the end of another of the old mercantilist company structures – which were a devise for the exclusion from certain prescribed economic activities, whatever these may be.


22 *Yearbook of the Commonwealth of Australia*, various issues.

23 E. F. Reedman, *Coasts from Newcastle: Aspects of the trade with China*, *Australian Journal of Politics and History*, Vol 29 No 3, 1983, pp.440–47, notes that the trade expanded to be a significant one by the 1850s, but by that stage it was dominated by British ships. The trade evaporated by the 1920s.

24 Production methods on the American east coast lacked the high level of craft traditions still alive in Britain freeing design and production methods from traditional notions. Similarly in the Canadian shipbuilding industry there was "the large increase of Shipbuilding throughout the Province [Nova Scotia], employing as it does about 50 per cent of unskilled labour..." *Evening Express* 1 Dec 1874, quoted in Ian Mckay, "Class Struggle and Merchant Capital: Craftsmen and Labourers on the Halifax Waterfront, 1850–1900", in Bryan Palmer (ed), *The Character of Class Struggle: Essays in Canadian Working Class History, 1850–1985* (McCullard and Stewart, Toronto, 1986) p.23

25 British designers began to rethink the dynamic structure of the sailing ship in the 1830s–40s. The high poop deck (common before 1800) and the sharp sheer (curve of the ship from bow to stem) were gradually eliminated through the 1840s and ships were made longer for their tonnage. The last of the large East Indiamen had length to beam ratios of less than 4:1 whereas this had increased to 4.7 by 1850. The tea clippers of the 1830s increased this ratio to the 5.5–5.9 range, (the *Curry Sank* was 5.9) see Clowes, *Sailing Ships*, 1, pp.105–105. Amendments to the Tonnage Act in 1836 significantly changed the method of calculation of ship tonnage, and in so doing removed the anachronistic method of mercantilism, see Graham, "The ascendency of the sailing ship 1850–85", p.77

26 Chain was used in slings for the lower yards, metal brackets (called patent-trasses) for support of the yard forward of the mast and wire-rope in place of the traditional hemp. Chain and metal brackets were introduced about 1840 and became standard use in the 1850s along with wire-ropes. The latter was half the size of hemp (for the same strength), lasted longer, catherpins were not needed to take up the greater slack caused by the elasticity of hemp, see Clowes, *Sailing Ships*, 1, pp.108–109; Kipping, *Rudimentary treatise on masting, mast making and rigging of ships*, (John Neale, London, 1861).

27 The British not only re-captured the Eastern trade, but also captured 65% of the American trade by 1865, rising to 84% by 1885. The American Civil War had a disastrous effect on the American industry, with about 40% of their tonnage destroyed, see Pollard and Robertson, *The British Shipbuilding Industry*, pp.11–14; British sailing ship fleet increased its size by 40% between 1850 and 1869, Fletcher, *The Suez Canal and World Shipping, 1869–1900* p.556

28 Robert Kipping, *Rudimentary treatise on masting*, eg. the reefing and furling of large topsails was always a difficult operation for merchant ships of the early nineteenth century. The American clipper Great Republic (built 1853) had the topsails divided into two, each set on its yard, both with no great depth. The result was easier handling. The design change quickly became standard on all large clipper ships.

29 The American ships relied on cheap soft woods, which progressively became more expensive to procure in addition to its technical limitations of seepage, lower robustness and faster deterioration. The hardwoods used in British clippers was, in contrast, stronger and longer-lasting.


31 Clowes, *Sailing Ships*, 1, pp.107–109. Composite construction attempted to avoid the rapid deterioration of iron in the tropics. Copper sheathed wood hulls on iron frames, pillars etc were used for strength and decreasing weight, decreasing (about 15%) by the use of steel.

32 James S. Leaimont, "Speed under sail", *Mariner's Mirror*, Vol 43 No 3, 1957 p.225 lists the Flying Cloud, Flying Fish and the Sword Fish, all about 2,500 tons, and built in the wake of the Californian gold rush, as the start of the revolution in the thinking about ship size.

33 Lubbock, *The Colonial Clippers*, pp.110–111,119 gives a complete list of the Aberdeen White Star fleet, and those built after 1853, averaged 330 tons. William Duthie of Aberdeen launched 5 wool clipper ships in the 1860s which averaged 996 tons. Clowes, *Sailing Ships*, 1, p.104 points out that, 'practically, the American ships were significantly larger than their British counterparts.

34 Lubbock, *The Colonial Clippers*, pp.10,11,12,11,12,12; Clowes, *Sailing Ships*, 1, pp.105–106. The speed of these ships was of significant interest in the 19th century, with 'records' keenly contested, see Leaimont, "Speed under sail", p.231, who concludes that many of the speed 'records' were largely fabricated for the benefit of the passenger market. He argues that claims of sailing over 400 miles a day were exaggerations; and that anything over 350 miles a day was a remarkable achievement. Clowes, supra, p.106 confirms this view, in that an average of 8 knots (in the Australian trade) over the whole voyage was good, that is, about 225 miles a day. Short-distance recorded speed, of up to 18 knots (over a day this would be 500 miles), are of little use in determining the effective speed of ships. North, "Sources of Productivity Change" argues that technically, the speed of sailing ships changed little from the 17th century to the middle of the 19th century. This may well be the case, but key point is that speeds did increase after then and the techniques which allowed it were not in common use until the spread of the clipper ships. This was reflected in regular liner services available from Sydney. The Aberdeen Clipper Liner advertised a Sydney to London service (offering 5 vessels at average size of 1290 tons) at an average of 80 days in the mid-1870s, see eg. *issues of The Sydney Morning Herald*, Sept. 1875.

35 Fletcher, *The Suez Canal and World Shipping*, 1869–1900, p.562 and fn 24; Fletcher cites a source which puts the figure closer to 4:1.


37 "[The single–cylinder marine engine was too heavy, occupied too much space, and consumed too much coal to carry freight profitably more than a few thousand miles .... [and] with the whole continent of Africa to circumnavigate and with coal bunkering deposits a thousand miles apart, even ships with compound engines had to load their holds with so much coal that they were unable to carry only a few hundred tons of cargo", Fletcher, "The Suez Canal and World Shipping", p.558

38 *San Francisco News Letter* 15 June 1872 reported that a British steamship company was to enter the West Coast China trade despite a $1m. government subsidy for the American line in the trade. This was made possible by a "perfect revolution" of steamship building over the preceding few years. The American wooden paddle steamer technology ($300,000 construction cost), needed 900 tons of coal and 17 days to travel between Honolulu and Auckland, whereas the British iron screw steamer ($150,000) fitted with compound engines, required 260 tons of coal and 13 days for the journey, (plus maintenance costs were 50% lower) see *Sydney Morning Herald*, 1 August 1872.
In some shorter distance trades, even in the Australian colonies, steamships were popular before the 1850s, eg, Sydney to Newcastle, supra. British production of steam tonnage increased over 400% between 1850 and 1869, Fletcher, "The Suez Canal and World Shipping", p.556

60 Pollard and Robertson, *The British Shipbuilding Industry*, p.17; note that the largest timber ships ever built (Wyoming, of 3,730 gross tons and Rossmore, 3,347 gross tons) were after 1900, in America, *idem*, fn.11, p.256.

61 Marginal cost for fuel still increased per additional knot speed, but the gains in engine technology reduced the rate of increase of this cost factor. Sailing ships could not average speeds of much over 8 knots for long voyages, whereas in the case of steam, consistent speeds of 15, 20 even 25 knots could not be achieved depending on the choice of the mix of costs by the shipowner. Engine improvements were, the compound engine, by Eldrid and Randolph in 1859, use of carbon steel and higher quality boilers, 1860s onwards, (widely adopted by the 1870s), triple-expansion engine in the 1880s, Parsons marine turbine engine in 1884, (first used in a ship in 1894) generally adopted after 1900, quadruple-expansion steam engine in 1914 and finally the marine diesel (first adapted for marine use in 1902), generally adopted after the first world war, Pollard and Robertson, *The British Shipbuilding Industry*, p.17; see also G. R. Henning and K. Trace, "Britain and the Motorship: A case of the Delayed Adoption of New Technology", *The Journal of Economic History*, Vol 35 no 2, 1975, p.353

62 The largest intercolonial company, ASNCo owned 30 vessels in the late 1860s; 3 largest vessels were 1002, 900 and 838 tons; fleet totalled about 13,000 tons and average size was 431 tons. Many of the 30 were small (eg lighters) thus the average size of the largest 20 vessels was 558 tons. It employed 20 masters. For list of vessels, *Rules and Regulations, A.S.N. Co.*, n.d. [c.1868]; *Trowton Papers*, ML Uncat. MSS Set 201.

63 E. J. T. Barton, *Jubilee History of Queensland* (Doddons, Brisbane, 1909) p.103

64 Charles Monford, "Fortitude Valley the Cinderella of the City", *Journal of the Historical Society of Queensland*, Vol 12, 1919, p.79

65 figures from *Summary of Building Rights*, [1Macdonald to Mackay?]*] 3 Feb 1905, Coal Vend Case (Collins) *McKellar Collection*, MSS 4548/Box 259. Nevertheless AUSNCo had operated the Kanowna (1696 tons) and the Kyara (1673 tons) in the 1890s but withdrawn in this period. The "Collins" group companies were, AUSNCO, ASSCo, Howard Smith, Huddart Parker, and McIlwraith & MacEachem.

66 Calculated from ship numbers and total tonnage of members of the Commonwealth Steamship Owners Federation (the Industrial Organisation of the ASOF, *Annual Reports*: 1905 and 1910 NBA/ANU E217/88


68 Evidence of Burns, managing director of Burns, Philp, & Co, Chairman of ASOA, Minutes of Evidence, *RC on Strikes* (1891), p.202. See also evidence of William Willis, agent, Qs.5923,5924, p.222 [Emphasis added]

69 For example Paterson's, a coal merchant and shipowner, abandoned steamships in the 1860s in favour of sailing ships, *Doherty, The Patterson Story* (E & H Handfield, Melbourne, 1958)

70 Random selection of Vessels Loading reports, *The Sydney Morning Herald*, April and Sept 1871, 1872, and 1873

71 Table reports 5-year totals, but surges across these, based on yearly registrations in Parsons *Steamships Registered Sydney 1834-1899*

72 I. Burns to Philp, 6 May 1881, and 1 Aug 1881, *Philp Papers* Box 2 OM6-32/6 Series 3 Oxley Library. cf. Burns' statements to the Royal Commission on Strikes (1891) see infra fn.

73 I. James Milson (Chairman of Board) to Trotton, 5 Jan 1881, *Trowton Papers*, ML Uncat. MSS Set 205; this was a letter of instructions from the Board of Directors for the journey, quote on p.9 [emphasis added]

74 *The Age*, 4 Jan 1883

75 AUSNCo *First Annual Report*, 21 July 1888, (Australia, Friars, McKellar Collection, MSS 4548/Box 9 This Company was formed in London and was an amalgamation of the Australian Steam Navigation Company and the Queensland Steamship Company. The ASNCo had been operating on the Australian coast for 50 years.

76 *Official Yobear of The Commonwealth*, No.15 1922

77 Fletcher, ""The Suez Canal and World Shipping", p.557, writes, "Merchants ... were more than willing to pay a freight bonus to secure steamer space, convinced that the savings in time compensated for the outlay." This was more likely to be the case in transporting high value commodities for the overhead costs in transportation were higher for longer voyages for these goods.

78 Evidence of James Burns, Minutes of Evidence, *RC on Strikes* (1891), Q.5505, p.208

79 There were situations in which the use of donkey winches was not possible or too dangerous, eg loading in mid-channel, in ports with large tidal movements and moving large quantities of sand for fast flowing rivers; for the latter, Judith Fingard, "The decline of the sailor as a ship labourer in the 19th century timber ports", *Labour*, Vol 2, 1977, p.51

80 *Sydney Morning Herald*, 24 Sept 1875

81 Newspaper reports of new steamships often mentioned the vessels stevedoring equipment; similarly an AUSNCo report stated that colonial steamships in Australia needed speed, modern conveniences for passengers and "appliances for rapid working of cargo", AUSNCo, *Second Annual Report*, 21 May 1889, *McKellar Collection*, MSS 4548/Box 9


83 Eg. London dock companies and river wharf development, Lovell, *Steamers and Dockers*, pp.14-22

84 eg the WA government delayed considerable expenditure on Fremantle until the 1890s, P. Brown, "Western Australian Merchants and Political Agitation: The Struggle for Fremantle Harbour in the late 19th Century", *The Great Circle*, Vol 12 No 2, 1990, pp.73-95

85 Report of the Commission on wharves and jetties *South Australian Parliamentary Papers* [SAPPs], 1881, Vol 2; Report of the Government Wharves Commission *SAPPs*, 1896, Vol 2 & 1897, Vol 2; Report of the Royal Commission on Wharves and Water frontages, *SAPPs*, 1911-12, Vol 3, all of these inquiries recommended public ownership of at least those colonial wharves which were public money was, or might be spent. There were also dissenting reports issued for the 1881 and 1896 inquiries. The 1911 Royal Commission recommended legislation for the establishment of a harbours board.

86 Glenn Lewis, *A History of the Ports of Queensland* (University of Queensland Press, St Lucia, 1973)

87 A select committee of the NSW Legislative Assembly in 1872 decided to redevelop much of the Port of Sydney, Proudfoot, "Wharves and Warehousing in Central Sydney 1790-1890", *idem*, p.86

88 Proudfoot, "Wharves and Warehousing in Central Sydney 1790-1890", pp.78–81


91 For example, in terms of wharfsage, the Illawarra & South Coast S. N. Co. Sydney facilities consisted of a finger wharf 120 metres long and 13 metres wide with an additional wharfage of approximately 4 metres wide, Plan of Illawarra & South Coast Steam Navigation Company Darling Harbour Wharf & Office, 10 July, 1903, Illawarra & South Coast Steam Navigation Co. *Papers*, ML MSS Set 103/Box 1(5) That is, the workable wharf space for vessels was only 4 metres to 20 feet wide. This was typical of wharves in Sydney and other ports.

This was the case in many of the smaller coastal ports that were affected by sand bars, eg. Northern New South Wales ports, Brisbane and some other Queensland ports.

For Sydney, N. Selfe, chief engineer of the Sydney Harbour Board remarked in 1908 of the impossibility of any broad and comprehensive access being initiated by separate proprietors of comparatively small private properties, cited in Malcolm Tull, "The Development of Port Administration at Sydney, 1903 to 1936", The Great Circle, Vol 4 No 2, 1982, p.95. National port planning remains a problem to this day.

In the case of Fremantle the railways controlled some of the wharves M. Tull, "Blood on the Cargo: cargo handling and working conditions on the waterfront at Fremantle, 1900–1939", Labour History, No 52, 1987, pp.15–29

Access to many Sydney wharves was very poor at the time of the formation of the Harbour Trust – cast lifts were used in addition to narrow circular access roads. The Trust embarked on a plan to construct and access road stretching from the south-western section of Circular Quay around the shoreline through Walsh Bay and Darling Harbour to Harris Street, Pyrmont (where the old Dalgety Stores presently sit), see Proudfoot, 'Maritime Land–Use in Central Sydney, 1890–1970', pp.110ff

T. A. Almond, Report on the Marine Department for the year 1899–1900, Brisbane, 1900, p.5 [emphasis added]

Almond, Report on the Marine Department, 1900, p.5


Royal Commission on Dominions: Minutes of Evidence taken in Australia in 1913, cited in Bach, Maritime History of Australia, p.262

The chute was 13 feet above the high water mark. The coal shaft was connected to the chute by an inclined wooden frame, down which one ton coal capacity skips travelled. All the skips were connected to an endless rope, where the weight of the descending loaded skip hauled up the empty ones, see E. F. Carlin, "Evolution of coal loading plant at Newcastle", Port of Sydney Journal, Vol 6 No 6, 1959, pp.156–57

See Coulin, "Evolution of coal loading plant at Newcastle", pp. 158–59

Installation of shore-based equipment was generally ad hoc, eg. a crane was not installed at Newcastle's Timber wharf until 1979, but it was described as of very great convenience to the small craft which then there, in discharging logs, stone, or other heavy weights". It was reported as evidence of the authorities consideration of this section of the port's trade, The Newcastle Morning Herald and Miners Advocate, 17 Jan 1879

Mechanisation was undertaken by coal companies, such as Australian Agricultural Company, J. and A. Brown initially, then the Newcastle Wallisend Coal Company in the 1850s, the Warriah Coal Mining Company (formed in 1862) and the Stockton Coal Company (1885). Where investment did take place the direct operators sought to maximise the returns of their facilities. The government supplied power and maintained control of the cranes but the contractors handled loading supplying labour and horses to handle the coal wagons, Carlin, "Evolution of coal loading plant at Newcastle", pp.159–60

Mining Engineer, The Acre, 11 Jan 1886

Proudfoot, "Wharves and Warehousing in Central Sydney 1790–1890", p.78 Note also that the government also bought up ASNCs. wharves, referred to above

The shipbuilding facilities of Sydney had all but disappeared by 1890, P. R. Proudfoot, "Wharves and Warehousing in Central Sydney 1790–1890", p.78; Frank Broeze, "Private enterprise and public policy: merchant shipping in Australia and New Zealand, 1788–1992" Australian Economic History Review, Vol 32 No 2, 1992, pp.12–13; a similar pattern of decline of the obsolete skills of sailing shipbuilding crafts was seen in North America, see Ian McKay, "Class Struggle and Merchant Capital: Craftsmen and Labourers, 1850–1900", pp.20–29

e.g. Tasmanian SNCS Half Year report 1888, "additional passengers meant an increase in servants on the boat, and in the case of cargo labourers on the wharf and on the steamer" [emphasis added], Sydney Morning Herald, 25 Feb 1890

Petition of Certain Merchants, Traders, etc., of the City of Sydney, NSWVQ, Legislative Assembly, 1859–60, Vol 4 1860, p.1087 [emphasis added]

Efficiency here refers to the use of as much of the available hold space as possible. This also improved the safety of the ship at sea by locking in' the cargo in the hold and thus eliminating potentially dangerous movement at sea.

Q.1489 In your opinion, in deep water ships where they are discharging with heavy lifts, is it necessary to have experienced men in the hold? Yes. They must have a good deal of experience, because if you break anything you are responsible for the damage, and you might have to pay £50 or £100. " evidence of Thomas Napier, stevedore. Minutes of Evidence, RC on Strikes (1891), p.45

After 1900, NSW Court of Arbitration, Judge Heydon, (who believed trucking to be easier than other waterside work) stated that the men would not admit trucking was easier work because they feared that a different, and lower, wage would be paid by employers. Billy Hughes noted that this was suggested in the oversea trade but rejected by the men, NSW Court of Arbitration, Transcripts (No 76 of 1902) Vol 2, 1905, p.734, NSW Archives: Industrial Commission, 2/29

Generally low bulk high value cargoes could be transported at higher (and costly) speeds whereas for high bulk low value cargoes speeds were lower, but calculations for this were imprecise. Eg. Australia's largest coastal co. AUSNCo., recorded vessel earnings, as well as separate figures for fuel consumption for each – but the figures were not systematically related to cargoes, weather conditions, particular trades etc. Coal fuel consumption was closely monitored closely by the 1880s, see monthly Reports to Directors in Britain, AUSNCo.

Certainly the larger shipping companies maintained records on a range of costs, such as coal consumption (per vessel per journey), wage costs, provisioning, wharfage and port charges, insurance and the like. Maintenance of vessels and equipment tended to be undertaken on a more rule–of–thumb basis. See eg. reports of operations by E. Bland of AUSN Co to the London principals in the early 1890s on approximately a monthly basis, General Correspondence AUSN Co. June–Dec 1891, McKellar Collection, MSS 4548/Box 126. These reports are in addition to half–yearly financial reports, Financial Reports, McKellar Collection, MSS 4548/Box 9.

Evidence of Burns, Q.5704, Minutes of Evidence, RC on Strikes (1891), p.215

Evidence of Willis, Minutes of Evidence, RC on Strikes (1891), p.257

Variability in work on sailing ships, plus lower time pressures meant that recording work rates was less urgent.

A hand held tool which was, in fact, a sharp pointed hook with a crossed T wooden handle.

Also other implements used such as Sampson posts, trunk planks, toms, shores, all mentioned in Lubbock, The Colonial Clippers, p.108


described in a report on a court action against a wharf labourer, The Newcastle Morning Herald and Miners Advocate, 24 Sept 1885

Evidence of Ramsay McKillop, Q.658, Minutes of Evidence, RC on Strikes (1891), p.30
103 Assuming averages of sailing ships - Britain to Sydney approx 125 days (return = 250 days) plus 10 weeks* in port in Sydney and 4 weeks in London (total 98 days) plus 30 days maintenance and refit, total of 378 days. This fell to 75 days (return 150 days), 6 weeks in Sydney 3 weeks in London (total 63 days) and 25 days maintenance and refit to a total of 235 days. This gives a 40% improvement. An average steamship cycle was closer to 30x2 = 60, plus 42 days in port and (say) 25 days maintenance, totalling 127 days - more than a 65% gain. " Turnaround time in Sydney estimated at over 3 months, see Broeze, "British Intercontinental Shipping and Australia", fn 52, p.207.

104 Fletcher, "The Suez Canal and World Shipping", p.539.

105 All About Burns Philp & Company: Their Shipping Agencies Branches and Steamers, (Burns, Philip, Sydney, 1903), p.27.

106 F. Broeze, "Wharves and Warehousing in Central Sydney 1790-1890", p.86.

107 Eg. British porterage, discussed earlier, was seen as a municipal service, and in London dock companies largely controlled the port rather than shipping companies. The formation of the Shipping Federation resulting from the 1889 dock strike signalled a challenge to this control.


109 Merchants and/or commercial companies, through to provide transport for their own entrepreneurial activities, eg William Pettigrew (of W. Pettigrew & Co.), and James McGhie, Abraham Luya, John Woodburn and F. G. Goodchap (of McGhie, Luya & Co.) were timber getters and merchants in Brisbane and northern ports, had shares in 9 and 4 vessels respectively. All were less than 100 tons and served their timber operations from 1850s to the 1890s, see, Rodrick McLeod, "Two Brisbane Shipowners of the last century", Journal of the Royal Historical Society of Queensland, Vol 9 No 4, 1972-73, p.27-43. McLeod also points out (p.31) that changes in shares were not regularly making an accurate record of ownership impossible. M. Diamond, The Suez Canal and World Shipping, London, (Melbourne, 1988); F. Broeze, "Australia, Asia and the Pacific: the maritime world of Robert Towns 1843-1873", Australian Historical Studies, No 95, 1990, pp.221-238.

110 In Melbourne Trade and Professional Directory listed approximately 100 merchants, a dozen shipping agents and only about 6-10 shipping companies (including P&O) in the mid-1850s, listed in the Age 1855 various issues (Wednesdays).

111 See eg, reports of Annual dinners of Sydney merchants, shipowners, and traders attended by dignitaries, political leaders and merchants. About Bums Philp & Company: Their Shipping Agencies Branches and Steamers, (Burns, Philip, Sydney, 1903), p.31.


113 In the ASNC the Chief (ie First) Officer held responsibility for "correct delivery of all cargo under his charge" including issuing receipts on the gangway and noting any damage to goods before they are loaded (Rule No.XLIX p.15) and tracing missing cargo through the procedures of Import Clerk or agents (Rule L, p.16), see Rules and Regulations, A.S.N. Co. n.d. (c.1868), Trounton Papers, ML Uncat. MSS Set 205.

114 In terms of a qualitative increase in productivity of the system, Performance could be increased through intensification of the existing system, a strategy employers found attractive.

115 Later to be associated with corporate structures, see Adolf A. Berle and Gardiner C. Means, The Modern Corporation and Private Property, (Macmillan, New York, 1932).

116 Page, Fitted for the Voyage, p.17: several examples show difference between stockholders and management in general meetings, see meeting of ASNCs. 4 Aug 1869 in which stockholders increased the dividend to 10% against the 8% recommended by directors, reported in the Brisbane Courier, 5 Aug 1869; the directors of the Queensland Steam Navigation Company attempted to wind up the company without the knowledge of the shareholders after the directors had called up the 2 pound shares, see Brisbane Courier, 31 Jul 1869.

117 James Burns referred to management as "only representing capitalists" and they had "the interests of our shareholders to study", Q.5430, Minutes of Evidence, RC on Strickey, p.205.

118 Eg complaint from London about the complete lack of information from the managing agents of the Queensland SSCO, for many months, see Edward Davies to McLwraith 2 May 1884, Parbury Lamb & Co. were the managing agents, Philip Papers, Box 2 OM65-32/12 Series 3.

119 All regulations quoted from Rules and Regulations, A.S.N. Co. n.d. (c.1868) Trouiton Papers, ML Uncat. MSS Set 205.

120 Burns to Philip, 25 Mar 1884, Philip Papers, Box 2, OM65-32/12, Series 3, Oxley Library.

121 Burns to Philip, 15 April 1884.

122 Page, Fitted for the Voyage pp.22,23,27.


125 Several resolutions on salaries, see Director's meetings 4 May, 21 May, 1885, Chairman's Minute Book, Howard Smith Limited Records, ML MSS 355/62X.

126 Mackay (Lord Inchape) to Macdonald, 7 Dec 1900, James Mackay (Inchape) Correspondence 1900-1906, McKellar Collection, ML 4548/Box 160.

127 It represented a pre-systematic company structure. In terms of manufacturing, Lister contrasted a European model of organisational development focused on the product to an American model based on streamlining production in his discussion of the development of systematic management. When applied to the water transport industry, each labour process focused on its product, rather than an overall management of the production process of all component parts, see Joseph A. Litterer, "Systematic Management: The Search for Order and Integration", Business History Review, Vol 35 No 4, 1961, pp.461-476.


129 Broeze argues that British overseas shipping in the Australian trade, was 'managed fully professionally' before 1850, Broeze, "British Intercontinental Shipping and Australia", pp.198-199, 205.

130 Indeed ships' officers became firmly embedded in the contract of employment (ie. of service). For general discussion see Adrian Merritt, "The historical role of law in the regulation of employment - abstentionist or interventionist?", Australian Journal of Law and Society, Vol 1 No 1, 1982, pp.56-88.

131 Evidence of Robert Garn, managing stevedore, Minutes of Evidence, RC on Strickey (1891), p.41 [Emphasis added]


133 Even Brisbane exports were trans-shipped to Sydney. South Brisbane in the 1870s, "[its] splendid waterfront, was the centre of a brisk export trade, and the small steamers and schooners came to load wood, hides, skins, and tallow for overseas ports, via Sydney", quoted in C. Melton, "Fortitude Valley: The Cinderella of the City", Journal of the Historical Society of Queensland, Vol 2, 1919, p.79.
The case workers in Queensland case-fields were a good example here. Workers unable to get case-cutting work sought casual work on the waterfront in a number of small Queensland ports.

Eg. the Gippsland Co. (formed by 8 men in Melbourne to settle the Port Albert area) chartered vessels from 1840 was renamed the Port Albert Co. in 1841 to aid development in the region. It became the Port Albert SN Co. in the 1850s, operating several steamers, a fleet of lighters and small vessels. The Gippsland Lakes Navigation Co. formed in 1864 by "a number of interested merchants and shipping people who had faith in the trade" established the first direct steam service between Melbourne and the Lakes in 1864. The iron paddle steamer Charles Edward (1855) 1855 operated on the service. The Gippsland company became the Gippsland SN Co. in mid-1865, joined by the rival Sale based Lakes Navigation Co. formed in 1877, see Bull and Williams, *Story of Gippsland Shipping*, pp.19-23,26,29; many masters operated vessels in Geelong, later S. G Henty & Co., Western SN Co operated to Victoria's west coast, R. Holden and J. Lowey, *Early Shipping in the Port of Geelong*, (Geelong, 1969) pp.25-27,33-34

134 Eg. the Gippsland Co. (formed by 8 men in Melbourne to settle the Port Albert area) chartered vessels from 1840 was renamed the Port Albert Co. in 1841 to aid development in the region. It became the Port Albert SN Co. in the 1850s, operating several steamers, a fleet of lighters and small vessels. The Gippsland Lakes Navigation Co. formed in 1864 by "a number of interested merchants and shipping people who had faith in the trade" established the first direct steam service between Melbourne and the Lakes in 1864. The iron paddle steamer Charles Edward (1855) 1855 operated on the service. The Gippsland company became the Gippsland SN Co. in mid-1865, joined by the rival Sale based Lakes Navigation Co. formed in 1877, see Bull and Williams, *Story of Gippsland Shipping*, pp.19-23,26,29; many masters operated vessels in Geelong, later S. G Henty & Co., Western SN Co operated to Victoria's west coast, R. Holden and J. Lowey, *Early Shipping in the Port of Geelong*, (Geelong, 1969) pp.25-27,33-34

135 The case workers in Queensland case-fields were a good example here. Workers unable to get case-cutting work sought casual work on the waterfront in a number of small Queensland ports.

136 All About Burns Philip and Company [1903] p.8

137 Some local and interstate vessels in Sydney were like 'grocery stores' with a variety of cargo handled, which required more labour to discharge/load quickly. GANGS of 40 or more men were not uncommon, Gaby, *The Restless Years*, p.18.

138 McKeUar, *From Derby Round toBurke's Travels*, p.17


141 The four ships were the Lura, Royal Shepherd, Kangaroo and the Flinders, Page, *Fitted for the Voyage*, pp.3-7,15

142 Page, *Fitted for the Voyage*, p.6


145 Although they were sold on the basis of a nominal subscription value, which was a common practice of the time. That is, the full value of the share was not paid at the time of the subscription, but was called up progressively. In this case only 10 shilling was paid up initially, and 10 shillings a month was payable by shareholders, see Page, *Fitted for the Voyage*, pp.10,18

146 Company secretary was the 'steampacket agent' Herbert Evans, Page, *Fitted for the Voyage*, pp.14-15

147 Howard Smith & Sons Pty Ltd was incorporated in Oct 1887, *Directors Minute Book* [catalogued as Chairman's Minute Book] *Howard Smith Records*, ML MSS 3565/2X, p.1; Huddart Parker and Company was formed in 1876; Melbourne SSCO, existed under this name since 1844, although officially formed in 1895; Bach, *Maritime History of Australia*, p.190

148 Buckley and Klugman, *The History of Burns Philp* ch.3. Indeed Burns Philp remained merchants throughout their association with shipping. More recent diversification and departure from shipping has seen it remain in business.

149 McKeUar, *From Derby Round toBurke's Travels*, p.213

150 Bach, *Maritime History of Australia*, ch.8, pp.159-186; Boeze, "Private Enterprise and Public Policy" pp.16-19


152 Those were the Loch Line and Devitt and Moore Bach, *Maritime History of Australia*, p.155

153 Eg. in 1890 Walter Ried & Co., General Merchants, Shipping and Insurance Agents of Rockhampton, held agencies for AUSNCo, BI SN Co., QRM Line, P&O SN Co., Messageries Maritimes, USSCo. of NZ, Gibb Line and Scottish Line. In turn McIwraith, McEachern & Co. represented them in London (the company's London 'correspondents') I. F. Bourt (secretary) to PhUp, 18 Nov 1890, *Philp Papers*, Box 3 OMS65-32/14 Series 3, Oxley Library.

154 Michael Page, *Fitted for the Voyage*, pp.155

155 Those were the Loch Line and Devitt and Moore Bach, *Maritime History of Australia*, p.155


157 The plant consisted of 1 horse, 1 spring cart, 1 set of harnesses, 1 tarpauline, 2 stores [hand] trucks, 1 Avery scales and 1 Fairbank scales. The equipment had, in fact, been reduced from 230 pounds in April 1890 with the sale of 4 horses, 3 drays, 3 tarpaulines, 3 sets of harnesses and 2 sets of lamps, see Robert PhUp, *Fitted for the Voyage*, p.6.

158 Local companies, eg Hunter River Co. operated shipping schedules almost from their initial operation, the short distances. Praise came from one passenger (and complaint about inconsistency by rail), Letter to the Editor, *The Sydney Morning Herald*, 8 Sept 1875

159 Q.1353 evidence of Robert Gam; Qs.3045,3047,3048 evidence of John Doyle, Minutes of Evidence, *RC on Strikes* (1891), pp.41,108

160 Evidence of John Russell (ironfounder) who employed about 200 men himself, Qs.1982,1983,1987, Minutes of Evidence *RSCWCC*, 1890, p.123. At this time the ASNCo maintained a fleet of over a dozen vessels in the Melboume, southern and northern NSW, and Brisbane trades, see McKeUar, *From Derby Round toBurke's Travels*, ch.2, pp.17-26

161 The plant consisted of 1 horse, 1 spring cart, 1 set of harnesses, 1 tarpauline, 2 stores [hand] trucks, 1 Avery scales and 1 Fairbank scales. The equipment had, in fact, been reduced from 230 pounds in April 1890 with the sale of 4 horses, 3 drays, 3 tarpaulines, 3 sets of harnesses and 2 sets of lamps, see Robert PhUp, *Fourth Report on Brisbane Branch* 16 Dec 1890 *Philp Papers*, Box 3 OMS65-32/14 Series 4, Oxley Library. James Burns described the firm as merchants. It employed 300—400 clerks and a few storemen in North Queensland, but did not employ much labour, despite their agent status for AUSNCo., Qs.5702-5704, Minutes of Evidence, *RC on Strikes* (1891), p.215

162 Quotations from the questioning of Ramsay McIlklop, secretary of SWLU, Qs.770-772, Minutes of Evidence, *RC on Strikes* (1891), p.34

163 Andrew Lenehan of Talbot & Co. Q.5185, Minutes of Evidence, *RC on Strikes* (1891) p.196; Andrew Gam, a stevedore superintendent, claimed that plant and premises amounted to £160,000. He could not however estimate the actual value of the plant alone, Qs.1450,1451, Minutes of Evidence, *RC on Strikes* (1891) p.42
Chapter 6

Informalism and Industrial Authority:
The Pattern of Industrial Relations, 1860–1890

I. Introduction

When a man ... must ... drive gaunt hunger from his door, ... he turns towards the docks; he is willing to work ... wanders along ... from dock to dock, and sees gang after gang, and crowd after crowd of men being put 'on' by the 'bosses' of the various jobs, but, as he finds to his chagrin, unless he is known, he may wander all day and ... no 'boss' will notice him and he soon discovers that it is not only the will and the ability to work that he needs, but the favour of the potent magnates denominated 'bosses'; how to obtain this is the first problem he must solve.... Probably the first idea that suggests itself to our would-be labourer, if he is a respectable sort of man, is that his respectability ought to count for something ...; gets, from some friend who knew him in better days, an introduction to this 'boss's boss', ... [to be] duly despatched to the 'boss'.... This, however, is about the worst course, with a view to success as a dock-labourer, that our friend could have adopted, as he gains thereby the character of a 'recommended man': a character peculiarly hateful to both dock-labourers in general and 'bosses' in particular, the former who resent any pretensions to respectability, probably as a sort of reflection of their lack thereof, and the latter fearing a 'spy', or possible rival, in the Newcomer.1

These practices as described by a craft worker's son ordered the apparent disorder of casual labour.2 They expressed structure as a combination of historical determination and social action, where customary practices flowed into social and institutional 'spaces' generated by a new form of domination. The subsumption of the labour process affected all spheres of social life. Green found himself enmeshed in a thick web of practices which expressed authority relations tied to local, community based customary ties. He experienced them as constraints – rules of exclusion – workers' saw them as protection. Using friendship with superiors (which he thought "ought to count for something") for advantage was illegitimate and merely triggered the next barrier. He describes the barriers4 designed to protect workers and foremen – foremen were enmeshed in informal work control as a customary authority – within a capitalist framework.

A central theme of this chapter, and those following, is the changing forms of workplace authority and its social and industrial context. Chapter four argued that informalist workplace authority of the nineteenth century was sustained by, and through, a myriad of social and cultural practices. Collective action by unskilled labourers up to the 1850s defended a mode of life defined by custom. The issue of customary wages was central.

For casual workers the system of hiring was also critical. Colonial conditions of labour market instability and worker poverty prevented casual labourers on the wharves from influencing hiring practices. Labour organisation based on local community ties was evident but feeble, in contrast to the more successful organisation of skilled workers reported in the research literature5 The skilled were able to combine workplace practices and community to form institutions, such as...
Benefit and Trade Societies, which served as centres for the social, communal and industrial aspirations of workers. In this chapter I will show that workers in stevedoring adopted similar forms of 'traditional' organisation, within the industrial context discussed in the previous chapter.

Colonial Australia lacked the pre-industrial social structure in which the authority of guilds and fellowships were embedded. When these collapsed in Britain no immediate alternatives filled the resulting social 'space' in either Britain or Australia. The large social distance between dominant groups and the 'working classes' allowed a relative autonomy of practices to develop amongst the latter, both inside and outside the workplace. This generated a nuclei of local customary norms and moral authority. Hence the dispersed, localised nature of industrial authority. At the same time wider structural forces (for example, the rate of social and technological change, capital mobility, growth of markets, the role of the state, and so on) also undermined informalism. Consequently local forms of organisation which sustained, legitimated and enforced industrial authority were under almost constant pressure.

In Britain custom based informalism operated over an extended period. I argue here that over the short period of British settlement in colonial Australia informalism did not become as entrenched. It was more flexible in adapting to new authority relations, and allowed the transition to a new framework of formal industrial relations to occur in less than a generation. Whereas strong local ties and sectional interests in Britain produced a more decentralised and voluntaristic industrial relations system. In Australia the unique system of centralised compulsory arbitration emerged. In stevedoring, informalism flowered but was then marginalised. Waterfront workers followed the same organisational pattern of craft workers, although in a weaker position. Later chapters show that informal workplace relations has persisted on the waterfront.

This chapter is concerned with the emergence and nature of informalism in stevedoring and the initial barriers it encountered over the period from 1860 to 1890. I will in Section II outline the social supports of informalism in light of the growth of shipping discussed in the previous chapter. Section III then turns to the types of organisation of stevedoring, from which informal industrial relations took place (Section IV). Section V then examines the pressures on this pattern and the crisis of the late 1880s and 1890. The final section concludes the chapter.

II. Occupation and Social Relations

In this section I will point out that on the basis of the material and organisational conditions discussed in chapter five that a small set of waterfront occupations became industrially and socially recognised well before 1900. The incumbents of the occupations were located in identifiable residential areas. Waterfront locale was a central feature of informal organisation, providing a spatial connection between workplace organisation and community life. Informal organisation was therefore connected to changes in the organisation of the labour process and the need to insert the newly recognised occupations into an existing work and social structure. To accomplish this, stevedoring workers resorted to existing modes of labour organisation – such as the 'society' which provided social benefits and a workplace organisation. But the workgroup was central to informalism at work, and its generalisation as a pattern of industrial relations.
Chapter Six

1. Occupation, Location and Continuous Attachment

I argued in chapter four that wharf workers generally resided in areas close to the waterfront, although by mid-nineteenth century official reports did not yet clearly differentiated them from the general category of maritime worker. However skilled maritime workers (such as shipwrights, sailmakers, carpenters, and coopers) were socially recognised. This section examines the formation of wharf labouring as a recognised industrial and social category of workers centreing on characteristics of a stable casual labour market, namely, occupational identification, residential patterns and occupational attachment of wharf labourers.

An important reason for the lack of recognition of wharf labourers was their inclusion in a larger unskilled casual labour market. Yet given this there was a broad differentiation of labour markets in part based on experience and skills. There appeared to be two partially overlapping labour markets. One covered maritime employment, covering sea-going work, wharf labouring, stores work, coal lumping and associated manual labour. The second was a wider market employing unskilled manual labour in a number of industries, including building, roads and railways, seasonal rural work, carrying, and similar employment. The general instability of nineteenth century employment that came from high levels of casual work, meant that workers crossed between both. Nevertheless the volume of waterfront work available after 1860 allowed a core of workers to form a continuous market attachment with stevedoring and closely related work. A larger number of workers drifted through, or in and out of, wharf work.

The resultant pattern of employment – a small core and a large 'floating' casual section – was not easily recorded by official statistics. Official recognition remained scant before the late 1870s and Census returns did not record wharf labourer or stevedore as separate occupational categories until later. However, workers must have identified these occupations to be aggregated into a broader category. This in turn indicated a conventional view of maritime workers as a mass of lower ranks covering ordinary seaman (having lower training and experience than able seaman), ballastmen, lightermen and so on. New South Wales and Queensland offer the clearest examples of this.

Table 6.1 shows the general category of seafaring persons (it included lumpers and ordinary seamen) in NSW in 1861 and 1871. Workers in this category were the most likely to be engaged in stevedoring work. The 1871 category is however more accurate, as seamen were excluded. The small numbers here indicate the limited number of men who claimed continuous market attachment, or considered that they could. It was unlikely therefore that more than a small core could secure a full living from the work – particularly in small ports outside of Sydney and Newcastle. So most wharf labourers lived and worked in Sydney. The hundreds of unemployed labourers reported to have attended public meetings in 1859 undoubtedly worked in many jobs and industries, including stevedoring. This floating unskilled labour force made continuous attachment to the occupation difficult for wharf labourers.

Table 6.2 shows a similar situation in Queensland ports. The seafarers category reported here is more accurate for lower maritime occupations. Most wharf labourers, approximately two-thirds, were located in the main port of Brisbane, as in NSW. More detailed statistics in Queensland for 1891 indicate a marked decentralisation as settlement spread north. Of the 367 wharf labourers indicated in Table 6.3, 46 percent were in Brisbane and 24 percent in Townsville.
Table: 6.1 Waterfront Employment by Location (Census districts), New South Wales, 1861 & 1871

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>District</th>
<th>1861</th>
<th>1871</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Number</td>
<td>(percent)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sydney (Balmain, Ryde, Glebe, Redfern, Liverpool, St. Leonards, Windsor, Campbelltown)</strong></td>
<td>119</td>
<td>(61.3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Newcastle (incl Morpeth, Port Stephens)</strong></td>
<td>33</td>
<td>(17.0)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Nth/Sth Rivers (eg Grafton, Richmond R., Manning R., Kiama etc)</strong></td>
<td>36</td>
<td>(18.6)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Others</strong></td>
<td>6</td>
<td>(3.1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>194</td>
<td>(100)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* 1861 total excludes 151 males listed as on board ship included in the Census. They were probably not lumpers.


Table: 6.2 Seafarers (incl Wharf Lumpers), Queensland 1864

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>District</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Brisbane</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brisbane North</td>
<td>143</td>
<td>42.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brisbane South</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>8.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fortitude Valley</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>9.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kangaroo Point</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>3.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>(Sub-total)</strong></td>
<td><strong>212</strong></td>
<td><strong>(63.3%)</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northern Ports</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bowen</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>4.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maryborough</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>7.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rockhampton</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>19.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others(&lt;10)</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>5.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>(Sub-total)</strong></td>
<td><strong>123</strong></td>
<td><strong>(36.7%)</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>335</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Colony of Queensland, Second Census, (1st Jan 1864, Brisbane occupational category XVII subdivision C, includes lumpers, ordinary seamen, etc.)

Despite imprecise Census categories the data indicates that many workers identified themselves as wharf labourers in both colonies by 1860, although not all may have worked only as wharf labourers. However stevedoring work was performed by other categories of manual workers, especially workers on lighters, in stores, and, seamen. The addition of floating workers expanded the figures considerably. Thus there is clear evidence that an occupational identity existed by 1860 – a key condition for the development of labour organisations.

Residential patterns of waterfront workers both reflected and reinforced the labour market attachment after the gold rushes. Workers needed to live close to waterfront to be available for work at odd hours. Tables 6.1 and 6.2 indicate that most men in Sydney and Brisbane who identified themselves as waterfront or maritime workers lived in or close to waterfront areas. In Sydney, the district of Balmain (covering Pyrmont, Darling Harbour and Walsh Bay) was at the heart of the Port Jackson maritime industry, since Woolloomooloo Bay was not yet developed. The wharf labourers reported in Liverpool, Windsor and Campbelltown, worked cargo on the navigable rivers in the Sydney basin in trades that began before the 1850s.

Residency in waterfront areas placed greater financial pressure on many wharf labourers. Rents were often higher than in other urban localities. Sydney rents rose in the 1870s and in the
1880s they were reported to average 12s. to 15s. per week near the waterfront and 6s. to 7s. in other areas, absorbing over one-third of the lumpers' earnings. SWLU secretary McKillop paid 13s. for his city accommodation. Often single men resided in the many hotels and lodging houses in the city areas, often long term. The Model Lodging-House in Kent Street had 200 beds at 9d or 1s. a night, where 40 or 50 men working on the wharves regularly stayed — many for over eleven months.

Wharf labourers appearing before the NSW Arbitration Court after 1900 reported rents between 6s. 6d. p.w. for half a house (shared with another wharf labourer and family) to 25s. for a house where three lodgers were taken in. The rent paid by lodgers averaged about 9s. per week, from average earnings of 25s. to 35s. a week. At this time it appears rents averaged about a quarter to a third of wharf labourers' earnings. Coal lumpers' secretary George Herbert estimated in 1891 that it was "considerably over one-third" of workers' income. Mitchell reports rents on the 'Hungry Mile' before 1914 as 12s. p.w. and often higher, particularly with inflation rising in 1912. To offset this, families sub-let a room, or shared a house in some manner. This is considerably more than the customary rate of 25 percent of income reported before the 1850s.

The evidence suggests that few waterfront workers owned property. For Sydney, the Arbitration Court witnesses and others suggest this. In Queensland, the electoral law prior to WWI restricted the franchise to property owners and required that occupations be listed. We can gain an indication of the property ownership of maritime workers. In waterfront areas identified in Table 6.2 (south and north banks of the Brisbane River) between 1894–1895 only 4 wharf labourers, one lighterman, one puntman, 7 seamen and 10 mariners (usually shipmasters) appeared, although more than 350 wharf labourers were reported in the 1891 Queensland Census (see Table 6.3) and WWF membership was 500 in 1902. In short, the great majority lived in rented accommodation with its inevitable and constant burden of rental costs.

This was generally the experience of wharf labourers around the country. Similar residential patterns emerged in other main ports. In the small capital city port of Hobart, maritime workers concentrated in and around Wapping. Recent research on Hobart waterfront areas shows a core of workers remained tied to the waterfront, although the number varied according to the level of labour demand. Tasmanian, and so Hobart, shipping traffic declined for two decades after the goldrushes and waterfront employment declined. However the locality saw a number of other industries develop which employed casual labour. The research concludes that before 1900 the labour force of the working class areas of Wapping and Old Wharf consisted of approximately 40 percent unskilled workers and 15 percent of workers employed in maritime jobs (seamen, fishermen, boatmen and so on). Wharf labourers moved between unskilled labour markets, drifting in and out of wharf work to rural seasonal work, such as apple picking. This floating labour population was a major element of the waterfront labour force.

Pt Adelaide and Fremantle, being physically separated from the city developed vibrant "isolated" maritime communities, albeit embedded in a wider worker community, especially in Pt Adelaide before 1900. Fremantle was small and undeveloped until the later 1880s, when overseas vessels switched from Albany to bunker coal in the port. The export coal trade from Newcastle provided continuous work for coal trimmers there. For the majority of the smaller colonial ports the movement in and out of wharf labouring was common. Work was usually available for only a few
days a week which forced men to seek alternatives. Moreover, season fluctuations in cargo volumes exacerbated the problem. Even in Sydney, the wool season had a marked impact on labour demand.  

The length of occupational attachment is more difficult to ascertain. Certainly by the 1890s many men had followed the industry for long periods. SWLU Secretary Ramsay McKillop reported in 1891 that he had been a waterside unionist for more than fifteen years – since the foundation of the union. AUSNCo wharfinger, John Doyle, had been in stevedoring since 1870 and reported in 1891 that many of the men had "been with [the company] a very long time." The names of many union officials appear in several editions of rules and returns to the Industrial Registrar of New South Wales over many years. Wharf labourers at the NSW Court of Arbitration invariably reported their waterfront experience. Of the 21 wharf labourers who appeared in a case in 1905, only 2 had been in the industry less than five years, 11 between six and ten years, 2 between eleven and fifteen years, with the remaining 6 for sixteen or more years. One man, Thomas Wilson, had been a wharf labourer since 1882, some 23 years. It must be remembered that the 1890 strike and subsequent depression had affected labour attachment. The link between residential pattern and labour market attachment was mediated by the fact that men may work for only one or two companies on only one wharf. The secretary of the Sydney union reported that many men worked predominantly at one wharf for up to fifteen years. In Melbourne, many coal heavers, who loaded and unloaded coal merchants ships, reported working over 25 years in the industry. Martin Kelleher, charged with assault in a dispute, was employed by Howard Smith & Sons for 18 years.

This evidence suggests that a significant core of workers followed the industry for extended periods of time. It is however difficult to determine when the stability of continuous labour market attachment was achieved, probably after the gold rushes and the late 1850s depression. That is, it emerged around 1860 in all major ports. In the wake of the post-goldrush recession, continued economic expansion assured attached workers employment through the 1860s and beyond. Newcastle & Hunter River SSCo general manager, Francis Thomas reported in 1905 that his company had employed up to 50 'constant' men as well as supplementary casuals for fifty years. Increased stability of the waterfront labour market was related to the pattern of recruitment. In the pre-gold rush period I argued that the small size of the colonies, an underdeveloped free labour market, convicts and immigration made labour supply haphazard. After the gold rushes waterfront recruitment was still generally via sea-going work. Seamen, anxious to work ashore went to the wharves since they were familiar with the work, skills and socialisation. Indeed there was a relatively high degree of mobility of men between sea-going and shore work. For example, the Sydney Coal Lumpers' Union membership of between 528 to 550 in the 1880s, still saw approximately 2,000 men on the books over the decade. Secretary George Herbert estimated that half those who paid the entrance fee stayed only one or two months before going back to sea, or elsewhere. This left a core of continuous workers of about 250 or 300. This pattern was characteristic of many Australian ports. Moreover, once a core of continuously attached workers developed, familial recruitment emerged, as it did on the waterfront world wide.
Workers generally entered the occupation in their twenties or thirties, given the heavy nature of the work, and left in their fifties. Some boys did light work, such as marking wool bales, in Sydney\(^32\) for example (see also Table 6.3). Fourteen year-old Henry Gurley, was reported as severely injured while assisting on a crane on Market Wharf in Newcastle in 1879.\(^33\) Men did work to much older ages but this was difficult. Although information on workers’ age in colonial Australia is limited, Table 6.3 reports the age distribution of Brisbane stevedores (i.e. shipworkers, but also include lumpers in the category) and lightermen 1891.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age range (years*)</th>
<th>Stevedores</th>
<th>Cumul. %</th>
<th>Lumpers</th>
<th>Cumul. %</th>
<th>Lightermen</th>
<th>Cumul. %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Number</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>Number</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>Number</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15-20</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>1.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20-21</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1.4</td>
<td>4.9</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.1</td>
<td>2.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21-25</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>5.7</td>
<td>10.6</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>21.5</td>
<td>23.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25-30</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>20.2</td>
<td>30.2</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>22.6</td>
<td>46.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30-35</td>
<td>91</td>
<td>24.8</td>
<td>55.0</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>18.3</td>
<td>64.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35-40</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>15.8</td>
<td>70.8</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>16.1</td>
<td>80.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40-45</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>12.0</td>
<td>82.8</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>8.6</td>
<td>89.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>45-50</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>7.9</td>
<td>90.7</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2.2</td>
<td>91.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50-55</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>5.2</td>
<td>95.9</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>94.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>55-60</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>2.7</td>
<td>98.6</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2.2</td>
<td>96.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60-65</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>99.7</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>97.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>65-70</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.3</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2.2</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>70+</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>367</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>93</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\(^*\) the age overlap is as appears in the Census; no females reported.

Source: Govt of Queensland, *Census of Queensland*, 5 April 1891, (Brisbane, 1892) Table CVI, Occupation Class III, Order XIII, sub-order 3, categories 9 & 10 pp.282–307

In both categories most workers, seven out of ten, were between twenty and forty years old. Overall most workers – more than seven out of ten – were 45 years old or under with most between 25 and 35 years old. These figures are only indicative, since the Census was taken soon after the 1890 strike and employer discrimination forced workers out of the industry. This was the case in Sydney, where the employers central pick-up bureau excluded most unionised wharf labourers.\(^34\) Nevertheless, this age structure is consistent with a fluid labour market and mobile labour force, but there is little doubt that the experienced men (over 40 years) were a core element of the industry for at least a decade. If these figures are taken as representative of all the larger ports, thousands of very experienced men were working on the Australian waterfront by the 1890s.

Despite the possible age distortion, the average age was less than forty. There was still a large younger ‘floating’ group that accounted for a large percentage of workers, with a relatively high turnover. The continuity of their attachment was linked to the volume of work. In 1875 Sydney wharf labourers claimed they averaged three days work a week over the year.\(^35\) Core workers would have averaged more than this to earn an adequate level of annual earnings. The formation of early trade societies around 1870 was *prime facie* evidence that the men who attended early meetings were a core element of continuous workers.

Floating casuals spread the work and lowered the earnings for all. In coal lumping, Herbert reported that work available in Sydney could support approximately three hundred coal men, that is just over half the union membership.\(^36\) For the SWLU, McKillop estimated that only 80 percent –
about 1300 men - were required from a membership of 1692 in 1891, not including non-union workers. If the effects of cyclical downturns were added, it was unlikely that more than 50–66 percent of workers could consistently earn a living of some sort - three or more days of work a week - by the 1880s. Of these men probably only half consistently earned a living wage - four days or more a week. In short, despite their considerable experience only about a third could claim continuous attachment earning a living wage, a third lived below a living wage, but remained in the industry and the remaining third struggled; with two or less days work a week. Billy Hughes estimated the "hopeless fringe" at 10 to 15 percent of the labour force and "nothing ...[could] bring them a living wage." Hughes' estimate undoubtedly applied to earlier decades.

The reported attendances at early meetings of wharf labourers (and shipworkers or stevedores) before 1880 in the capital city ports provide further indicator of those following the work. But the reports cannot be interpreted consistently. At the formation of the Sydney wharf labourers' society in September 1872, 400 to 500 men were reported to have attended, yet the 1871 Census (see Table 6.1) reported only about 160 wharf labourers in Sydney. At a meeting in Sydney three years later in 1875, attendance was reported to be between 200 and 300 men of the 800 men who, one worker reported, were divided into the East and West sections of the port. In early 1879 some 1350 men were reported to have either joined a 'wharfman' union in Sydney or were expected to do so. The Queensland Census reported over 200 seafarers in Brisbane (Table 6.2) but only 40 men were reported as attending a meeting which formed the Brisbane wharf labourers' society in mid-1869. These figures were affected by the nature of the meetings.

Sydney wharf labourers push for an 8 hour day and wage rises in the 1870s, increased the attendance of all groups - including men continuously attached but unable to earn a living wage on the wharves and men drifting through the industry. Whereas in Brisbane wharf labourers were not in dispute but sought to form a benefit society - for "stevedores and wharfage labourers." In the 1860s, work in Brisbane depended upon approximately two dozen lighters to transship cargo from Moreton Bay up the Brisbane River to city wharves. A larger number of small steamers and sailing vessels plied the river, requiring at least 100 men for this work. The 40 who sought to form a society were probably only a section of those continuously attached in the port.

Meetings in Port Adelaide and Sandridge (Hobson's Bay in Melbourne) reported attendances of about 50 in 1865 and 400 in 1874 respectively. In both cases the meetings called for more formal regulation of the distribution of stevedoring work. No further figures are available for Melbourne until the 1880s, when nearly 900 wharf labourers were reported to work on Yarra waterfront. Meetings of a reformed Port Adelaide society reported 455 members in 1874, nearly 500 in 1876, 492 in 1877, and 600 members in 1878. The stability of these numbers indicates a higher level of continuous attachment amongst workers.

In this section I can conclude that wharf labourers clearly identified themselves with the occupation in the major ports. They lived close to the waterfront, invariably in rental accommodation, were mostly under fifty years of age and had good maritime experience. A significant proportion were likely to have had a relatively long attachment - five years or more - to the industry. However, continuous market attachment was precarious, as a significant proportion of
workers were generally unable to consistently earn a living wage. But the overlap of casual labour markets allowed a 'floating' section to drift in and out of waterfront work. Probably more than half of the labour force enjoyed reasonable continuity of employment, albeit many with low annual earnings.

Clearly wharf labouring became a recognised occupation amongst the 'labouring classes', although with low status for the work and workers. The next section examines in more detail the public estimation of the waterfront and the views of employers.

2. Moral Sentiment and Industrial Authority in the Maritime Industry

The moral basis of labour was as important as economic function, in social recognition in the nineteenth century. Indeed economic functions were assessed through a prism of moral standards. In a functional sense such moral standards, or the framework in which such standards were developed and sustained, had the effect of legitimating the form of domination in the wider society.

As argued in earlier chapters the waterfront was morally condemned. The respectable/idler dichotomy resonated in the permanent/casual work distinction that then reflected occupational and normative expectations. Green's attitude to work on the docks (quoted above) was typical – dock work was the last resort "to drive gaunt hunger from his door". This British cultural influence in colonial Australia was significant. This section sketches the pattern of this moral evaluation, and its effects on maritime employment.

In mid-Victorian society, casual labour in the maritime industry was easily identified as idlers/shifters. The moral dichotomy of free worker/convict before 1850 was easily adapted to the respectable/idler dichotomy. Sydney police Inspector Charles Harrison recounted the symbolism of the 'idler',

most of them [unemployed men] were men I have known to be hanging around Sydney, about the wharfs [sic] and markets – idle characters, not dishonest, but idle characters, who had been hanging around the city for a long time.

Twenty-six years later British manager of QSSCo James Munro, opined that "[t]he firemen and sailors on the coast are a dirty, ill-disposed lot." In contrast, the respectable class of workers were praised by 'polite' society. This selective or differential paternalism was premised on the conventional social ranking of the time. Respectable workers were signified by their propriety and economic conduct, both absent in idlers. The following comment, by a doctor, conveys the symbolic accoutrements of the better class of worker,

This class – the superior class of working men and the small shopkeepers about the city – are generally correct in their manners; and what is, perhaps, as good a sign of their conduct as anything, when I have to attend them they generally pay their bills pretty punctually.

The notion of 'right conduct', or the observance of 'correct' norms, was bolstered by the economic prudence – paying bills on time. Not surprisingly many in the labouring classes saw 'right conduct' as the appropriate method of gaining respectability. Wharf workers had two problems, to establish occupational recognition beyond the shiftless day-labourer, the 'navvy' class.

Second to build moral respectability as stable workers. In a casual industry these was difficult. Some recognition came with continuous attachment, but the market and trade held marginal status, which undermined the benefit. When able to they turned to the Benefit and Trade Society from the mid-1860s to demonstrate respectability and the capacity for 'right conduct'. But
before I look at collective organisation, this section examines how the general pattern of moral evaluation was applied to the maritime industry.

This is important because the tension that developed between the employers paternalist understanding of workers and employment and the pressures of economic relations in sea-going and shore-based operations became unsustainable by the end of the century. Changes in the organisation of production undermined the moral basis of paternalism. As I will argue in later chapters this began a process of politicisation of collective labour organisation and unionism after 1900. I will begin with an examination of labour management across all operational employees.

Not surprisingly seamen and wharf labourers were jointly labelled idlers. In contrast, officers recruited by shipping companies were considered to be "men of responsibility in charge of ... property" and not seen "as a labour body", as they had "a certain amount of status." Indeed even the most junior officer could not be classed with ordinary seamen for he "always [had] the chance of rising" that is, "of getting a ship at £25 or £30 a month," or even a partnership position for the right man. Status and promotion possibilities were regarded by some employers as rewards in themselves. Shipowner James Burns justified the low wages of junior officers, often lower than seamen, as a "premium", paid to learn the "profession." As one wharf labourer noted, the officers' "social position ... [was] considered a few grades higher than that of the unfortunate wharf labourer" a view which mirrored those of eighteenth century Britain.

This paternalist view was later under pressure, as the material conditions and authority relations on which they rested disappeared. As companies moved to a coordinated organisational structure officers' work was steadily transformed by the imposition of control-systems. First, nepotism was increasing difficult to enforce in gaining a position. Following British reforms of the 1850s, colonial regulations also required that masters and officers hold accreditation certificates, indeed, "the moral standards of the merchant service officer were inextricably linked with technical skill and competence." Second, while shipmasters maintained relatively wide authority in their work, their sources of income narrowed considerably after 1860. Companies progressively removed the income that flowed from their 'privileges'. For example, ASNCo rules prohibited any officer (or employee) having an interest in purchasing, repairs, any other contract, or holding any other occupation outside the company. This regulation was reinforced in the first circular letter appended to Company rules issued in 1868. The rule specifically, "prohibited [officers] from engaging in any mercantile pursuit which necessitate[d] the carriage of freight on the Companies lines." Captains lost access to additional income (such as unofficially sub-contacting liquor sales on board, filching some of the providoring budget, 'selling' certain stewards positions, and so on), and where responsible for breakages, theft and other losses, and uniforms.

Covert surveillance enforced these rules. The Union SSCo. introduced a system of travelling 'stewards' to check food quality on board to prevent misappropriation of providoring funds. Greater specification of a narrow range of masters' duties reduced masters' autonomy over general commercial management of ship and cargo and its lucrative income, just mentioned. Ironically government certification after 1860 required knowledge of "invoices, charter-party, Lloyd's agent, and ... the nature of bottomry". Company controls on masters appeared earlier in coastal shipping,
since managerial control-systems were more easily introduced and policed. Masters in overseas shipping masters retained their broad functions longer. Their position was considerably degraded by the end of the 1880s.

Similarly other ship-board workers lost ancillary avenues of income in the 1870s and 1880s. Perquisite payments, known as the "bunce", to stewards declined sharply, even though they had been traditionally built into stewards' the rate of pay. Tips fell despite the increase in passenger numbers because the new market attracted passengers less willing or able to pay tips or gratuities. In sum, the progressive extension of managerial control-systems into operations narrowed avenues of income of all personnel. The traditional privileges of Officers' were slowly but surely withdrawn as they were transformed from partners and contractors into 'pure' employees.

This transformation into 'employee' status rested on a tension in the new capitalist company structure. The ASNCo again provides an example. On the one hand, officers worked under a seniority based 'bumping' system in periods of economic downturn. Junior commanders were 'bumped' to First Officers so that more senior commanders kept their positions. Then First Officers went to Second Officer level, but Third Officers, considered supernumerary or probationary officers, were liable to dismissal. On the other hand, seniority alone was considered an insufficient requirement for promotion. The latter was left to management discretion. One employer admitted that the 'future advancement' justification for the low pay of officers, could not be sustained as promotional opportunities were limited. Moreover, masters had fewer possibilities for alternative employment or working as an independent operator. Tighter organisational structures and production with fewer employers, combined with higher financial barriers to entry or exclusionary practices, closed off shipping to such independent operations by the 1880s.

Although shipping companies recognised the problem of lack of incentives, remedial policies were rudimentary and subject to management discretion. For example, Howard Smith & Sons introduced pay bonuses above annual increments for junior officers in mid–1885. Bonuses, of up to £20 a year, were also paid to Chief Engineers, provided that the Managing Director thought they had "exercised exceptional care in the management of machinery and other matters relating to their respective departments." In short, employers extended control over labour, including officers, where past privileges and autonomy were stripped away and few compensatory rewards were offered. Shipmasters gained some employment security, but these were counter-balanced, if not outweighed, by the loss of potentially lucrative opportunities for income and guaranteed promotion.

Masters increasingly lost authority over stevedoring as well. Shore-based shipping agents and contractors took over the function, particularly in larger ports. But officers were still required to work long hours to overview cargo handling. In smaller ports, masters retained operational authority over stevedoring as seamen were routinely used for handling cargo in these ports. In theory stevedoring remained a duty under the ships' articles of every seamen, but in practice the volume of labour needed made the use of shore labour unavoidable.

Furthermore pressure from the collective organisation and action of seamen limited masters' autonomy. Masters retained their significant power over all sea-going workers, such as seamen, firemen, marine engineers and others, but as union organisation of these groups grew in the 1870s
and early 1880s, they began to limit it in several ways. The public and political concern over the treatment of sailors and shipping safety was often focused on the behaviour of masters.

As coordinated organisation in shipping deepened, the issue of labour control loomed larger. Companies were hampered in dealing with the 'labour question' as they lack the organisational capacities to deal with local variations in conditions and practices. ASNCo., like others, delegated the responsibility for the performance of labour to the captain. But the company's attempts to establish general labour management rules proved difficult. The ASNCo Handbook "enjoined [commanders] to carry out as far as possible one uniform system of discipline, combining firmness, energy, and gentlemanly deportment as an example to be followed by subordinates." The companies advocated paternalism, but tried to practice formal control.

In sum, formal processes undermined paternalism in the employers strategy in labour management issues. It nevertheless retained a significant attraction for employers. For senior employees, deck officers and engineers, the employers supplemented paternalism with incentives in their labour management practice. The functions and authority of masters were eroded and they were pressured by company management from above and industrial pressure from below.

The deepening of the coordinated organisation recast officers and engineers as levels of operational (line) management in the evolving capitalist enterprise. Such employees were "men of responsibility in charge of our [ie employers] property who have to give orders to subordinates." While not ordinary labour, their status was ambiguous – employees but not labour – holding responsibility for company equipment and workers yet subjected to greater control. Employers conceded some role for an association of junior marine officers, but they baulked at any affiliation with unions of this 'lower' rank. Burns stated that employers, "never looked at the officers as a labour body, and therefore ...[could] not put them on the same footing as the labour bodies." Officers now held authority over productive capital and labour by virtue of the newly created capitalist shipping organisation.

3. Summary

This section has argued that stevedoring workers established a clear industrial and social identity in the second half of the nineteenth century. It was underpinned by the growth and stability of shipping that made possible stevedoring employment and continuous labour market attachment. Recognised waterfront residency stabilised. But waterfront workers found it difficult to escape the condemnation – as shifters and idlers – of the mid-Victorian colonial moral scheme. One contemporary wharf labourer quipped to the amusement of colleagues in 1876 that they were the "class of men they called duffers."

At the same time the emergence of a coordinated organisational structure in shipping undermined the high status and authority of shipmasters and officers who, in Australia, had hitherto held significant authority over shipboard stevedoring operations. However, organisational and management pressures for the coordination of functions in the capitalist company structure transformed the work and position of ships' officers, in a larger shift in authority in the maritime industry. In short, capitalist relations began to penetrate the content of the labour process, rather than only provide its form. Moreover, officers illustrate the emergence of a new structural position.
of occupations, the contradictory class position. By the late-1880s the independent (ship) master was transformed into the waged employee, albeit as part of line management.

This is the context that the position of wharf labourers must be seen. The coordinated control systems of shipping companies from about 1860 to the 1880s left wharf labouring largely outside the purview of shipping companies. Although, as I noted in the previous chapter shipping companies were seen the "paymasters," stevedoring enjoyed an operational autonomy resulting from the traditional involvement by merchants and other employers. This autonomy was eroded as the role of stevedoring in shipping production became more visible and costly to shipowners.

The next sections consider work organisation in stevedoring under the coordinated organisational structure and control. Local informal work control and methods were increasing seen as challenging the managerial authority of shipowners. It explores the processes of change as stevedoring labour was increasingly incorporated into the industrialisation of shipping.

III. Informalism and Stevedoring Employment

The local basis of stevedoring relied on an informalist pattern of industrial authority centred on the workplace and workgroups. Here autonomous regulation and customary rules gained their legitimisation. This section has two aims: to outline the types and nature of employment relations between the 1850s and 1890 in which informality expanded. The shift in authority from shipmasters to the shore in stevedoring was accompanied by the growth of employment and scale of work. A number of factors make analysis difficult; few records have survived, given the relative invisibility of stevedoring, its low occupational recognition and informal worker activities. Surviving evidence centres on collective labour organisation, usually the trade society. This was not however, the central institution of informality. Rather it was the workgroup in the workplace. As I will argue below the 'society' was as much a claim for social or public recognition as industrial organisation. But their weak organisation - forming and disappearing - is a characteristic of the nature and role of workplace organisation under informality. The industrial concerns of workers in this period mostly centred on wages and hours, rather than work performance or work control. In other words, the 'market' contact between workers and their employers was primary, rather than their 'industrial' contact in the labour process. This section focuses on types of employment in this transitional period of local organisation.

In stevedoring, the 'duffers' established the autonomous organisation of labour in the cracks of the emerging capitalist enterprise. Between 1860 and the 1880s stevedoring was only loosely coordinated in shipping production and retained its local character. It complemented shipping. As I have shown, work organisation within the core shipping labour process fell under new control systems that managed steamships and officers. However, shipping companies lacked the capacity to extend the managerial control-system to cover stevedoring, and had to rely on coordinating stevedoring with shipping before it was able to restructuring the labour process. In short, shipping production drew on unevenly developed labour processes. As Littler has shown, differed types of control were used in the nineteenth century and have not been conceptualised in the labour process literature. It is argued here that stevedoring workers were able to secure industrial authority in the workplace, even where they had little claim to skilled status.
Two clarifying points should be made. First, the autonomy secured by shore and ship based wharf labourers was not consistent in all ports. I stress that workplace conditions continually generated practical demands for autonomy in the workplace based on operational conditions and conformance with informal norms and invariably included first line supervisors. Critically, the workplace was not subject to the direct authority of shipping companies or detailed control systems. Stevedoring was more influenced by technological changes of ships and their cargo-handling equipment, than endogenous factors.

The period in which the informalist pattern of labour organisation flowered was from the 1860s to the 1880s. With more cargo and larger scale of operations employers merely adopted existing modes of labour organisation in recruitment, organisation of labour and work methods on the waterfront. Thus labour traditions had the opportunity to shape the developing industry through the growth of autonomous regulation.

1. Autonomous Organisation of Employment – Direct Contracting

In previous chapters I showed that waterfront workers were engaged by a wide variety of employers, which included shipmasters, shipping companies, merchants, agents, warehouse and stores firms, agents dealing in particular commodities, and carriers. The recognition of wharf labouring as an occupation after the 1850s, hardened its occupational or job territory. The workers adopted craft traditions that were based on a relatively stable social division of labour combining economic function, social identity and status. Over time and as employment grew occupational recognition became easier. This section focuses on the character of direct contracting, which generally gave workers a higher level of work control.

Waterfront employment maintained its pattern of local variations and arrangements after 1860. The main employers were generally mercantile agents and shipmasters. Agents were more specialised in serving the growing number of shipping companies but were nevertheless varied – general traders or merchants, small concerns operating in one port, large wool or rural agents and brokers, coal companies and merchants or specialist ship brokers. Crucially, specialist or master stevedores appeared to have emerged in the 1860s, complementing the existing range of wharfingers. The commercial arrangements for stevedoring services became routinised during these decades. Irregular or ad hoc arrangements gave way to continuous contracts of agents with shipmasters, shipowners or shipping companies, particularly in regular trades. Only small ship operators – masters or small partnerships – used agents irregularly, often preferring to use their own seamen and only a few wharf labourers.

These arrangements provided the organisational mediation between larger shipping companies and waterfront labour and were the local institutional basis for informalism. Wharf labourers developed close ties with particular agents, wharfingers and other employers. Most were employed as casuals, as mentioned earlier, yet some workers were employed 'constant men' – men on a weekly wage – as for the Newcastle and Hunter SSCo, who worked with casuals hired under a preference system. The clearest type of autonomous regulation is found in direct or cooperative contracting where wharf labourers contract directly and solely to the agent, shipmaster or owner for stevedoring services.
Labourers gained work by tender – a price per ship or hold to discharge and load and stow cargo. This type of cooperative work, performed independently from the control of the agent, had two effects. First, wharf labourers could maintain authority in the labour process through direct work control and apply exclusion rules in the labour market. Second, agents or shipowners required only minimal administrative costs for stevedoring. The absence of company control–systems and information on work practices provided favourable conditions for informalism.

Cooperative contracting was found in several casual labour industries. It was referred to as 'shares' system, or working on the 'co-operative principle' in stevedoring. Direct workers tendered for labouring services and if successful the men were paid according to their share of time worked or cargo handled. As shown in chapter three this type of system was seen British porterage for teams and later gangs. Recall that workers purchased positions in a gang giving them access to more regular work. Four hundred Port Phillip stevedores (working overseas vessels) in Hobson's Bay, adopted this model. They launched a cooperative stevedoring company in 1874 where each approved shipworker purchased a £1 share. The objective of cooperative tendering was to keep the work in their hands by enforcing first preference for share holding members.

Similar schemes were reported in Brisbane, Port Adelaide, Port Pirie, Newcastle, Sydney, Melbourne and other ports from the 1860s. They involved various sections of the port's stevedoring labour force. In Brisbane the men who formed the Brisbane Stevedores and Wharfage Labourers Society saw it as a means "to take contracts for stevedoring or lightering direct from the agents, and employing thereon members of the society." Port Adelaide wharf workers met in mid-1865 to form a society, to inter alia, "regulate and fix the price of wages" and ensure that contracts taken by men "employed on shares" paid them more than 30s. a week. It appears that direct contracting was widely used in Pt Adelaide from the 1840s particularly by shipworkers. Wages were set according to "shares", each man received a percentage of the contract price according to the shares held. The experience of close-knit work control of these workers later flowed onto the formation of the workingmen's association which initially only covered shipworkers. The PAWA committee was associated with the formation of the Pt Adelaide Working Men's Stevedore Co. Ltd in 1884, but this was run as a conventional company. A number of petty stevedores – wharf labourers taking contracts and employing other wharf labourers – were also reported in Pt Adelaide. They worked vessels in the 1870s, and probably before. In early 1890 before the strike, the men were urged to return to cooperative work at a tonnage rate. If they abandoned 'middle men' (ie contractors) the men would "work for themselves and reap the benefit of their labor."

Members of the Port Pirie Workingmen's Association (PPWA) formed a cooperative stevedoring company in June 1890 with capital of £500. The company issued 1000 shares at 10 shillings each. The Newcastle wharf labourers formed the Prince Alfred Union Co–Operative Stevedore Company in 1883. No details of these companies appear to have survived, but the latter formed in response to the objectionable monopoly practices of wage cutting by a small number of stevedoring contractors in the early 1880s. The men had not previously taken direct contracts but the employers had paid customary wages of £2 to £3 a week. While not strictly direct contracting, the Newcastle Coal Trimmers, used a 'gang wage' system in which wages were equally shared by gang members for tide and shift work. Twenty–three members did form a contracting cooperative in the wake of the 1890 strike, but by this time it contravened amended
union rules. The Bombo Workingmen's Cooperative Association worked vessels in Sydney in the late 1880s.

In Sydney and Melbourne waterfront coal workers worked for coal companies or coal merchants under a tonnage rate system, described by contemporary commentators as co-operative working or 'profit-sharing'. It was however technically a piece-work system, but the work was done by the gang as a cooperative and autonomous unit, exercising work control over the labour process. The coalworkers' Society rules were accepted and followed by the master coal stevedores illustrating a close relation between agents' supervisors and small companies and waterfront workers. Secretary McKillop of the SWLU worked during the 1890 strike in a cooperative, and later advocated that a cooperative company be formed. Coalworkers in Brisbane and Albany, WA, were similarly employed after 1900, and probably before, albeit on a smaller scale.

Workers authority was also exercised over the pick-up. The Sydney coalworkers' Society established recognised pick-up points (not at the ship's side or wharf), with additional arrangements for company foremen to engage men at any time of the night. The normal pick-up was mediated through the planksman. Hired by the foreman, the planksman in turn hired his own men (shovellers) for each job. He was effectively a gang-boss, but worked with his own shovellers on board. The foremen also hired the carriers and trimmers. This resulted in cooperative (autonomous) workgroups as each gang controlled the allocation and pace of work, the methods used, and so on. The Sydney Bombo Cooperative Workingmens Association reported that the benefits of waterfront cooperatives were, more regular work, a "feeling of unity amongst the men", and an average weekly wage of a little over £2. In other ports, arrangements allowed a degree of autonomy for workers. For example, Pt Augusta shipworkers enforced three month contracts, based on a daily wage paid by merchants in the 1880s and possibly earlier, which gave them workplace autonomy. They did not interfere with shore-based labour.

Direct contracting included workers using their own working equipment and gear. In Pt. Adelaide, the PAWA owned and maintained its own gear. The Association's Trustees Committee reported in mid-1879, that it had purchased six pairs of screws, as part of a review of requirements for the men ordered by the Association Committee. The Trustees concluded that the number of screws, Lampson posts or planks was sufficient for demand. All this gear was used on board ship. The Trustees also considered purchasing shore gear, but the Association decided not to purchase a dray as it had no space for it at its Dale Street rooms. Interestingly the Association resolved to "charge one penny per bale" when its gear was hired out, indicating that 'petty' and master stevedores probably used Association gear. In Sydney, McKillop reported that wharf labourers provided the necessary "appliances" when they stevedored a vessel under the co-operative system, in addition to the usual hand held tools, such as shovels and 'hooks'. After the 1890 strike, McKillop strongly advocated the adoption of co-operative working where wharf labourers would provide the necessary plant.

Direct contracting developed under three local conditions; a relatively defined and small section of the industry or small port; second, the work was contracted form small employers, and
third, the special nature of the work. This often was performed on board a vessel and needed close interdependence and cooperation of workgroups. Brisbane in the 1860s had about 100 men continuously attached to the labour market rising to less than 400 by the 1890s. In Sydney there were about 500 coalworkers in the 1880s, fewer in earlier decades. The Melbourne coalworkers numbered less than 200, the Port Phillip stevedores 400 in the 1870s, and the Newcastle wharf labourers numbered about 300 in the same period. Although the number of wharf labourers in Pt Adelaide exceeded 500 by 1880, the direct contracting referred to above covered mainly shipworkers. The small number of employers was exemplified in Sydney coalworkers – 12 foremen worked for the half a dozen relatively small Sydney coal stevedores, (each had one or two foremen, one with four). In addition the coal trade included Warburton & Sons who employed about 20 non-union men, and the North Coast Co employed their own men for coaling operations. One man noted that all the men, "are well known to the foreman; in fact the foreman knows every man in the Union. There are about 12 of these foremen. They know what every man in the Union can do."  

The third condition of direct contracting was the nature of the work. Generally it was shipwork in the hold and on deck. Hold work required strong workgroup cooperation, specialist competencies, and high productivity. The Brisbane lighters required skills in rigging gear, slinging cargo and teamwork – teams or 3 or 4 men worked in small holds and lighters. Coal work was an exemplar, men worked small holds doing heavy work of 'heaving' coal which required men of "exceptional physique" to shovel and manipulate coal baskets weighing up to 250 lbs. The allocation and pace of work and tonnage wage system was controlled by the teams. The Port Phillip stevedores, who worked overseas vessels, required skills in tight and efficient stowage of wool, wheat and other export cargo – one employer stated that the "stowing of the wool ... requires a certain amount of science; no novice could stow a wool ship, he must be a man of some experience, and, although they use screw jacks, a man must understand how to use them to stow the cargo to the best advantage."  

In sum, it is difficult to estimate the extent of direct contracting, but it was never widespread – and thus affected only a minority of workers from 1860 to 1890. It was nevertheless important in some ports and sections of the waterfront even after 1900. For workers it was the strongest expression of autonomous regulation based on the central role of small work groups, albeit within a society or union organisation. It was a critical expression of informalism and worker authority in the labour process.

2. 'Traditional' Stevedoring: Agents, Masters and Men

The role of agents expanded after the 1850s in the shipping production process. Agents used master stevedores or employed their own casual and permanent wharf labourers. They became more important in managing larger and continuous stevedoring operations requiring many more regular wharf labourers. Here I examine the role of agents in shipping production and the employment of wharf labourers by agents, small masters and master stevedores.

The nature and functions of agents altered markedly after the 1850s. Vessels were less likely to be handled on an irregular, 'spot' basis for a particular partnership or ships' husband, but as part of a longer term contractual relation with new shipping companies. Companies increased the size of
the economic unit of capital, and operated several vessels on scheduled routes. Schedules placed
strict time constraints on shore operations, increased cargo volumes and minimised unproductive
time in port.

Since many new companies did not have the resources to establish the required shore
infrastructure, (wharves, winch engines, gear and stores for handling cargo) they relied on agents in
each port. Where coastal companies had resources they were concentrated on the capital
investment in new ships rather than shore infrastructure. The state increasingly funded
infrastructure as reported in chapter five. In short, shipowners developed an agency network as a
necessary business policy. Agents often handled rural produce, coal, or general merchandise and
handling shipping cargo was often seen an additional source of revenue. Agents often had little
incentive to lower handling costs to lower freight rates since they were predominantly involved
in commercial activities rather than production. British brokers for example had a key impact on
export freight rates.

Consequently most stevedoring operations were not directly organised by shipping
companies, nor indeed directly by agents. In the 1870s more than two dozen employers of wharf
labourers in Sydney were intermediary contractors or small masters, although demands for
greater continuity of work and cargo volumes increased. Larger agencies invariably only loosely
controlled stevedoring operations. James Burns commented on the vessel 'Victory' thus,

I gave Brown charge of her. He is a regular old fool and keeps trotting from vessel to office ...
inundates the office with men of all kinds from the wharfs [sic] ...instead of pushing things on, he
keeps them back. The vessel has now as much as she can take.

There was little interest in securing work control. Smaller agencies, especially in the regional
and outports, often had closer contact with wharf labourers. Furthermore, the absence of
intermediary dock companies in Australia saw little specialisation in stevedoring, or materials
handling and storage as seen overseas. Wool (and later cold) stores in larger ports did specialise
some areas of cargo, but the volumes were not as great as overseas. Shipping agents did not
generally have the capacity for long-term storage. As one Brisbane agent wrote,

we have nothing further to do with the cargo after it is landed on the Brisbane wharf, beyond
storing it at the risk and the expense of the consignees, if it is not claimed by 4 o'clock p.m. on the
day it landed. To forward the goods up country is more strictly the business of the forwarding
agent.

In effect, the pre-1850s type of agencies simply expanded to fill the production void created
by larger scale shipping. However agents could no longer rely on shipmasters or wharfingers
(private or government owned wharves) to organise stevedoring and handle labour. This
responsibility was devolved contract master stevedores or directly employed superintendents,
wharfingers, wharf managers or foremen. These supervisors generally had maritime experience;
superintendents were often ex-ships' officers and contractors and foremen ex-wharf labourers.

The result was that stevedoring operations were performed relatively autonomously, although
formally within the framework of the agency. The organisational relation of agents and
supervisors (whether foremen or master contractors) mirrored that of the relation between the
shipping company and the agent. This 'double uncoupling' was a pivotal for formalism and
was a major organisational arrangement in stevedoring into the 1880s. Workplace relations were
shielded from the direct control of agents, in the same manner that agents were shielded from the direct control of shipowners. These relationships allowed informalism to flourish although the trajectory of economic change did not sustain it.

Turning to the employment of wharf labourers we find that employment stabilised after the 1850s. The expansion of the intermediate level of agent employers was an external support of the labour market. Four elements are important for the argument here. First, complementarity existed in the labour market, second, the cooperative nature of workplace relations, third, there were compensatory functions in worker organisation, and fourth, both agents and contractors were pressured by the tendency to greater co-ordination and integration of production.

As I have shown, the continuous labour market attachment required complementary action by employers and workers. There is little doubt that the small size, insulated position and maritime background of master contractors, indicates their dependence on customary work methods and authority. Small employers, or agent's foremen had little social distance between wharf labourers. Common social background, economic circumstances, and use of equipment, all supported this, as these factors did in direct contracting. Preferential hiring sustained workgroup cooperation by using the same workers. One employer put it "men who attend regularly expect something in return" as did the employers. Preferential hiring also allocated workers to a series of smaller sub-markets, which in turn fostered informal relations. In coastal trades agents and shipping companies were more likely to directly employ casual wharf labourers and their own supervisory staff to manage stevedoring. But many of the foremen, or master stevedores, were members of the same societies or unions as the men working under them.

Paternalistic ties were evident between employers and men. Men were reported to have approached masters for financial assistance for burials, to pay fines and other commitments for family assistance following industrial accidents (eg. William Scott fell and broke his jaw at an Australian Agricultural Co. coal chute, and his employer James Russell offered his wife assistance). A Newcastle unionist's comment "that the stevedores are really on terms of friendliness with the wharf labourers," was common. Contractors or agents, and even shipping companies, adopted existing forms of organisation of wharf labour as the most efficient at the time. In other words normative structuring complemented capital in the employment relation.

Second, the cooperative nature of workplace relations boosted productive efficiency. Practical work organisation was widely delegated to direct workers or their supervisors. Contracting permitted production coordination between different labour processes based on more efficient internal work organisation. Excluding 'strangers' assisted the continuity of workplace cooperation, as Sydney coalworker secretary Herbert pointed out, "[w]e would of course a great deal [sic] rather work with men used to the work than strangers." Referring to direct contracting, McKillop believed that in cooperative working the men's interests were best served by an awareness of employers' needs (to minimise cargo losses, ensure careful handling and good stowage and lower costs). Long term contracts would ensure 'peaceful' operations since the union would "weed all the drones out of our ranks". In short, labour's claim for autonomy in the labour process was grounded in production efficiency.

Third, informal practices also served to cope with external disruption in the labour market and thereby complemented workplace organisation. Workers sought to eliminate alternative or
novel forms of stevedoring which sprang up, often with the tacit support of small employers. For example in Port Adelaide the shipworkers wanted to exclude the boarding house keepers, who, "having a number of runaway sailors about them, have been in the habit of contracting to discharge ships at such low rates that the men could not earn a subsistence." When it reformed the Port Adelaide Association continued to regulate hours and wages later in the 1870s. The direct employers accepted this with some reservations, yet they believed, "that in the end they were better served [by the rules] than before. Consequently the association had received ... countenance and support ..." The Rev. S. Green, who regularly attended annual anniversary dinners, noted in 1875 that the PAWA was "well established, and they [sic] were as well able to carry on their business as any other company". Green saw shipowners – who attempted to cut wages – and shipmasters as benefiting from wage cuts, not the stevedores. Thus shipowners continued to be viewed suspiciously in Port Adelaide, given the close ties between the direct waterfront employers, the 'petty stevedores' and wharf labourers.

Newcastle wharf labourers strongly opposed some stevedoring contractors when they entered low price contracts which lead to wage cuts. When regular wharf labourers refused to work for lower wages the contractors employed runaway sailors. Vigorous complaints by the men continued over "the monopoly of the contracts for labour ...[in the] hands of one or two [men]," that resulted in lower earning for wharf labourers. Indeed it lead to the formation of the workers' cooperative, mentioned above.

Fourth, both agents and contractors experienced pressures from greater co-ordination and integration of production. Scheduling imposed significant time constraints on stevedoring. It meant that more men had to be employed to handle the greater volume of cargo carried by larger vessels in a given time period. This initially promoted informal relations by expanding the need for better coordination and shorter setup time. Quick setting up (rigging, removal of hatch covers and so on) required skills and experience, and was often performed by seamen for this reason. But the small scale employment seen in direct contracting, gave way to larger employers, despite specialisation. Agents and stevedores became larger through the 1870s and 1880s handling several shipping companies at a time in the case of the overseas trade. Shipping companies pressed for cost reductions.

Also additional peripheral work was generated – work such as receivals, deliveries, stores work, handling gear and general maintenance – that stabilised these tasks as waterfront work and increased employment opportunities. Some of these tasks were done by 'constant' men (eg gear men) since they can be done when not working vessels. Constant men were employed in Sydney and Newcastle from the 1850s and possibly earlier. Port Adelaide in the 1870s. Prominent intercolonial companies, such as AUSNCo and its predecessors, Howard Smith and Huddart Parker, Lamb's Wharf, various stores, lighters and merchants, all employed constant men. They were found in most ports. But this was an equivocal development. It was generally confined to merchant stores before 1850 and constant men were used by shipping companies and others in stevedoring under different circumstances.
The reciprocal balance between workers and employers was increasingly measured by employers in their own terms. Constant work was increasingly seen as a purely economic relation—although "social reasons came into it," said one employer, but ultimately the best men were selected since it was "a very great advantage to the consignee and ship owner, because they [wharf labourers] understood their work, you don't need to follow them about." Providing employers could find these men enough work they saved 20 percent in wage costs. Casual were paid 1s. an hour, whereas constant men received 9 1/2d. an hour (a weekly wage of 48s. for a 60 hours). In other words, 'constant' wharf labourers gained work and predictable earnings, but they lost choice over their work tasks and were on call for long periods. But casual workers lost access to some work and resented dismissal when constants took their jobs. This later became a source of dissension.

In general, the normative structuring discussed in this section came under greater pressure from capital, so that the custom based norms operated in the context of coercive power contained in the employment relation. The application of coercive power lay at the centre of the 'labour question' the emerged in the 1870s and will be discussed later. The formalisation of industrial authority through the creation of an arena of 'industrial relations' emerged as the 'answer'.

3. Summary

Section III has focused on the enabling conditions and nature of employment in stevedoring work from the 1850s to the 1880s. Lacking a new organisational form to specifically shape the new capitalist company structure, shipowners cobbled together a workable pattern of relatively autonomous components—of merchants, agents, small masters and internal company functions. These were the foundations of the industrialisation of shipping and by default stevedoring. Shipowners did not 'control' workers since they lacked an integrated control–system to achieve this or even direct employment to achieve it. However the coordinated organisational structure acted to pull the various required labour processes together, resulting the conditions for authority and employer control to emerge.

However practical work control was located in the local mixture of working knowledge, customary legitimation and 'economic' necessity. There were mutual pressures for productive efficiency in the labour process. Workers, supervisors and employers through a number of types of engagement of wharf labourers depended on a web of informal relations to ensure the smooth working of stevedoring. Employers interests were served by lower administrative overhead costs (hiring labour, training, working hours, wage payments, and so on), and little investment in equipment. The costs of waiting time, labour turnover, training, and so on, were born by workers, small masters and trade societies. Supervisory practice and discipline rested on informal workplace norms accepted by foremen who were intimately linked to workplace organisation. Under this system in the 1860s to 1880s, the sort of 'simple control' by employers proposed by Wright could not be said to exist.

The next section explores the web of informality and the construction of work control in relation to industrial relations. I will argue that deepening industrialisation in shipping progressively closed the opportunities for informality to operate. But the contingencies of the labour process remained. This maritime experience may be contrasted with the railways, where work was
standardised and an elaborate system of organisational rules developed – mechanisms typical of integrated organisational systems. The uneven *organisational* development of industries is characteristic of the capitalist dynamic.

**IV. Informalism and Industrial Relations**

This section is concerned with the nature of informalist industrial relations. Indeed the modern concept of industrial relations was carved from the social and industrial world based on legal and political doctrines of civic freedoms, individualism and a fundamental belief in human equality of classical liberalism. Colonial Australia was pitched between the moral authority of status and duty, liberalism and a spontaneous egalitarianism of the frontier culture. While generally the latter was receptive to equality and political freedom, and drove political innovation in Australia, work culture was slower to change. It may be argued that the adoption of state sponsored compulsory arbitration was one element of colonial political innovation rather than specifically industrial. In contrast, local and sectional institutions combined in Britain to prevent a national political solution, resulting in the diversity of voluntaristic collective bargaining.

This was the context in which 'industrial relations' emerged in colonial Australia. This section is concerned with three aspects of informalism, first, the pattern of work control and industrial authority, second, the development of a collective institutions that is, early societies and unions and third, the nature of industrial conflict under informalism.

1. **Work Control: Form and Enforcement**

As I have argued, informalist authority rested on the small scale of the labour process which allowed the workgroup to maintain internal discipline, through close ties and face-to-face contact. Authority was experienced as a personal relation between the supervisor and workgroup, and generated from a mutual conformance to customary practice. Before 1850 waterfront employment was dispersed and too unstable to develop the network of continuous personal ties to sustain work control. Section III argued that after 1860 concentration and stabilisation of employment saw small-scale group work emerge in an 'uncoupled' co-ordinated organisational structure. It is here that work control emerged, but was soon under pressure as the industrialisation of shipping deepened and stevedoring. This section focuses on the nature and enforcement of work control.

Work control was a function of the scope of authority. During the period discussed here work organisation was based on customary rules, held in common between men and supervisors. The web of rules was generated by the practical work problems, and by their nature were not recorded. Society rules provide only a glimpse of actual working rules. For example, the Newcastle Wharf Labourers' December 1883 *Rules* regulate only wages and payment under the section Labour Rules. The Sydney Wharf Labourers *Rules* (1883) list ten working rules covering wages, job territory, membership, conduct and disputes. The latter were generally seen as individual grievances where the "member so aggrieved [sic] shall apply to the Committee for advice." Employer victimisation against men "vindicating the cause of this union," evoked the "sympathy and support of the whole union" although the employer still had a right to dismiss a worker for incompetence. The Newcastle Coal Trimmers *Rules* (November 1882) list seven Labour Rules, covering membership, wages, the distribution of work and relations with employers. Not
surprisingly Rule 4 distributed work by engaging night gangs to relieve day gangs and vice-versa. The relationship between employer and employee was to be based on "a proper degree of respect", neither side could engage in activities to "take undue advantage of ...[the] other," particularly any "attempt to raise or depress the labour market on account of any temporary change." Work methods were given, thus the rule related to advantage in the labour market and not the labour process. The few rules that related specifically to work organisation or work methods were not formally detailed. For example manning for gangs for the Newcastle Coal Trimmers was not specified the rule only noting that ["the term [gang] is to signify the full number of men required to do the job."

Manning was an issue of mutual, customary understandings in the workplace, based on practice and acceptable work effort.

Early society rules show that codified work rules were not significant for formal regulation by the societies. This is a characteristic of informalism. The core of informalism was the enforcement of work control by direct workers not societies. The following discusses some salient areas of work control by stevedoring workers. The following views were filtered through a deepening concern over the 'labour problem' by employers in the 1870s and after.

One experienced stevedore described the workplace thus,

fourteen years ago [the late 1870s] the men were inclined to be even more particular in their rulings than now [1891]. That is to say that they would not allow a man outside their own body [workgroup and society] to do anything at all on board ship. I know of one case where the captain of a ship saw his "fall" [rope holding the hook] left on the quay, ... and when he remonstrated with the men, they all knocked off in a body. But it taught him a lesson. Shortly after he went below and found a man smoking among the cargo. This time he did not complain to the men but to the Union officers, and they came down and cashiered the men. In another case an island trader was alongside putting cotton on board the ship "Moravian"; the crew were allowed to land the cotton abreast the main hatch, but as there was a great deal of cotton they wanted more room, and the officer in charge told them to roll the cotton as far back as the break of the poop, and the Union men in the ship immediately struck work and went off to consider about it, and the vessel was idle for one or two days, until they discussed the matter at a general meeting, and then they came back to work.

Several issues from these statements. First, the exercise of authority by the workgroup was virtually impenetrable, and it curbed the shipmaster's authority in both events. His exercise of authority over the treatment of equipment (the rope) and the transgression of rule (smoking near cargo) was limited by the boundaries of workers' authority. Furthermore waterfront workers marked the physical boundaries of the work, by limiting the role of seamen to working the hook (ie as winchmen) and placing wool bales near the main hatch. Wharf labourers assumed the functions of landing and moving wool bales on deck.

The key industrial changes were, that as the number of bales on deck increased they had to be cleared and stowed faster. The men objected to the rate of work of the hook being assumed by the ship's officer, the type of work being done by seamen and the quantum of work needed to move bales back to the hold. More importantly for the argument here, where customary work patterns were altered by an officer, direct workers' initiated the cessation of work. Only after that were labour officials involved. This point was stressed by a commentator, who reported the workgroup as the initiators of the action, and it retained the right to determine the appropriate action. Master stevedore Andrew Lenehan said,

They acted ... in accordance with their rules.
5104. Did the men settle that matter themselves or did the leaders? The men, after they had some conversation at their own office, returned to work after one or two days.\(^{150}\)

The density of the network of customary ties between direct workers made the issue of leadership inappropriate. Informal group enforcement underpinned customary authority. Leaders under informalism were either embedded in the workgroup as unit, or subordinate to the workgroup, since workplace organisation was critical in terms of occupational and unionate organisation. Leadership did not operate as a necessary condition of organisation as understood today. Thus the view that unions lacked effective leadership in the nineteenth century, fails to recognise the role of workplace-based organisation. The authority of custom and its enforcement were intrinsically collective. Thus the stevedore Lenehan could remark that, "[i]t would have been impossible to fasten who started it [the cessation of work] on any one in the ship".\(^{151}\) Such 'temporary combinations'\(^{152}\) were common as workers were galvanised into action in support of existing practice. The core of work control was the manner in which the workgroup determined issues such as job tasks, the rate of work (work effort) and discipline.

Society organisation encompassed these norms. A founding member and a 'leader' of the PAWA, Charles Hains, commented in 1874 that, "he had been accused of being a leader, and perhaps he was, but it was a good purpose."\(^{153}\) Although the previous year he was presented with a silver medal for services to the Association, any claim to leadership was directly sustained by a line of authority from the men. Thus societies were often highly democratic. Office holders were elected as frequently as every three months, and they were generally unpaid.\(^{154}\) The leader personified workgroup authority and exercised delegated functions. In contrast representative leadership came only with modern union organisation.

Men defended 'fair and just' practices by independent action. So when the steamer "Fijian" berthed at the steamers wharf, Newcastle, in August 1888, the numerous wharf labourers waiting refused to accept an engagement to unload 150 tons of produce because they had been underpaid and paid four or five days late when it last visited the port. The ship's crew was used to discharge the cargo.\(^{155}\)

While the authority and impetus for workplace action rested with the workgroup there appears little evidence, at least up to the 1880s that working methods were a significant issue in the workplace disputes or if they were, no documents survive.

In sum, two points need to be emphasised. First, work control was an informal web of rules that were generated by social and cultural understandings of existing work organisation and work methods. Second, the web of rules was reflected in the lack of formal society rules, which in practice were not necessary. Early surviving society rules (of the 1880s) did not cover work rules in any detail. Where rules were codified they indicated the decline of informalism and the emergence of a more formal system. I shall now turn to the institutional expression of occupational or 'trade' recognition – namely the Society.

2. **Institutional Organisation – Societies and Moral Worth**

Stevedoring developed in a unique local manner in each port within the general development of this emergent industry. Despite high labour mobility, continuous labour market attachment of workers and occupational stabilisation provided the enabling conditions for societies to emerge.
The experience of workers prompted the formation of wharf labourer Societies. This section is concerned with the formation and nature of wharf labourer Societies in the period up to the mid-1880s. The context of organisational and technological change outlined in chapter five soon overwhelmed them. The modern union haltingly emerged from the mid-1880s.

Wharf labourers, stevedores, coalworkers and lighterman formed societies from the 1860s. The first recorded society was the PAWA of shipworkers, formed in September 1865; others followed, stevedores and wharf labourers in Brisbane (1869); Sydney Labouring Men (wharf labourers) (1872), West End Labouring Men on coastal trade (1873), East End Labouring Men at Circular Quay on overseas vessels (1873), Sydney casual wharf labourers (1875); Port Phillip Stevedores in Melbourne (1874,1881), Melbourne wharf and coalworkers, (1879, 1881,1883,1885), attempted Hobson Bay and Yarra men (1880); Newcastle wharf labourers (1877), Newcastle Coal Trimmers (1877,1881); Morpeth wharf labourers (1887); Pt Pirie wharf labourers; Fremantle wharf lumpers (1889), and several other ports over the following twenty years or so.

These societies were predominantly Benefit societies. They represented a dual thrust by wharf labourers in colonial society between 1860 and the mid-1880s. They were firstly an expression of the claim for status of the trade and a resource for the maintenance of moral authority. In the absence of the pre-industrial 'corporate' shell in the nineteenth century, the trade society was a vehicle for social recognition, integration, and moral uplifting of these workers. No legal recognition or protection existed for industrial unions in this period. Second, they sought to make provision for the uncertainty of casual employment - they provided accident, sickness, medical and funeral benefits. While they covered industrial issues, these societies were not industrial organisations in the modern sense. The normative pressure to avoid a paupers burial for example, sprang from the same impulse to maintain customary wage levels.

These early societies made little claim to skill status, as in Britain and the US, for they lacked the depth of specialism that came with continuity, stability and size. The societies were formed in relatively small and functionally undifferentiated ports. Nevertheless they were specialist workers as noted earlier – the Port Adelaide, Brisbane and Port Phillip Stevedores all worked on board ship, Newcastle and later other ports had specialist coal workers. Second, they covered separate trades – in Sydney and Melbourne, one union covered the coastal trades, the other overseas. In both ports, the workers were separated by locality, each had its own wharves. In many cases – as in Sydney, the societies combined with other wharf workers, but in others they did not. The early waterfront societies were based on traditional organisational methods.

The role of trade Societies was reflected in their reported objects, aspirations and functions. The primary objective of the Brisbane Stevedores and Wharfage Labourers' Society in July 1969, was, "for advancing their interests individually to raise their [workers] position and occupation by fair and legitimate means" and provide members with assistance in the case of accident, sickness and illness. Interestingly the issue of wages was not dealt with at the initial meeting but carried over to a future meeting. At the formation of the PAWA four years earlier workers were concerned about wages, but its financial resources were directed to accident benefits. In Sydney, the 1872 foundation of the Labouringmens' Association, saw "[t]he object of the society is to better the condition of the labourer, socially, morally and politically. The first Newcastle wharf labourer's society in 1871 sought equal work allocation. A second short-lived society of labourers, trimmers
and lightermen sought traditional mutual protection.\textsuperscript{160} A Wharf Labourers' Accident Assurance Club was formed in Newcastle with a objects of accident assistance "and to endeavour by other means to improve the social and financial position of its members."\textsuperscript{161} No mention is made of the industrial position of members, although clearly several can objectives can encompass this.

Union formation was more uncertain in Melbourne. The Port Phillip Stevedores formed a cooperative society in 1874,\textsuperscript{162} and reformed in 1881. Wharf labourers on the Yarra wharves organised on "the mutual benefit principle", 'some time' before February 1879 with other appearances in following years including an attempt to combine Hobson's Bay and the Yarra men in 1880.\textsuperscript{163} The Melbourne Wharf Labourer's Union (MWLU) emerged only four weeks after the employers' rejection of a twenty year informal agreement which entitled wharf labourers' to be paid for the Eight Hours' anniversary procession.\textsuperscript{164} In Newcastle a general labourers society was formed as early as 1871 that covered wharf labourers, including Mr J. Russell who later became an employer. It collapsed, as did an amalgamated Society of wharf labourers, coal trimmers and lighterman formed in 1877. The formation of a Wharf Labourers' Accident Assurance Club by seamens' missionary John Shearton was reported in March 1882.\textsuperscript{165} However the legal recognition of unions under the NSW Trade Union Act (1881) spawned the formation of the first wharf labourers' trade union, the Newcastle General Labourers Union later in 1882. It was replaced by the Wharf Labourers Union in February 1888.\textsuperscript{166} The legislative recognition of unions followed in other states, such as the Queensland Trade Union Act in 1886.

The reported objectives of the early wharf labourer societies mentioned above were reflected in the Rules of the organisations registered in NSW under the 1881 Act. The objects of Newcastle Coal Trimmers remained the "raising of funds, to be applied for the protection of our labour; also to make ... provision ... for members disabled by accidents whilst working at their occupation as Coal Trimmers."\textsuperscript{167} In 1883, the objects of the Newcastle General Wharf Labourers Association were to raise funds, "for the protection of our labour, and ... to make such provision, ... for members disabled by accident."\textsuperscript{168} The Sydney wharf lumpers' sought to "bind the Labourers of Sydney employed amongst shipping together as a body of men; to aid one another at all times and in all places."\textsuperscript{169} These objects were mirrored in many societies during this period.\textsuperscript{170} Key features for the advancement of wharf labourers were the claim to recognition and status amongst other 'trades' broadly defined, and provide benefits for members.

The goal of uplifting the moral standing and social position of members was served by prohibiting 'undesirable' behaviour under the threat of fines. Guardians or Doorkeepers excluded "irregular, intoxicated or improperly dressed members"\textsuperscript{171} from meetings, disorderliness, drunkenness, smoking, "lewd conversation and profane swearing,"\textsuperscript{172} the "use of insulting personal language, or attributing improper motives to another,"\textsuperscript{173} engaging in discussion of "sectarian and religious questions,"\textsuperscript{174} failing to "act properly" and sit down after speaking, and other behaviour all attracted fines. A supporter of the PAWA, noted the association's social benefits,

\begin{quote}
[The PAWA] had tended to make them better husbands, better citizens, and if it were possible, more loyal subjects of the Queen. Since they had joined the association they had enjoyed more comforts in their homes, and he believed they had been enabled to place by sums in the Savings Bank. The association had made them better citizens, because by being enrolled in it they were
\end{quote}
compelled to submit to certain rules, which personally disadvantageous perhaps, were submitted to for the good of the whole... Their association also helped to make them better colonists.\textsuperscript{175}

The motifs of right conduct and economic prudence appear again. Yet Rev. Green was critical of several rules. He thought Rule 2 should be struck out (the 1874 Rules have not apparently survived). The Port Phillip Stevedores excluded convicted criminals, encouraged musical entertainment and debate on current affairs.\textsuperscript{176}

The moral and social claims of Societies were reflected in their public and symbolic displays – annual dinners, parades, picnics, sports events and the membership of public figures. Some 8,000 people attended the 1885 SWLU street procession through Sydney.\textsuperscript{177} Indeed members were fined 10s. if they worked on the day.\textsuperscript{178} In 1886, the Premier attended the union's banquet, over 2,000 people attended the picnic and an address was read to the Governor at Government House. He responded.\textsuperscript{179} In 1887, approximately 3,500 attended the Sydney picnic.\textsuperscript{180} The Sydney union conducted sports events during the picnic and at other times, prompting several business people to complain of the Saturday afternoon sports.\textsuperscript{181} Politicians were regularly invited to dinners, picnics and to occupy official positions in the society. Representation at annual Eight-Hour Day processions was another symbolic gesture, which, in Sydney was enthusiastically supported by wharf labourers.\textsuperscript{182}

The PAWA awarded medals for distinguished service. As early as November 1873, the Association awarded a silver medal for services to the Association to Charles Hain. Although the Association had re-established the year before,\textsuperscript{183} the first society dated from 1865 when Hain was undoubtedly active. The close ties between seamen and stevedores also saw the Merchant Seamen's Association present Hain with a "massive silver star attached to a silver chain" for service to them.\textsuperscript{184} At a NWLU presentation to James Watson for his services as their TLC delegate, employers were also present and toasted the recipient.\textsuperscript{185}

Hain's award also indicates a continuity of membership, despite the precariousness of societies. The PAWA originally enrolled about 50 shipworkers,\textsuperscript{186} although membership was open to others, at its fortnightly meetings.\textsuperscript{187} It is not clear how long it survived, but must have withered since it was re-formed seven years. This characteristic was shared by many of the larger port societies, the Port Phillip stevedores, the Melbourne, Sydney, Brisbane and probably Newcastle wharf labourers and coal workers, and smaller ports such as Morpeth. As W. Hack, a speaker at a PAWA annual dinner noted, in the past such societies met in secret.\textsuperscript{188} This tradition of informal organisation makes it difficult to determine continuity.

In sum, this section has emphasised the importance of claims to social status and 'respectability' in the formation of early Australian wharf labourer societies. It is this essentially moral claim that was fundamental to claims to industrial authority in the labour process. Not surprisingly a further component of societies was the universal provision of benefits. While they covered work accidents and sickness, they universally paid a funeral or burial benefit – to avoid the moral turpitude of a pauper's burial. This is not to say that societies had no industrial role. The next section turns to an examination of industrial relations under informalism, or what Price termed 'unformal' industrial relations.
3. 'Informalist' Industrial Relations

Industrial relations as a separate social domain only emerged in last two decades of the nineteenth century, as part of a process which saw new institutions and practices develop from within the informalist pattern of work relations. Thus not only were informalist 'industrial relations' embedded in the exercise of workplace authority but no institutions existed to deal with the scope of issues that emerged. Initially, there is little evidence of disputes over working methods or issues of work control. Here I examine relevant industrial issues in support of the argument. Section V turns to the emergence of key issues of the 'labour question' and modern industrial relations.

I have shown that workers on the waterfront took action over wages before 1860. This was continued. Pt Adelaide shipworkers at the formation of the PAWA in September 1865 were concerned over the undercutting of wages by outsiders, not employers. They sought to maintain the level of the customary wage of 10s. for a ten hour day when Boarding House keepers were taking contracts that paid lower wages. Note that the Pt Adelaide men also protected the customary day labour. However the local diversity typical of informalism, saw one commentator report that prior to then wage levels and hours differed across the port, "there had been no recognised rules with reference to the hours of labour and the rate of pay." This is not to say that there were no customary rules in different trades, employers or wharves. For example shipworkers, coalworkers and overseas men were traditionally paid more. Also direct contracts invariably paid more. Typical of informalism was the unilateral action of workers to enforce the relevant customary standard. The PAWA codified these customs, rather than giving birth to them. The Courts upheld the force of customary wage levels, in a case against a shipmaster for refusal to pay the standard.

The Association resolved to support weekly employment at £2 2s. for a minimum of 2 months to overcome problems in the distribution of work. Under this system, the SA Stevedoring Co. in particular only offered 60-70 men constant employment, out of the 240 it engaged casually. Strike action by 900 men in late 1882 called for higher rates and the abolition of these constant men. The PAWA then black banned the SA Stevedoring Co. when it refused to pay new rates after the 'petty' stevedores had agreed. The higher rates were 10s. a day and 12s. for wool work, and work after 6 pm. PAWA claimed the increase on two grounds - weekly earnings seldom got to £3 10s. and was as low as 15s. in winter and, secondly, Melbourne, Sydney and Newcastle workers were paid higher rates. By this stage shipowners were concerned. Later workers enforced rules concerning the size of baskets used for discharging coal and secured coverage of permanent workers in stores and on lighters in the port. Here, the secretary of the Steamtug Company stated he did not "wish to act contrary to the rules of the Association", and one stevedore thanked the Association for bringing to its attention the practice of a foreman not hiring Association men. As a close-knit organisation the PAWA retained the kernel of informalist organisation well into the twentieth century, and the Association's benefits extended to the 'petty' stevedores even in the late 1890s. Moreover the PAWA even enforced wages rates for seamen on local vessels.

The Newcastle men defended established wage rates when they took direct contracts rather than accept wage reduction of up to fifty percent in 1879 - from £2-£3 a week to 30s. Similarly Sydney wharf labourers claimed a wage rise in September 1872 - from 8s. to 10s. a 10 hour day. The spread of the eight hour principle combined with wage rise for seamen in August spurred the
wharf labourers into action in the context of “prosperous” trade. They unilaterally posted the new rate of 1s. an hour, to begin on 16 September. They added that time and half (1s.6d. per hour) be paid for overtime after a meeting on Saturday, 14 September and refused work at the old rate. The ensuing strike failed after several weeks and the wage remained at 9d. an hour.

Three years later, in September 1875, the Sydney wharf labourers – as the Sydney Labouring Men’s Union – issued a circular on 13 August that claimed an 8 hour day for 10s. or 1s.3d. an hour and 1s.6d. per hour overtime, plus limitations on the use of constant men, sailors and non-union men based on its Rules. As I noted above shipowners were not the direct employers. Merchants and shipowners quickly met and refused to recognise the union, rejected the claim, and urged agents, owners and shipmasters to employ their own seamen or non-union men. The shipowners employed dozens of contract stevedores and lighter owners and it was these small employers that were caught in the middle. On the one side, wharf labourers threatened a three month ban on any stevedore hiring out donkey engines or other gear to be used by non-union men. On the other, the shipowners replied with threats. So the stevedores formally supported the employers, but also declared no objection to either the wage claim or union men. They were willing to employ union men for 1s. an hour and 1s.6d. for overtime, but not the 8 hr day. Some, such Edward Flood refused to join the employers action. The stevedores were however in the hands of shipowners.

Trades and Labour Council intervention produced three compromise options – 9s. an 8 hr day all year; 10s. for 9 hrs in summer and 9s. for 8 hrs in winter; or, 10s. for 9 hrs all year round. In ‘deputations’ to the contract stevedores and lightermen TLC secretary E. Aiken failed to gain acceptance of any of the options. TLC delegates attended the meeting "to hear the answer which the [stevedores] meeting would give them.” The merchants ignored the men and remained unmoved. The recruitment of free labour finally broke the strike by mid-November 1875. The wharf labourers withdrew their claim and admitted their action was “injudicious”. The wage rate was however 1s. an hour in 1875.

Three years later, wharf labourers in Sydney and other ports supported the Seamen in their agitation against the ASNCo over their use of lower paid Chinese crews. Seamen walked off ASNCo vessels on 18 November that started a thirteen week strike. With widespread, and racist, support from the public the seamen forced the Company to reverse its decision. Importantly the issue sparked the formation of the Shipowners’ Association of New South Wales in October 1878, under the chairmanship of ASNCo. general manager Frederick Trouton. It marked a break from a commercial merchant and shipowners association already in existence.

Again in late 1882 casual wharf labourers sought a wage increase of 3d. an hour, in light of rising prices as the local economy picked up. The men wrote to the companies in October where they stated “[w]e... humbly pray that you will kindly take this [prices] into consideration and grant us an increase of 3d. per hour day work, the wages to remain the same for night work.” The claims were reported as part of the formation of a new union, the Sydney Wharf Labourers’ – under the new NSW Trade Union Act. They repeated the claim, "kindly asking” employers this time, two weeks later with no success. The union resolved to strike on 9 November, bringing out a 1000 men. While employers rejected the claim, the ASNCo paid the additional amount on Friday 10 November to get its steamers away. Two stevedores soon followed on Saturday, as more than 3,000 people marched in support of wharf labourers. The contract stevedores formed a committee.
of six to resist the claim. But a week later stevedore Andrew Lenehan's residence was firebombed. The strike continued with no apparent prospect of settlement. In the third week, some men drifted back to small employers, crews and constant men worked cargo where possible. A Sydney alderman attempted to get the parties together but the employers' committee refused to meet or attempt any compromise—a position they maintained. Employers also complained of intimidation. G. E. Dibbs of the ASNCo estimated the strike was costing employers' effected £10,000 a week, and £4,000 a week for wharf labourers. On Wednesday 6 December the majority of men returned to work, "apparently on a general impulse" after four weeks with no wage increase.

Strikes in other ports followed similar pattern. The Melbourne wharf labourers strike in 1879 was to consolidate their society. Coal workers went on strike in February 1883 in pursuit of the 8 hour day. The Pt Phillip Stevedores struck against 'outsiders' and in support of preference in 1872, and in protest against sailor labour in 1873. These workers—members of the Port Phillip Stevedores' Eight Hours Association—gained the 8 hour day and wage rise in 1883. The coal heavers struck for the 8 hour day in early 1883. The conduct of these strikes demonstrated the nature of informalist industrial relations as identified by Price.

Most were triggered by a perceived imbalance of customary wage relativities, resulting from either, outsiders lowering wages, an adverse assessment of their position with reference groups or price changes, the integrity of the society and the eight hour movement. Each is based on a longstanding moral assessment of the position and returns for labour. In part this underpins the conciliatory language in which claims are presented—a combination of moral worth and deference and social respectability towards higher status employers. The Newcastle Coal Trimmers Rules implored members to "treat each [other] with a proper degree of respect, especially when standing in relation of employer and employed," and members "will not under any circumstances, attempt to raise or depress the labour market on account of any temporary change." For any permanent change the members "will enter upon a calm and cool consideration of the same, without any desire to take an undue advantage of each other." The use of deputations (and petitions and similar appeals over various issues) is also consistent with this dimension. But it points to a second dimension—the lack of institutional framework or behavioural norms of negotiation and compromise. Societies and unions were not well organised and employers only organised on an ad hoc basis. Third parties are essentially conduits of information rather than active participants—whether it be the TLC, politicians or other prominent persons. Third parties were not, as TLC secretary Aiken's prophetic plea for arbitration urged, a mechanism for "satisfactory arrangement." In short, the conception and practice of bargaining had not yet emerged. Workers made demands that employers either accepted or rejected. As stevedore Lenehan noted in 1891, "[w]e do not fix the rate of wages; the men fix it themselves, and we agree to it," or not agree.

Where employers were small, specialised and close to workers—the Pt Adelaide 'petty stevedores', the Brisbane shipworkers, Port Phillip Stevedores, the coal merchants and their foremen, the contract stevedores in Sydney and others—acceptance was more probable (although not certain). They understood and accepted the web of informalism, the shape of work control and
the custom of wage levels. Where employers were shipowners and senior managers – distant from workers – rejection was more probable, since wages were an economic calculation that outweighed custom. Critically, the separation of the waterfront from shipowners in the coordinated organisational structure shielded workers from direct attacks on work control. However, the 1870s saw the decline of the day as the unit of labour in favour of the hourly rate. To be sure, pay was related to the length of the day. And as TLC secretary Aiken argued in 1875, a high hourly rate was some compensation for precarious employment of 3 to 3½ days a week. Moreover overtime rates were compensation for the rise night work in the 1870s. Of the major ports it appears that only the PAWA made some attempt retain the day unit – it enjoined members not to accept less than a quarter day work (for 2s.6d.) in the early 1880s.

Given the weakness of bargaining, the third dimension of informalist industrial relations was evident – conflict was a test of strength. But not union strength. Many strikes lasted several weeks indicating that workgroup bonds and community ties were sufficient to sustain workers for some time, despite low earnings. While societies and early unions certainly assisted workers, workgroup power was the essential component. When the men became dispirited they weakened and societies faltered. The resort to violence is consistent with traditional methods of enforcement of existing 'conventions'. Employers were implacable, refusing to meet or compromise with workers and only conversed through intermediaries. Labour organisation was commonly seen as tyrannical, and leaders as 'agitators'. These charges were also informed by the moral measure of appropriate conduct for workers of their rank. Only one party could win since the processes of negotiation and compromise essentially in a bargaining relation, had not developed.

As I have argued in chapter five the economic and organisational conditions of shipping changed through these decades. They were key factors that undermined the pattern of informal industrial relations. The ASNCo action in paying the higher rate in 1882 to 'get vessels away' on scheduled routes points to new pressures on employers and new opportunities for workers. Such opportunities were often used. Stevedore Lenehan of Talbot & Sons, complained that he had been forced to pay 3s. an hour (twice the overtime rate), to get steamers away in the evening. But more importantly workplace rules on a wide range of working conditions and terms of employment examined in Section A above became more codified by unions and visible to employers as work control opposed to their interests. But the organisational shape of the co-ordinated structure was inadequate to deal with the issue of industrial authority that it precipitated. The experience of one employer is instructive. AUSNCo wharfinger John Doyle had normal command over coaling vessels, but no authority over the men. The costs to AUSNCo and the lack of disciplinary control created an imbalance for shipowners. He reported the following.

2908. Is it the case that the coal lumpers used to knock off work if it rained a little? Yes, most unfortunately. ... 2910. Have you known your steamers to be delayed through the men knocking off on account of rain? Yes, frequently in the past, but not recently, and in some cases vessels have been postponed indefinitely until the weather cleared. 2911. Steamers could not get away because they could not get coal? Yes; I have known the men knock off for a simple spitting of rain after the termination of heavy rain. I have often spoken to the leaders about these men when we have had a contract for coaling, and said, "Well, it is not raining now, will you let the men turn to?" and they have said, "No." 2912. But while they were waiting until the rain ceased they are getting paid? That is a matter for the contractor, with which we had nothing to do, so that I cannot say of my own knowledge.
This issue exemplified the emergence of 'new rules of the game', however imperfectly understood in the 1880s. The economic pressures on shipowners were different and workers came to see advantages of broader organisation, or rather the gains from work control which accrued under the new conditions. But collective bargaining as a social practice and economic institution had not yet emerged. The 'labour question' was thus conceived of as a test of strength between the customary work control and new demands for 'managerial' authority. The 1890 strike was triggered by the accumulation of pressures for which there was no 'industrial relations' system for resolution. But the parties were soon to learn as the role of informal relations was fundamentally altered over the next two decades.

V. The Limits of Informalism and Industrial Relations Change

In this section I examine key industrial relations developments to demonstrate critical changes in the institutions and practices of dealing with industrial matters. They pointed to the emergence of a new formalised pattern of dealing with authority in industry – although the development was neither smooth nor well-understood. This section will outline key institutional changes for employers and workers and then turn to practices and issues that shaped the emergence of formalised industrial relations after the 1890s depression. As I will show in the later chapters there are key continuities in the workplace.

1. Institutional Change: Employer and Union Organisation

The transformation of the institutional framework, triggered by the broader factors already set out, and the emergence of formalised industrial relations that altered the role of informal practices and work control in the workplace. This section turns to collective organisation of employers and further development of wharf labour unionisation.

1 Employer Organisation

As noted, the initial Shipowners Association formed in 1878 to address the seamen's action over low wage Chinese labour on Australian ships. While it appears inactive – Capt Trouton chaired by the SOANSW for the next five years. Contact between shipowners in Sydney, Melbourne and Adelaide was established and continued in the early 1880s. Employer unease over the labour question grew as shipping expanded and the problems co-ordinated production became more evident. Their refusal to recognise unions was symptomatic of the concern. The costs of delays for steamships were large, thousands of men worked on wharves, yet shipowners had little direct control over them. Industrial conflict with seamen, and other maritime workers pushed employers to strengthen their organisation.

For most of the 1880s market competition on the coast was "very severe," with extensive rate cutting. Some attempts at trade arrangements between companies were made but all proved limited and unstable. Trouton proposed a pooling agreement in 1886, but nothing emerged for as QSSCo manager James Munro believed, there were "too many jealousies on the coast to permit successful working of the joint purse arrangement." Howard Smith suggested amalgamation of companies, and Munro thought that 'combination' was better. There is little evidence to show that the activities of overseas companies adversely affected intercolonial shipping.
Employers were more successful in industrial coordination. In early 1884 shipowners met in Sydney and appointed Trouton (ASNCo), Smith (Howard Smith) and Burns (Burns & Co) to prepare resolutions. Opinion was split, Trouton favoured laying up vessels to pressure workers, while others favoured importing workers to "glut the market" and "smash" the unions. Meeting in Sydney for a five day conference in June some thirty companies were represented covering all sections of colonial shipping. They formed the Steamship Owners Association of Australasia (SOAA) based in Sydney, with the objective of mutual support and the removal of "hindrances and obstructions" to shipping. Two critical policy decisions were adopted by the conference. First, the shipowners recognised unions and were willing to negotiate with union delegates. Employer delegations would approach relevant unions to propose Board(s) of Conciliation be established for dispute settlement and establish agreements in respect to employment and "any relations customary between employers and employed". In achieve this, the second issue was determined, that is, sub-committees were to meet with sea-going labour, "...to define what their respective duties are." A list of at least sixteen issues was outlined — including, hours, wage and penalty rates, engagement, termination, work duties, discipline, manning, and power to discharge. Interestingly, to begin this task the shipowners requested from Unions a copy of their rules to begin negotiations.

In short, the employers were bound together by concern over industrial matters and indeed registered under the 1881 Trade Union Act as a union. But too many sensitive commercial interests and jealousies lay under the surface for any stable commercial arrangement to emerge. The employers adopted key processes or mechanisms of negotiation and bargaining and unwittingly mapped out the terrain of the new industrial relations. But they lacked detailed knowledge of the actual work duties of their own employees, not to mention those working for contractors. Ironically they depended on union rule books as a starting point.

The Steamship Owners soon linked with bodies in Melbourne and in Adelaide which existed as separate associations with members drawn from companies operating in those colonies. The Pt Adelaide employers organised the Merchants and Shipowners' Association in the midst of the 1882 strike. The Association formed a branch in Melbourne — the Victorian Steamship Owners Association (VSOA). In its first full year of operation, the SOAA had 25 members including ten of the largest intercolonial and coastal companies from several colonies. It held 28 meetings, at least one a fortnight to deal with "most weighty questions" on labour matters. These procedures required an administrative structure. A permanent secretariat was established and a full-time secretary John Ferguson was appointed in early 1885 (the VSOA appointed Charles Hudson), funded by subscription fees. Key policy decisions were taken in Sydney, and following consultations with Melbourne and Adelaide, were adopted. Over the next four years the SOAA also formed close links with employers' unions in NSW, Victoria, Queensland and SA. Thus the employers significantly expanded the organisational capacities, particularly in respect to industrial matters. Although, given the commercial sensitivities, it took some time gain agreement for a Bond of Alliance defence. Shipowners established the necessary organisational continuity of the new formal industrial relations system by the late 1880s.
2 Union Organisation

Collective organisation and change for workers was more uncertain. There are two dimensions to consider – benefit societies and unions as organisations and cooperation between unions. Looking at internal development first. Some organisations adopted a clearer union operation in the 1870s – such as the Sydney wharf labourers – while others combined society and industrial goals – such as the PAWA, the PPSA and later the Fremantle Wharf Lumpers – and others were predominantly benefit societies into the 1880s – Brisbane, early small Melbourne organisations and the Newcastle men. Coghlan identified an incident with the SWLU in the 1870s as the trigger for the passing of the Trade Union Act of 1881. The wharf labourers were registered as a friendly society to protect its funds. During the 1875 dispute, the society ‘loaned’ union trustees funds to assist the union. It was not subsequently repaid. The resulting litigation in 1876 determined that since the union activity was a coercive combination against employers, and therefore illegal, any funds used for illegal activities could not be recovered. It took five years, but the Trade Union Act 1881 was passed and gave unions a legal identity.

The Act could not or did not immediately change many practices of the organisations or members. But a review of union organisation – primarily through its registered rules in the 1880s indicates changes in three critical areas that support the argument here; its status as a trade union, its leadership and administration, and the terrain of work rules. The legal recognition of societies as trade unions gave them a legal identity once registered. This protected the union’s financial and other assets, set enforceable rules for members, union’s could enter into contracts and other capacities. Accordingly, the role of office holders changed. Their capacity to act more independently as legal representatives of the union required more internal controls over their actions. The SWLU Rules of January 1883 indicate the introduction of quarterly auditing, restriction on payments by officers’ over £2, removal of officers by two-thirds vote, additional trustees held file keys, general meeting could direct officials on banking, officers could be removal from office if absent on three consecutive meetings, they could hold only one office and so on. Amendments in 1887, limited the burial benefit to £9, removed the entitlement if more than 13 weeks in arrears, required notification within 24 hours of death, and notice of week for payments over £2. Mr A. J. Kelly reported on efficiency measures for the union in January 1890, before the strike, that included fewer delegates to the TLC and MLC, tendering for printing and other measures. By 1890 the COM was required to meet weekly and the range of functions were specified. In 1902, the legal position of officials was recognised as the rules stated that the union secretary "shall be the officer to sue or be sued on behalf on the Union." The process was completed in 1904 when the union secretary acted as a "representative of the Union in its relations with the Employers and all other bodies ... and ... may exercise any powers not inconsistent with these [union] Rules." This may be contrasted with the secretary’s duties in the NWLU in 1883 – perform clerical duties, take minutes, sign memorials and cheques and ensure "everything in his possession" was handed to his successor and get a receipt. Workers knew that things had to change. When the Newcastle Coal Trimmers were re-established in July 1888, it was "unanimously resolved [by about 90 men] that the old Union should be renovated on a new basis that would not be of such an arbitrary character as formerly."
In short, the bureaucratisation of union organisation deepened as the demands of a formal system grew. Union officials became representative leaders, separate from, but accountable to the rank and file members and formal administrative procedures expanded. All of which constructed the tension between leaders and members so common in modern unions. Thus extent and type of links between officials and the rank and file became a key issue for all unions including the WWF.

Turning to cooperation between unions. Wharf labourers were generally not active in peak organisations until the late 1880s. The Sydney men affiliated with the Trades and Labour Council in 1873 and 1874. I was short lived as no representatives attended meetings. On reformation as the SWLU in 1882, they reaffiliated in January 1883 but again generally failed to send representatives until later in the decade. Wharf labourers then joined with several maritime unions – seamen, coal lumpers and others – to establish the Maritime Labour Council in 1884. But when the seamen called a strike without consulting the wharf labourers it fell into disuse. But by 1889 the union was actively involved with the TLC and the MLC. Through the 1880s wharf labourers took a prominent part in the annual Eight Hours Day parade and celebrations.

By the end of the decade the Sydney men clearly saw themselves as in a strong position – strong enough to raise the membership entrance fee from 10s. to five guinea (£5 5s.). The union also played a central role in two events that symbolised the new enthusiasm for organising. It took an active part in fund raising for the London dockers' strike in 1889 and began preparations to establish an intercolonial wharf labourers union. In a special meeting on 30 August succeeding resolutions quickly upped the amount to £500 as "heartfull (sic) sympathy" was expressed for the Londoners. With the TLC, rallies were organised and donation collected – with some £30,000 sent to London from around Australia. In March 1890, the SWLU, along with representatives from Melbourne, Pt Adelaide, Brisbane, and smaller ports, as well as New Zealand, met at a conference in Sydney at which the Federated Wharf Labourers' Union of Australasia was launched. Rules were formulated, printed and adopted by the SWLU in June 1890. Yet this initiative was more symbolic than real for one of the "chief objects ... was to establish a system of correspondence between kindred societies" to share information on industrial matters and eventually adopt common rules. Events in the coming months would see this initiative disappear for more than a decade.

Thus the union forged organisational links with other unions, but these were tentative and generally limited to unions of cognate occupations. Two characteristics emerge which are consistent with informalism – weak central organisation and stronger informal links. The weakness of formal links to peak bodies follows from undeveloped union structures. The stronger rank and file links, which often extended to sympathy strikes flow from the strong role of workplace groups and community links.

A weaker example of this pattern was seen in Melbourne up to the mid-1880s. The PPSA became well established in the Hobson's Bay locale but did not join the Melbourne Trades' Hall Council until 1884. The MWLU was formed and affiliated in 1885, although the THC had strongly encouraged the men to organise for several years, but early attempts faltered. Both unions maintained regular representation at meetings. However, both the PPSA and the Melbourne labourers were prominent in the Eight Hours movement. Ironically, the trigger for the formation of a continuous MWLU was the abolition by employers of a twenty year old custom that men were
paid for Eight Hours Day. In Brisbane there is little evidence of activity of the old stevedores and lighterman's society through the 1870s and 80s. The wharf labourers union did donate £150 to the London Dockers' strike in 1889. The latter did not affiliate with the Brisbane Eight Hour Anniversary Union, the predecessor of the Queensland TLC, until 1896.\textsuperscript{258} The Fremantle wharf lumpers unionised in 1889.

The PAWA departed from the weak centre–strong workplace pattern. It held a central position in union organisation through the 1870s. It was a foundation member of the Pt Adelaide TLC, and remained a key union despite differences over political issues in the mid–1880s. For the first time the PAWA abandoned its annual dinner in 1883 – it was too expensive and the politicians invited rarely carried out promises. The men considered they had "been humbugged enough."\textsuperscript{259} The PAWA was a founding member of the local Maritime Labour Council (MLC) in 1887. The MLC was formed in response to the employers' organisation when the maritime unions warned that "many signs of a struggle between capital and labour, more particularly in the shipping industry [were evident] and there is no better way of keeping things going peacefully than by being well prepared for war .."\textsuperscript{260} The new language of class conflict emerged. In the first year the founding four unions were quickly joined by four others, giving the MLC 2,200 financial members. Yet two of the eight unions were associations of employers – the Licensed Carter' Association and SA Coasters' Association and another – the Shipmasters and Officers – withdrew before the end of the year.\textsuperscript{261} NSW Seamen's Union secretary Davis commented that labour was better organised in Pt Adelaide than in Sydney or Melbourne, "all the unions worked unanimously together as they kept combined." This was an assessment shared by an Adelaide newspaper that also recognised the organisational innovation it represented.

With respect to shipping labour, Port Adelaide presents ... a very rare and complete organization which focuses in the Maritime Council Master, mates, seamen, firemen, cooks, stewards, lumpers, coasting seamen, carters, coasting shipowners, storemen and labourers generally. From coasting office to ketch, store to wharf, gangway to deck ... freight and labour are united and by the federation of several societies labour is in touch with that of other colonies. At present the organization is an experiment, and it remains to be seen whether the intelligence which produced the cohesion will be able to sustain it.\textsuperscript{262}

In sum, the 1880s saw a perceptible shift in the organisational conditions which underpinned informalism at work. Based on the co-ordinated organisation structure in shipping, shipowners saw a rise in the costs of disputes, developed better systems of calculating costs and developed a widening coordination of policy on industrial matters. Policy was shaped by two factors; a response to industrial disputes on the one hand and a desire to minimise costs of managing workers. For wharf labourers, societies soon gave way to union organisation. Internal change to a more formal bureaucratic model was however slow in terms of union rules – and slower in terms of practice and language. There was only a flicker of the language of class above the understandings of custom and respectability. Yet union officials formally took on a representative leader role. The recognition of the benefits of union cooperation were clearer, but wharf unions varied in their willingness or capacity to develop links with peak organisations. Those links were more likely to emerge and strengthen in Maritime Labour bodies, that is at the industry level.
Chapter Six

2. Emerging Terrain and Processes: 'New' Industrial Relations

By the latter half of the 1880s, the operation of co-ordinated organisational structures had engendered collective organisation of both shipowners and wharf labourers. Each party responded to the variety of contacts experienced with each other – conflict, organisational change, fear of potential action and so on. Each side reacted to the other on these issues, but the nature of formal organisation was the same for each. This section and the next examines more closely the industrial relations contact between the parties from the mid-1880s to the conclusion of the 1890 maritime strike. I will argue that union organisation, outlined above, allowed informal work control to be extended in the workplace which was then dramatically blocked by the employers.

Intercolonial employer organisation brought a clear shift in employer policy on unions. The initial resistance of merchants and shipowners to the recognition of unions or direct bargaining was characteristic of informalism. However when the SOAA in 1884 adopted a policy of establishing voluntary conciliation boards for each union agreement it attempted to reconstruct the foundation of moral obligation and rule-making from an external focus on custom to an internal conformance to contractual terms. The employers stated "the board aims at securing the assistance of trades unions to exercise moral coercion upon refractory individuals" that required a non-antagonistic attitude to unions. They viewed voluntary boards as preferable to legislation. Intercolonial employer organisation brought a clear shift in employer policy on unions. The initial resistance of merchants and shipowners to the recognition of unions or direct bargaining was characteristic of informalism. However when the SOAA in 1884 adopted a policy of establishing voluntary conciliation boards for each union agreement it attempted to reconstruct the foundation of moral obligation and rule-making from an external focus on custom to an internal conformance to contractual terms. The employers stated "the board aims at securing the assistance of trades unions to exercise moral coercion upon refractory individuals" that required a non-antagonistic attitude to unions. They viewed voluntary boards as preferable to legislation. The Pt Adelaide Merchants and Shipowners Association, attempted a less refined tactic on its foundation in 1882 strike. It tried to establish a company union – the Workingmen's Club – to entice workers away from the PAWA. It failed – apparently only 5 men deserted the PAWA, and three of those soon returned.

The conciliation policy was soon implemented in arriving at an agreement with the Federated Seamen's Union on 18 August 1884. It included provision for Boards of Conciliation and Arbitration to settle disputes or other matters. Similar clauses appeared in other ports, such as with the NWLU in 1885 after an unsuccessful wage strike. However by early 1885 economic conditions and market competition put pressure on employers and their interest in conciliation wavered, although they still recognised it as "desirable." Nevertheless the seamens' agreement was threatened after the Melbourne dispute and cancelled in May for the failure to use conciliation. Accordingly the SOAA did not consider it advisable to endorse a joint Victorian Employers Union and THC initiative on such boards. Contract stevedores were pushing wharf workers harder as the shipping companies attempted to cut costs. Melbourne employers cut coal workers wage rates in early 1885 and then insisted men work on the Eight Hours holiday in September. Ironically this dispute resulted in the first arbitrated agreement on the Australian waterfront.

The refusal to recognise the customary Eight Hour Day holiday sparked the formation of the MWLU. Conferences were held with shipowners in October and November 1885 over rises in the rate for handling coal baskets from 1s. to 1s.2d. and bags from 1s. 4d. to 1s. 6d. an hour, rises for general cargo, the removal of pay deductions to stevedores and other claims. The shipowners only offered an additional 1s. for day work and 1 1/2d. an hour for nights, but accepted the 8 hr day and overtime rates for work between 5 and 7pm. A strike began at midnight 31 December and Howard Smith quickly advertised for 100 men. Men picketed the wharves and in the first days sailors loaded a small amount of cargo. Draymen soon refused to handle cargo and only three of the company's 40 constant men worked. The Geelong men went out in support. Two men were sacked by Huddart Parker for encouraging sailors to disobey their captain. The employers were divided on
handling the strike – the employers eventually offering 45s. for a 48 hour week for strikebreakers. Few appeared many companies had to rely on sailors and clerks to slowly load vessels. The strike began to affect business after ten days. The THC expressed support for the labourers in response to Employers’ Union support of shipowners. Waterfront sugar sorters and the Port Phillip men supported the Yarra wharf labourers wage claims and the THC urged all unions to support it. Other workers – plasterers, masons and millers – also claimed higher wages, and support came from SWLU, Townsville wharf labourers and others, and then the seamen went on strike in sympathy, as did the Warrnambool lightermen. Most damaging for shipowners was the immediate defection to the MWLU of 45 strikebreakers shipped in from Adelaide and capitulation of McIwraith’s to the union claims. By the middle of January in correspondence to THC secretary W. Murphy the shipowners broached the issue of how “the movement towards conciliation can proceed.” Two days later the Employers’ Union appointed a committee to “confer” with the THC to seek binding arbitration. The men returned to work on Saturday 16 January, at the higher rate of pay, 1s.3d. an hour for ordinary time.

The arbitration board first met on 28 January, presided over by Professor Kemot. Evidence was heard over the succeeding days and after heated discussion the board released its award on 9 February. It granted the eight hour day, overtime, wage rise in general cargo to 1s. 3d. an hour, the Eight Hours day as a holiday, a sliding scale for working coal consistent with the union’s claim, and employers were to assume responsibility to pay stevedore contractors.

The employers’ expressed full support for the award but the union was reserved in its assessment. It doubted the practicality of the sliding scale for coal work, but welcomed the control over stevedores, estimated to save wharf labourers between £15 and £17 per vessel. Although the award signalled a new era in industrial relations, two factors need to be highlighted. The wharf labourers enjoyed a relatively strong position due to the economic context and the shipowners found themselves on the defensive. Second, informal workplace organisation and pressure was not affected by the shift to formal mechanisms. Indeed the joint VEU and THC Arbitration Board agreement attempted to address this – through the use of a three stage dispute resolution procedure, prohibition of sympathy strikes, automatic six monthly inquiries into disputes and provision for two months written notice for proposed changes in wages, hours, or the ”system or conditions of working.”

Employers continued to be concerned about the ”harassing rules” that unions passed which negatively affected ”the efficient and economical conduct of their businesses.” They came to see union demands as inexhaustible, with no consideration to the viability of business. Shipowner Bruce Smith, in reference to ships’ Manning, stated that over ”the last few years the various hands ... have been gradually adding one additional burden to another until it has become apparent that such a thing as finality is unknown.” The Shipowners cancelled the seamen’s agreement and so its conciliation clause. Six months later they invited several sea-going unions for discussions – but now to press for cuts in wages, Manning, conditions and rule changes to halt ”undue interference” of unions with their employees on board.” By 1887 and into 1888 shipowners were more equivocal over their conciliation and arbitration policy, and unions often were unwilling to accept this new
method. In October 1887, an agreement was concluded in Pt Adelaide between the Shipowners Association and the PAWA but was never implemented, apparently due to the opposition of the MLC. The Port Pirie wharf labourers refused to have their claim for an 8 hour day go to arbitration in 1890.

By the latter half of the 1880s three key issues had become clearer. The Melbourne strike pointed to the first and second of these, the role of contract stevedores in the shipping production process, and the organisation of industrial authority in the workplace. The third was how to deal with the faster flow of changes in working conditions. These three issues are linked – the Melbourne arbitrated agreement more clearly differentiated the role of stevedores, and as I have shown employers were increasing concerned at work control. Both were effects of changes in working conditions, which I turn to first.

A wider scope of industrial issues emerged through the 1880s, where union rules expanded to cover to new working conditions and methods. The SWLU Working Rules covered ten issues in 1883, 13 in 1885, 17 in 1890 most of which were specified in more detail. Job territory was more clearly specified – the ban on working with sailors and the conditions of working with constant men and engine-drivers were set out. The use of constant men, at 9d. an hour, was a continuing source of discontent. The demands of the labour process examined in chapter five saw the union claim two 15 minute smoke-ohs a day (30 minutes at night) in 1885 for they had to carry heavy bagged cargoes – such as flour, oats, maize, copra and others. This provoked resistance from shipowners yet one employer did admit bags weighed between 1.5–2 cwt (76–102 kgs) each. Limited wharf space in Sydney also meant that bags had to be carried on men's backs – since the shipowners refused to use hand trucks – and stacked 30 or 40 high – "such a ridiculous height" – for storage. The work was so hard that men were "rapidly knocked up." They then claimed a higher rate for bagged stuff (1s. 3d. and 1s. 9d. overtime) which was resisted by employers.

Similar changes occurred in other ports. Demands for continuity in the labour process by employers resulted in more Sunday work in Pt Adelaide, in contravention of the Customs Act. The PAWA resolved to restrict Sunday work, but this was dismissed on the grounds it was allowed in Victoria and NSW and it comes with progress. Community action – through several public meetings – also pressed the government to prohibit these practices. It achieved little over several years.

Second, the role of stevedores generated discontent over labour intensification. It was an issue in the Melbourne coal workers dispute in January 1886. The Pt Adelaide men objected to their role as 'middle-men'. When stevedoring companies were amalgamated in the late 1880s the available contracts were taken by a companies which forced out the 'petty stevedores' and brought the men "more under the lash". The PAWA men to the rise in the stevedores' profits, particularly for large vessels, under the hourly wage system – money the men would be paid under the customary tonnage rate. The Sydney coal workers complained of contractors' practices. Lumpers' union secretary Herbert stated they always cut time – 3 or more hours a week – and when stevedores' took lower rate contracts the "men have to work all the harder to enable the stevedore to make the same money," and the stevedore "has to rush his men around", and "continually depriving men of little things." SWLU secretary McKillop noted that wharves had "no proper clock" and depended on foremen who often cheated time from them. He stated that 'middlemen' had caused
discontent for ten years and men continually complained they were forced to work "far harder", because it was "the sweating system pure and simple."288

Third and fundamental to the employers position was the issue of control in the workplace. SOAA chairman James Burns expressed the employers view, in stating that unions – particularly covering sea-going men – had significantly interfered with the management of their businesses, as they were "tyrannical labour organisations." Other employers agreed that unions had too much power. 289 For employers this meant lower work efficiency and poor discipline in the labour process. In their view, shipowners had lost control of their ships, particularly since the 1886 union conference in Sydney. The ban on non-unionists meant that if employers gave a man a job on the wharves, "the whole of the men on the wharf would simply walk off."290 The SWLU first created a Vigilance Officer (VO) position in the late 1880s "to interview employers. To act as general delegate in, on, or about the wharves..."291 By 1889 the VO was actively pursuing union rule infringements – for example ordering a shipmaster and stevedore to employ union men under threat of boycott; calling aforeman before the COM; threatening to ban colliers for employing non-union men, and so on.292 The employers saw similar actions in other ports – a strike by NWLU over the use of non-union men.293 Employers were also concerned over the relation between officers and 'labour' in the exercise of authority. Even the Chamber of Commerce was concerned over the rise in pilferage on the wharves.294

As I have shown above, employers viewed officers in a different light to labour. Officers were part of the company management. Thus shipowners came to view with dismay the attempts of officers' associations to affiliate with labour organisations, since it would severely compromise authority and discipline in the workplace. In September 1884 the recently formed Marine Officers' Association affiliated with the Sydney TLC. At the time it was not opposed by the shipowners, who had recently adopted a cooperative control policy. The officers left after 1885 when the MLC was formed, but never joined this body. The association floundered but reformed in 1889.295 But the employers attitude later changed. ASSCo. general manager Turnbull strongly resisted the affiliation of the Shipmasters' and Officers' Association (formed in June 1887) with the Pt Adelaide MLC in 1887. The officers' had succeeded by September, in gaining MLC support for a closed ship for its members on local vessels. A short strike occurred in October, with wharf labourers' support. But under pressure the officers withdrew their affiliation.296 Officers in SA and other states later became the trigger for the 1890 strike.

By 1889 shipowners' concern over labour issues prompted them to build closer ties with the broader employers unions in most colonies. In SA shipowners sparked the formation of the employers' union and in Victoria, men such as shipowner Bruce Smith were senior office holders in the Employers' Union. Indeed an intercolonial employers' union conference was held in Melbourne. The SOAA introduced a Bond of Agreement soon after its formation to render mutual assistance and ensure joint action over labour issues.297 It was reported that a Bond was seen by the seamen in early 1888 and referred to Defence Society. It existed in 1890, but covered commercial regulation.298 Nevertheless it is clear that organisational and financial co-operation was in place amongst employers before 1890.
In sum, the organisational changes discussed in the previous chapter generated pressures in the labour process that shaped the actions of the parties. Workers became more concerned with regulating changes in working conditions. Their use of methods—union rules and work control—were supplemented and reinforced by more formal union organisation. For their part, the employers adopted a three pronged policy from 1884; union recognition, the routine use of direct ‘conferences’ and negotiation, and the innovation of conciliation and arbitration boards. The seamen for example had a two year cycle of agreements.\textsuperscript{299} The shipowners policy also proceeded to improve employer organisation. Despite some early success, competitive conditions and continued union action saw shipowners question these policies. While the method of negotiation remained, union recognition and arbitration were viewed less sanguinely, given the perceived lack of compliance with agreements. Unions were unable to wholly contain rank and file work control, nor deal with the demands of agreements versus the customary propagation of work rules. Changes in the ‘rules of the game’ were little understood in the workplace and union were not as organisationally strong as they appeared, or thought.

3. **Crisis in Industrial Authority: the 1890 Strike**

Thus at the start of 1890 the waterfront was potentially volatile. Each side was deeply locked into a partial view of the industries problems and unable to understand opposing views. On one side, the employers’ concern over labour demands and work control continued to grow, and on the other, the unions commitment to the enforcement of rules and exclusion of non-unionists hardened. Sydney was particularly important in shaping the events in the industry in 1890, but other ports followed a similar pattern.

The SWLU adopted new *Working Rules* on 8 January and submitted them to the shipowners two weeks later\textsuperscript{300} to come into operation on 1 March. They set out claims for higher wages, smoke-oh breaks, restrictions on the employment of constant men and use of sailor labour, and a dramatic rise in the entrance fee to £5 5s. The shipowners rejected several rules—particularly the cut in working hours that came from the smoke-oh breaks. But they were prepared to meet union delegates\textsuperscript{301} and conferences were held in February. The union conceded smoke-ohs for general cargo because they believed the effective 7 1/2 hour claim was the main employer objection.\textsuperscript{302} Later conferences with the SOAA and the Employers’ Union resulted in additional concession over sailor labour and other issues, but Rule 15 continued to be an obstacle. The union would allow these men to join the union, but the employers insisted on ‘freedom of contract’. Therefore they would not accept restrictions on the number, or wages, of constant men (the union claim was for only genuine employment at 44s. for 44 hours).\textsuperscript{303} The union men bitterly resented the use of constant men (about 30 or 40 men at each of the larger companies) who were paid only 9 1/2d. an hour (45s. for 56 hour week) and thus took work from casuals. Negotiations initiated by the MLC also were at a stalemate in May. The employers insisted on 48s. a week for 10 hour day (actually 58 hour week) for constant men. The SWLU was frustrated. It reaffirmed the minimum wage rate at 1s. and 1s. 6d. an hour for ordinary and overtime respectively for casual and constant men, and resolved to apply them from 1 July.\textsuperscript{304}

From the beginning of the year the union expected ‘practical’ support from the TLC and other unions.\textsuperscript{305} Sydney hosted the first Intercolonial Wharf Labourers conference from 28 March
attended by delegates from New Zealand, Pt Adelaide Melbourne, Brisbane, Newcastle, Pt Pirie, Pt Augusta and Launceston. They agreed to form the Federated Wharf Labourers' Union of Australasia because the port unions recognised that a strong federated body was needed to pursue "legitimate and necessary claims." It was claimed that it could be one of the strongest unions in Australia with 12,000 to 15,000 members. Rules were drafted, and later adopted by the SWLU. In May the SWLU was in little doubt concerning the direction of the issues in dispute. Three delegates were commissioned to canvass support for the union "in case we require it for this Crisis." In June the union sent delegates to Qld, Victoria, SA, Tasmania and NZ to again garner support "with reference to the future strike." It reportedly received 200 letters of support from other unions in the colonies.

While Sydney occupied a central place in the industry, events were mirrored in other ports. The NWLU revived the long standing issue of non-union labour and went on strike early in the year. A conference between employers, wharf labourers and coal trimmers was unsuccessful as were negotiations under the auspices of the Sydney MLC in early March. In a long conference a week later friction between the wharf labourers' and trimmers' emerged when as all union rules were discussed. In addition to non-union men, issues such as stream work, Sunday and holiday work, tides, shifts, and running up hatches "provoked long and angry discussion" as well as disorderly scenes. The trimmers refused "to give and take a little," although the NWLU refused to work with non-unionists at all. Yet the trimmers' did agree to accept them into the union. The PAWA in Adelaide unilaterally changed wheat loading from day work to a sliding scale by the ton in January 1890 in protest against their wages going to the profits of 'middle-men'. Hourly wages almost halved their earnings compared to the customary tonnage rate, particularly for larger tonnages of cargo. The Stevedoring Co. and shipmasters introduced it under duress, but it pushed up costs. The issue went to conciliation and was settled at a higher wage rate. The Pt Pirie men went out on strike over non-union labour in March and then for the 8 hour day in June. In March, the feeling of the men was to "hold out to the bitter end" and favoured a general strike across the port. Ironically, it was reported that most "speakers [at the union meeting] favoured the men striking till an amicable settlement was arrived at." Even sea-going unions, such as the stewards and cooks in January and again in July, and the seamen and marine engineers – claimed higher wages or shorter hours. In short, the events of early 1890 merely reinforced the employers' concerns over labour issues.

The general employers' union held a conference in February 1890 to discuss the SWLU situation. Chaired by W. Meeks from the Gibbs, Bright shipping agency it received correspondence from employers' unions in Victoria, SA and Queensland and the Qld Pastoral Employers' Association, all links that were established at the intercolonial conference in Melbourne a few months earlier. Employers continued to view the waterfront with disquiet over the next four months. On Friday 20 June more than 200 employers met to reject the SWLU rules and reaffirmed support for the shipowners in maintaining existing wage rates, working time and employment of constant men under 'freedom of contract' for a 12 month agreement.
The shipowners were anxious to avoid a strike, scheduled to begin Monday 30 June. Three days earlier conciliation discussions organised through informal contact between McKillop and John See, a politician and shipowner, brought a quick result. They arrived at a bargain on 27 June in which the employers would accept the 8 hour system, increase the wage rate for constant men and let them join the union, and in return, the union agreed to no additional wage claims and a no strike clause for a twelve month agreement. The union had given up most of the smoke-oh claims but gained earnings rises due to the 8 hour rule. Newspapers remarked that a major strike had been avoided, and the MLC and TLC congratulated the union on its victory. Over the next few weeks the constant men were accepted into the union.

However, the issue of contractors soon flared again. Union SSCo agent T. Napier had taken a stevedoring contract that effectively halved manning. Wharf labourers believed it to be the 'sweating system' and walked off three vessels. A special union meeting on 'middle-men' was held on 16 July at which the Byrnes resolution banned men working for any contractor on intercolonial vessels, although a further resolution excluded contracts signed before 1 July. The following day a further meeting rescinded the Byrnes resolution and thus created some dissension. A further meeting on 18 July attracted 800 men. In a heated discussion an attempt to reinstate the Byrnes resolution was lost 65 to "about 500." McKillop warned the men to be careful not cause strife and damage the position of the seamen, given the legal opinion of the stevedores contracts and their recent gains. In this context, the sparks for the ensuing strike came from outside the waterfront but fell on highly volatile feeling on the Sydney wharves. Three sparks came from, the seamen, officers and shearers in August and the wharf labourers were eager to participate. They were unmindful of the deteriorating economy, particularly rising unemployment.

The seamen claimed the 8 hour day in 1890. In negotiations in July and August the Sydney companies said they could not afford it. SOAA secretary John Ferguson indicated that a downturn in trade had cut the market value of the companies and dividends to less than half the interest rate. The Mercantile Marine Officers' Association, reformed in October 1889, affiliated with the Melbourne THC in March and the Sydney TLC. This provoked the ire of the shipowners. The shearers' industrial strike came to a head in mid-1890 and the pastoralists soon employed non-union labour. The first approach to the SWLU was in May, when £50 was donated to shearers in Mildura.

The three issues converged in August. Shearer's Union William Spence had been attempting to gain maritime support for banning non-union wool for some time. He suggested a conference with maritime unions and Sullivan strongly supported a ban. Spence secured the personal support of McKillop and then the SWLU carried the resolution on 6 August. It was the same day seamen had refused to sail the 'Corinna' after a fireman was discharged. Wharf labourers supported the seamen in refusing to discharge the "S.S. Helen Nichol" as it was manned by non-union crew. The VSOA and SOAA strongly opposed the Marine Officers' affiliation with the labour peak bodies but offered to discuss their grievances on condition they disaffiliated. The shipowners also organised an opposition 'union' – the Mercantile Marine Services Association. But the officers' declined the offer, set the shipowners a deadline of 15 August for them to offer 'concessions' and resolved to boycott vessels loaded with non-union wool on 18 August. The Sydney and Brisbane wharf labourers, seamen stewards and cooks and others supported this action. Even in Pt
Adelaide the inactive SA Shipmasters' and Officers Association urged members join the Marine Officers'. They affiliated with the Melbourne branch and were therefore associated with the THC. Spence had been instrumental in organising a great deal of this action over the preceding months. He attended SWLU meetings in mid-August to thank the labourers for their "generous resolution of support." Intriguingly, McKillop then resigned as President, but soon withdrew it.

The preparations by the employers were to have a large impact on wharf labourers. By mid-1890 the employers had a Bond of Alliance, the Defence Society and core of a free labour force in place. In anticipation of trouble in handling non-union wool on the wharves, several wool stores employed constant men two weeks before the settlement of the SWLU rules at the end of June. Indeed, the union had not seriously considered the notices placed on wool store wharves during June – by Flood & Co on 16 June, Talbot & Co., Alfred Lamb & Co., and Dalgety's – offering constant work at 44s. for a 48 hour week. When the union did consider them, in mid-August, they were seen as a "defiant attitude" by employers over non-union wool. McKillop remarked that he had 'heard' Dalgety's had employed constant men. By this stage it was too late.

The Marine Officers' deadline for a counter offer from the shipowners expired on the 15 August without reply, and they went out on Saturday 16 August – and sparked the 1890 strike. The seamen followed and then the wharf labourers went out in support three days later on 19 August, a day after Spence had addressed them. Resentment was in the air. The employers wasted little time and reposted the June circular calling for free labour. Thus when the men went out the shipowners easily found substitute labour, in addition to the non-union constant men that the wool stevedores had already employed. The union appeared blind to this state of affairs. It had postponed a consideration of the plight of unionists already in distress on 13 August and coal lumpers' secretary Herbert warned them on the 18 August that the SOAA had offered £50 to a boarding house keeper to crew the 'Corinna' ten days earlier. Wharf labourers and coal workers in Newcastle, Melbourne, Brisbane and several Queensland ports, Pt Augusta and other ports banned non-union wool and went on strike over the next four weeks. The strike concluded on 5 November when the Sydney union urged a return to work, other unions going back at various times.

The course of the strike indicated the relative position of the parties. The shipowners consolidated their position as the SOAA and VSOA worked closely together after July. The SOAA reported 107 meeting in the year from 1 July 1890, many of which ensured close cooperation with other bodies. The SOAA worked closely with the Pastoralists' Union through their common secretary John Ferguson. He played a key role in the formation of this Union in NSW and coordinating policies on the waterfront between different employers. The key role of the shipowners' secretariats in several colonies should not be underestimated and, as I have shown, was built on several years of experience. The employers were spurred on to form the Employer's Defence Council in early September and went on to hold an intercolonial employers' conference a week later. Three of its five resolutions covered organisational issues – a call for more employers' unions, more affiliation and confederation between them. These initiatives strengthened the
employers determination to deal with labour issues on their terms across a number of industries. Yet it appears that the shipowners were keen to avoid disputation.

The shipowners had been keen to avoid a strike on the waterfront in June and they even made a counter offer to the seamen's claims in July. The SOAA and VSOA agreed a pay rise for marine officers' was in order, but the Victorian shipowners firstly recognised and then resisted their THC affiliation. Indeed Burns said the SOAA was unaware of their affiliation, and did not initially insist on disaffiliation. It seems the Victorian owners sparked (as the Adelaide ones three years earlier) the general change in attitude of shipowners in July and August, over the issue of industrial authority. Burns recounted his surprise when he saw tailors and iron moulders, who "did not bear the appearance of officers" represent the officers in conference.

Labour organisation by the Sydney TLC - the Labour Defence Committee- and the Finance and Control Committee in Melbourne could do little to affect the position of labour. Too many unions were involved, they were too dispersed and had too many local interests. They faced a more organised and focused opposition, who soon became less attracted to conciliation. Thus offers for negotiation received a cool reception. The Sydney seamen offered to negotiate a settlement after less than two weeks, and the Melbourne THC attempted to broker an resumption of work in September in which matters would be referred to a joint conciliation board. Employers' Unions in Sydney and Melbourne both claimed a need to consult with other bodies rather than negotiate.

Three weeks into the strike and it is not surprising that, as Rickard points out, the employers' Intercolonial Conference, and the press, began to proclaim victory. In respect of the waterfront, shipowners were already pleased with the success of a Labour Bureau opened at the end of August. There is no evidence to show that the employers had any long term plan. But between 19 August when the Sydney men went out and 27 August, the SOAA developed a plan for the central registration, engagement and allocation of labour to employers, and a method of funding the administrative costs of a manager via a levy on wages. This action was triggered by an escalation of the strike on the waterfront on 22 August. The SWLU abandoned its exemptions for the Union SSCo, Ellis & Co and perishable cargoes, when a non-union crew was found on a fruit boat. Melbourne and Sydney shipowners and pastoralists met in Albury and adopted a united stand to isolate recalcitrant companies and employ free labour. Advertisements for registration at a labour bureau appeared on 27 August and signalled the end of any chance the wharf labourers had of success. Unemployment had been growing Sydney and other colonies through 1889 and 1890, and hundreds of workers had rallied in a call for a government labour bureau. Thus the shipowners' Sydney Labour Bureau had a ready labour pool. And the same was the case in the other colonies. SWLU attempts to entice the unemployed away from the wharves with offers of accommodation and meals was not successful. The strike pay for the striking unionists could not be sustained.

The labour bureau allowed the employers to exert organised authority over the shape of informal relations. It displaced the union as the institution of shaping labour supply and engagement in the industry through an administrative mechanism which enforced 'freedom of contract'. The bureau formalised engagement which was previously dispersed under labour market rules. The weight of unemployment and the supply of free labour, eventually outweighed the resources of the SWLU and its members, as it did for other unions.
The strike came to an end for wharf labourers as many entered the free labour bureau or drifted away from the union. The seamen went back under the old conditions, the marine officers withdrew their affiliation with the Melbourne THC and the intention to join the Sydney TLC. Significant damage had been done to waterfront unionism in the major ports of Sydney and Melbourne for the next decade, less so in other ports.

**VI. Summary and Conclusions**

In this chapter I have argued that the expansion of the shipping industry from the 1850s provided both the material conditions for the development of informalism and its demise of its dominance at the end of the 1880s. Social and industrial recognition emerged when workers became continuously attached to the labour market and resided in waterfront communities. Their patterns of employment – direct contracting with shipmasters and agents, or traditional contractor employment – reflected the importance of informal links. However social recognition was morally tainted as the waterfront 'idlers'. Thus respectability was a central goal of early institutional organisation, the benefit societies.

The industrial relations of informalism centred on wages and hours. Set by customary norms, their transgression triggered resentment and appeal to authorities or a test of strength. Industrial strength was primarily based on workgroup solidarity, although (informal) temporary combination in the labour market or other workplaces occurred. The understanding and techniques of collective bargaining hardly existed. Formal worker organisation was weak. Few disputes covered working methods. Similarly employer organisation was weak and still resembled commercial rather than industrial organisation.

By the mid-1880s the material conditions of shipping and stevedoring significantly changed the operation of informalism. The emergence of modern unions and legal recognition in 1880s saw the spread of formal organisation. While this provided a conducive environment for the strengthening of work control, it also created a division between union officials and the rank and file. The collective organisation of shipowners also adopted more formal character, centred on industrial matters. The employers adopted the formal mechanisms of conferences – that is, negotiation and bargaining – and voluntary arbitration. However, the organisational discipline inherent in formal systems was undeveloped, particularly for unions. Constant pressures on work conditions, methods, labour intensity and authority for economic efficiency from employers precipitated what employers' regarded as unlimited union claims. The expansion of the arena of negotiation, correspondingly weakened the role of custom. In other words, economic dynamics broke the cast of custom and created modern industrial relations.

Yet it was not a clear path, each of the parties searched for new ways of dealing with pressures and demands. For shipping and stevedoring, 1884 marked a key turning point of the employers view of unions and the mechanisms of setting wages and conditions. Unions and workers were more cautious. Peak bodies were more willing to establish mechanism for a measure of joint regulation, but individual unions were either sceptical and/or unable to deliver compliance. Work group solidarism was the basis of union organisation but it was a solidarism less and less
checked by custom. The Pt Pirie men and the Newcastle labourers and trimmers for example maintained the 'fight to end' policy of informalism in 1890.

Deep seated frustration of employers over the 'labour question' was evident before 1889. A similar frustration simmered amongst the rank and file – over the issues of labour intensity/working conditions and contractors/authority – fuelling a "guerilla mode of warfare." Although the shipowners were circumspect over industrial conflict through 1889 to July 1890, they had carefully built links with other employer unions. In both the maritime and pastoral industries the key issue of the exercise of industrial authority precipitated bitter strikes. Ironically it was the degradation of officers' pay and conditions that sparked the conflict, and released lockouts. The 1890 strike quickly exposed the fragility of union organisation – ports unions remained locked into one port – and the strength of employer organisation – which was enhanced through late August and September.

The shipowners, through superior organisational capacities, were able to create a new institutional structure outside the labour process that had direct impact in the workplace. The shift in command over this aspect of the shipping production process had significant effects on the authority of the union, and work control of direct workers. It cast informal relations aside as employers asserted their authority. Work control was thereby converted into the 'frontier of control' central to the real subsumption of the labour process and the 'new' industrial relations. Yet fifteen years after the strike, informal norms still pervaded the workplace. The NSW Industrial Court recognised the strength of informalist relations when it stated,

There are between the Respondents [ie employers] and the many members of the Claimant Union [SWLU] understandings, not amounting to legal contracts, no doubt, but fully recognised and acted on by both parties, that the men will attend regularly and constantly at certain wharves they shall be given priority [sic] of employment.

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2 John Green (b.1836) apparently had 'ideas above his station', was studious when young and his illiterate father was a rope maker and twine spinner. John Green left Britain as a ships' steward in 1861, but spent about 20 years in India, apparently in work connected with the Calcutta Times. Returning to Liverpool he sought work on the waterfront, eventually becoming a sailmaker. On the problem of casual labour on the British docks in the 1850s see Henry Mayhew, London Labour and the London Poor, 4 vols (Frank Cass, London, 1961 facsimile edition).

3 "Spaces' refers to fractures or cracks in the social fabric, where opportunities develop for different variants of social and cultural patterns, rather than alternative types of patterns.

4 Eg. the foreman is not swayed by the authority of his boss he tells the "paper-collar gentleman" to turn up the next and succeeding mornings but will not have a suitable job. If the foreman is swayed by the authority of his superior and gives him a job, the next barrier is triggered - he gives him a job that the "boss imagines he knows least about" - usually in the hold but will not have the tools, (hook, needle or knife) for the work. If he does he will not know how to use them or will be given the hardest work, or something will be dropped "accidently on purpose", and so on. Green attributed these practices and attitudes to a loss of "humanity" amongst the dock labourers, Green, A Dock Labourer in the 1880's, pp.425–26.


6 A key aspect was the spread of the rule of law, which partly replaced state patronage in the protection of the labouring classes, see E. P. Thompson, Whigs and Hunters: The Origin of the Black Act, (Allen Lane, London, 1975) for Britain and David Neal, The Rule of law in a Penal Colony (Cambridge University Press, Melbourne, 1991) for Australia.


8 Although later, Ship Painters & Dockers' secretary Robert Mahoney reported that many of his members were also in the SWLU (about 20), SUA ('some'), the Iron Workers Assistants' Union (about 20–30), as employers used casual labour, and even house painters, NSW Court of Arbitration, Transcripts Vol 2, 1905, pp.597–8, NSW Archives, Industrial Commission, File 2/359.

10 The Queensland Census reported approximately two-thirds of those placing themselves in maritime occupations were in the seafarer category—disaggregated by rank—master mariners, able seamen and then seafarers which included ordinary seamen, wharf labourers and other.

11 Eg., advertisements such as, "Ship Fiery Star from London, Lighters from the above vessel are now daily DISCHARGING at the Wharf of the undersigned," J. & G. Harris, Brisbane Courier, 3 Jan 1865, were common in all daily newspapers of the period.

12 Wharf storemen was a large category in several ports where wool was handled in significant quantities (and so had wool stores). This category was not recorded separately in the Census. Although such storemen were not seafarers as such, they often performed casual waterside work and in the period after the First World War, hundreds joined the WWF.

13 Evidence of Ramsay McKillop, Minutes of Evidence, RC on Strikes (1891), Qs.745,746, p.28

14 Reported by TLC se. Aiken, Sydney Morning Herald, 7 Oct 1875; Evidence of George Herbert, Qs.259-260, and Ramsay McKillop, Qs.745-749, Minutes of Evidence, RC on Strikes (1891), pp.8,23 respectively; Bruce Staces, "Gender Household and Community Politics: The 1890 Maritime Strike in Australia and New Zealand", in R. Fraazes and B. Scates (eds), Women, Work and the Labour Movement (Aust. Soc. for the Study of Lab. Hist., Sydney, 1991) p.72 puts the figures at 8-10% in the suburbs and 2 to 4% more in the inner city, including the waterfront areas.

15 Sydney Morning Herald, 12 May 1884

16 Eg. NSW Court of Arbitration, Transcripts Vol 2, 1905, pp.556,591-2,595,608,637, NSW Archives, Industrial Commission, File 2/59

17 Evidence of George Herbert, Q.261, Minutes of Evidence, RC on Strikes (1891), p.8


Queensland Electoral Rolls, Brisbane North and Brisbane South electoral districts 13 Dec 1894, 5 April 1895, 11 Oct 1895 (the latter two were additional lists) 23 Nov 1894, 22 April 1895, 11 July 1895, 14 Oct 1895 (the latter three were additional lists) Queensland Archives.

Wapping/Old wharf areas in Hobart had developed the moral taint that characterised the waterfront and maritime employment through the period under discussion here. The urban decay of waterfront housing was evident from the 1830s when the effects of capitalist urban patterns became entrenched, see Wapping History Group, Down Wapping: Hobart's vanished Wapping and Old Wharf districts, (Blubber Head, Hobart, 1988) pp.54-55

Wapping History Group, Down Wapping, p.63; cf. Stedman Jones, Outcast London, estimated that maritime employment was 25% of all employment in the mid-1800s in London.

19 Kerr and Siegel, "The later—Industry Propensitt to Strike", pp.194-196

20 see evidence of Andrew Lenczner, Minutes of Evidence, RC on Strikes (1891), p.194, Q.5142 For how long would this rate of pay average 31. a week? About seven months. Q.5143 And for the other five months, how then? Wages may run down to 25s. and 30s., but many of the men are earning a good deal more. Many of the men who are employed on the wharves in the summer go afloat in the coastal trade in the winter-time. 5144 Mr Trouton.] Do they go shearing? I do not know. All I can say is, they go away from Sydney and we do not see many of them till the wool comes down next season.

21 Evidence of McKillop, Qs.611, 627, Minutes of Evidence, RC on Strikes (1891), pp.19,20

22 Evidence of Doyle, Minutes of Evidence, RC on Strikes (1891), Q.2994, p.107

23 based on a survey of union rules between 1881 and 1910 for SWLI, NWLU, NGWLA, NCTFU, NCTFU, Industrial Commission, NSW Archives, Box 10/42128, T.U.File 11; Box 10/42126, T.U.File 182; Box 10/42119, T.U.File 21; Box 10/42118, T.U.File 10; Box 10/42127, T.U.File 183 respectively.

24 No. 76 of 1905, NSW Court of Arbitration Transcripts, Vol 2, 1905, NSW Archives, Industrial Commission, File 2/59. Unfortunately no earlier transcripts (than August 1905) have survived. This transcript is also incomplete. This fact and the selective nature of witnesses means this evidence is only illustrative.

25 Evidence of Ramsay McKillop, Minutes of Evidence, RC on Strikes (1891), Q.970, p.31

26 The Age, 13 Feb and 14 Feb 1883. The coalheavers were on strike for the 8-hour day. These workers became the coalworkers section of the Melbourne branch of the WWF.

27 Evidence of Thomas, Transcript, NSW Court of Arbitration, Vol 4, 1905, p.1066, NSW Archives, Ind. Com. File 2/60

28 Evidence of George Herbert, Minutes of Evidence, RC on Strikes (1891), Qs.382,384, p. 12

29 Sydney Morning Herald, 23 Sept 1875, reference to strike over use of boys—union succeeded in prohibiting boys doing manual work.

30 Newcastle Morning Herald and Miners Advocate, 30 Jul 1879

31 "[A]ll the present movement on the wharves, ..., is being carried on almost entirely by means of free labour," 1. to Editor, J. Ferguson (Secretary, Pastoralists' Union, & SSOA), Sydney Morning Herald, 5 Jan 1931

32 C. Hurley statement at a public meeting in Hyde Park 28 Sept 1875, Sydney Morning Herald, 29 Sept 1875; E. I. Aiken (sec. Labor Council) said average was 3 to 3 1/2 days a week, Sydney Morning Herald, 7 Oct 1975

33 Herbert stated that if he were in charge of labour supply in Sydney he would prefer 400 men as a maximum, although they would not get a "decent living", Minutes of Evidence, RC on Strikes (1891), Qs.420-427, p.13

34 Evidence of McKillop, Minutes of Evidence, RC on Strikes (1891), Qs.833-838, p.26

35 PAWA rules specified that weekly men be paid £2 2s. (about 4 days at 12s. a day) in 1882. The SA Stevedoring Co could only offer 60-70 men out of 240 (ie about 25%) it employed weekly employment, see Editorial, The Advertiser, 21 Nov 1882 [MO]

36 Statement to the NSW Court of Arbitration, Transcripts Vol 2, 1905, p.814, NSW Archives, Industrial Commission, File 2/59

37 This was reported as the Sydney Labouring Men's Association, on the night of the 29 Sept, in connection with the campaign to gain the eight-hour day, Sydney Morning Herald, 30 Sept 1875. The following day an "open air meeting" by the Association on the "labour question" attracted attendance of 2000 to 3000. The East season worked the overseas trade around Circular Quay (the Labouring Men's Union) and the West the intercolonial, coastal and local trades and associated work around Darling Harbour.

38 350 reported joined and 1,000 expected to, Newcastle Morning Herald 16 Jan 1879

39 Figures for Sydney, Sydney Morning Herald, 19 Sept 1972; for Brisbane, Brisbane Courier, 5 July 1869, and The Queenslander, 10 July, 1869

40 Sandbridge quoted in Lockwood, Ship to Shore, p.74

41 The Argus, 1 Jan 1886, reports that 870 men were thrown out of employment by a strike.

42 The Advertiser, 10 Sept 1874; 7 Sept 1876; 6 Sept 1877; 16 June 1878 [MO]

43 Barnes notes that, prior to WW1 New York waterfront workers (and wives) often sought to conceal their occupation, preferring to describe themselves in Census returns as labourers or shipping clerks, due to the social association with drinking, shiftlessness and so on, idem, The Longshoremen (1915), p.18

Minutes of Evidence, *RSCWC*, 1860, Q.333, p.16 [emphasis added], see also evidence of Nathaniel Pigeon (missionary) Qs.430, Walter Windersey (assistant city treasurer), Qs. 557,565, Isaac Aaron (medical practitioner), Qs. 693-5, and Malcolm Campbell (tweed manufacturer), Q.2440 for similar views.

1. Munro (QSSCo) to Dawes (sec P&O), 23 June 1868, James Munro Correspondence, *McKellar Collection*, ML MSS 4548/Box 159

Evidence of Dr Isaac Aaron, Minutes of Evidence, *RSCWC*, 1860, Q.654, p.34 [emphasis added]


Evidence of James Burns, Minutes of Evidence, *RC on Strikes* (1891), Qs.5656,5658, p.207 Q.5594, p.211. The salary of a ship's captain was approximately five times that of a seaman.

54 Evidence of James Burns, Minutes of Evidence, *RC on Strikes* (1891), Q.5690, p.214

55 Evidence of James Burns, Minutes of Evidence, *RC on Strikes* (1891), Qs.5595, 5596, p.211, Qs.5502,5604, p.212

Evidence of Raymond McKillop, Minutes of Evidence, *RC on Strikes* (1891), Q.695, p.21 [emphasis added]


59 Evidence of Rowland Bradley, Marine Officers' Association, Minutes of Evidence, *RC on Strikes*, (1891), pp.266-277

60 Evidence of John Armstrong, official of Stewards' and Cooks' Union, Minutes of Evidence, *RC on Strikes* (1891), Qs.6620, p.254

61 "Examination of Masters, Mates and Engineers of Steam Vessels" pt.1 item 32, *Vicotorian Government Gazette*, 3 Aug 1865, quoted in Shorten, "To take a star...: Australian Colonial Statutory Qualifications" p.26

62 A cursory view of the shipping columns in the daily papers of any port during this period and it will be seen that overseas shipmasters still had responsibility for freight and passage, e.g. *"For London – For the February Sales – ..." The new AAI Clipper Ship FRANCIS THORPE – 1297 tons register, Henry Buck Commander, having over 1000 tons cargo partly on board, the remainder being ready for shipment, will have unusual dispatch.* – For freight or passage apply to Captain Buck, on board, or MASON, BROTHERS, Agents; or B. P. CAMPBELL, Brokers. – Wool received at Talbot and Co. In the case of overseas vessels, such as in this example, the dispersion of authority was more evident than in the case of coastal shipping.

63 Armstrong estimated them at £3 per trip on the coast in the early 1870s but fell to 3½ a decade or so later, evidence of John Armstrong (Stewards & Cooks Union), Minutes of Evidence, *RC on Strikes* (1891), Qs.6587,6588, p.253, Qs.6640-6643, p.255

64 *Rules and Regulations, A.S.N. Co.*, [c.1868], Rules No 57,58 pp.17-18, *Trouton Papers*, ML Uncat. MSS Set 205. The company listed 20 commanders and 20 chief officers by seniority (pp.4-5)

65 Evidence of William Wills, Minutes of Evidence, *RC on Strikes*, (1891), Q.6769, p.259

66 eg local sole operator Capt Harley, was denied cargo in Sydney for Rockhampton as ASNCo continually undercut his freight rates and "would take the goods for nothing rather than he should have them," Rockhampton *Bulletin*, 8 June 1869, reproduced in *The Queenslander*, 19 June 1869

67 Chairman's Minute Book, meeting 31 July 1885, p.56, [emphasis added], *Howard Smith Limited Records*, ML MSS 3565/2X. Here water transport lagged behind land transport. Railway engineers and firemen [seen as career positions] received bonuses for efficient and safe operation of locomotives as early as 1861. Railways had developed a more integrated control-system than shipping before 1900, see Greg Patmore, "Labour history and labour process: the New South Wales railways before 1878", *Australian Historical Studies*, Vol 23 No 93, 1989, pp.431ff

68 Eg, under ASNCo Rules Chief Officers held responsibility for the "correct delivery of all cargo", it covered only administrative functions, this *Rules and Regulations, A.S.N. Co.*, [c.1868], Rule 49, p.15 *Trouton Papers*, ML Uncat. MSS Set 205


70 eg on the Pimsoll line, editorial, 3094 British vessels lost 1873-4, more than 6000 lives lost, *Sydney Morning Herald*, 18 Sept, 10 Oct 1875, Employer submission to a Select Committee on alleged shipping abuses, SOAA, *Second Annual Report*, 29 Aug 1868, p.3, *McKellar Collection*, ML MSS 4548/Box 249; deputation of seamen to NSW Colonial Secretary re overloading of vessels, *The Age*, 2 Feb 1886

71 *Rules and Regulations, A.S.N. Co.*, [c.1868], Rule 8, p.5 [emphasis added], *Trouton Papers*, ML Uncat. MSS Set 205

72 Quotations from James Burns, Minutes of Evidence, *RC on Strikes*, 1891, Q.5465 [emphasis added], Q.5468, p.207

73 1. Dunn, M.P. (guest at Pt Adelaide Workingmen's Association dinner) *The Advertiser*, 7 Sept 1876 [MQ]

74 see Eric Wright, *Classics*, (Verso, London, 1985)

75 Little, *The Development of the Labour Process*, pp.69-72

76 A well known merchant/shipwrecker was Burns Philip, other merchants eg. Geo. Raff and G. Harris in Brisbane, the Browns in Sydney, Paterson in Melbourne.

77 Such as Dalgetys; Macarthur's (in Brisbane), Bretts (in Brisbane).

78 Rupert Lockwood, *Ship to Shore*, pp.74-75

79 *The Brisbane Courier*, 5 Jul 1869; *The Queenslander*, 10 July 1869

80 *The Advertiser*, 15 Sept 1865 [MQ]

81 *The South Australian Gazette and Colonial Register* 12 Dec 1846 [MQ] mentions co-operative working.

82 *The Advertiser*, 23 Jan, 11 June, 13 Aug 1884 [MQ]. Although initially referred to as the Working-men's Stevedoring Association it raised more than £3,000 in £1 shares, called in at 2½d in May. Its first half yearly meeting was held at the PAWA, the company worked 73 vessels and paid out £5,250 in wages. Its articles of association did not appear to cover co-operative working.

83 see *The Advertiser*, 7 Sept 1876 [MQ]

84 *The Advertiser*, 7 Feb 1890 [MQ]

85 *The Advertiser*, 19 June 1890 [MQ] during a dispute over a claim for the 8 hours day

86 formed 5 Jan 1883, *The Newcastle Morning Herald and Miners Advocate*, 6 Jan 1883

87 *The Newcastle Morning Herald and Miners Advocate*, 6 Jan 1883

Evidence of Angus McDonald, NSW Court of Arbitration Transcripts, Vol 2, 1905,

Historically there was a close association between coalworkers and wharf labourers. As a result I have considered both groups as waterfront workers for the argument here. Coalworkers in Sydney and to an extent Newcastle saw themselves as separate to wharf labourers in the nineteenth century and formed separate societies and unions. This was largely influenced by the significant presence of coal–companies and coal merchants in those ports and the scale of the coal trade. These ports were at the centre of the Australian coal trade and the export trade. In contrast, coalworkers in Albany, Melbourne, Hobart and several smaller ports were more closely linked to wharf labourers. In these ports coal loading for steamships was the major part of the industry, rather than the export or transshipment of coal. In these ports where the coal trade was more marginal coalworkers became sections or branches of the Waterside Workers Federation. So did the Newcastle coaltrimmers. Brisbane was an anomaly, in that coalworkers were initially associated with wharf labourers, but broke with them and formed a separate union in 1907. They eventually amalgamated with the WWF during World War II. The Sydney Coal Workers Union continues to exist to this day, with only a few dozen members.

Evidence of G. Herbert, Minutes of Evidence, RCon Strikes (1891), Q.662, p.21

Minutes of Evidence, RCon Strikes (1891), Q.1005, p.32

The Age 13 Feb 1883, in a story of a strike in support of a demand for the 8 hour day, reported that 140 men were on strike. Assuming a level of continuous oversupply of approximately 30 to 50 percent (which were typical of casual industries discussed earlier in the chapter) it would mean that 180 to 210 men were attached to the industry at any given time.

The Newcastle Morning Herald and Miners Advocate, 13 Aug, 20 Aug, 22 Aug 1883 reported that 150 men attended a meeting for the purpose of forming an association and 200 attended its third meeting and 250 in a meeting a few days later. Using the 30 to 50 percent addition factor, the number of men in the port would have ranged between 200 to 375. This was likely to be less than 300 some years before 1885.


The trade was involved in three main areas of work; transshipping coal, usually from Newcastle, for export overseas or to Victoria; discharging coal for the latter or local domestic use in Sydney, although this was increasingly a smaller part of their work; and the coaling of steamships in the various trades. Much of the work was undertaken while vessels where anchored in the harbour.

Evidence of Angus McDonald, NSW Court of Arbitration Transcripts, Vol 2, 1905, NSW Archives, Industrial Commission, File 2/59, p.692 [emphasis added]. By this time there were almost 900 men in the coalworkers union.

Evidence of Angus McDonald of the SCWU, NSW Court of Arbitration Transcripts, Vol 2, 1905, NSW Archives, Industrial Commission, File 2/59, pp.691–693. The 'baskets' were actually tubs that were limited by law in size but not weight; for Melbourne see The Age, 14 Feb 1883

Evidence of Howell (Howard Smith Sydney manager, over 30 years experience), NSW Court of Arbitration, Transcripts, Vol 2, 1905, NSW Archives, Industrial Commission, File 2/59, p.822 [emphasis added]

EG. in 1872 the coal trading was 72% of its plant & equipment capital in ships, or 68% of all company assets... Most non-ship assets were in ship maintenance and engineering plant or capital investments, see Half Yearly Report of Proprietors to 30 June, Sydney Morning Herald 31 July 1872; corresponding figures for the local Hunter River New Steam Navigation Co., in 1875, were 88% and 73%.

EG. (1891), Qs.282-285, p.9

EG. (1891), Q.1005, p.32

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Ironically this is a widespread claim for so-called 'new production systems' at the end of the twentieth century. The management of labour, and its disciplinary processes, discipined and lawfully, the production process itself required coordination and standardisation. Thus the development of standardisation and rules and regulations. The Newcastle Morning Herald and Miners Advocate, 22 Nov 1882.

Fair Play', Bullock Island, in The Newcastle Morning Herald and Miners Advocate, 13 Dec 1879. The largest of the stevedoring contractors was Mr. Russell, who employed a foreman named Mr Ferguson, The Newcastle Morning Herald and Miners Advocate, 15 Dec 1879. Yet this man had been in the port since the 1850s and had built up a close relation with the regular men.

For Sydney, see McKillop, Minutes of Evidence, RC on Strikes, (1891), Q.763, p.24, "... the stevedores are Messrs. Flood--they are purely and simply deep-sea stevedores-- Talbot, Alfred Lamb & Co., and Dalgety are practically stevedores; and then there are more who get work direct from the agent, such as Messrs. Chesters, Brown, Keane, Moran, and Louch..."; in Newcastle, James Russell was a stevedore and had been in the port since 1855, Samuel Royl, foreman at the Great Northern Wool Dumping and Shipping Co., Messrs. Cheek, Braddon and Mr. Murrell of Huddart & Parker Co., The Newcastle Morning Herald and Miners Advocate, 24, Sept 1885.

Evidence of Frances Thomas, General Manager NHRSSCo. Ltd., previously HR New SS Co., Minutes of Evidence, NSW Court of Arbitration, Transcript, Vol 2, 1905, pp.431-432. The railway industry presents a unique example the experiences of Capt. James Gaby who through Ulness was forced to seek work on the Sydney waterfront as a foreman in the 1880s, Gaby, The Restless Waterfront.

Casual Labour, pp.22ff; LoveU, The Restless Waterfront.

On the occasion of the fourth anniversary of the Workingmen's Association, it was reported that men "in constant situations and who could not obtain the desired liberty, refrained from work, and [in] despite this the day was observed by them as a general holiday" (emphasis added) The South Australian Advertiser, 7 Sept 1876 [MQ].

AUSNCs employed about 50 constant men in the 1880s, evidence of John Doyle (wharfinger at the Company), Minutes of Evidence, RC on Strikes, (1891), Qs.2885,2926, pp.103,104.

Evidence of John Doyle, Minutes of Evidence, RC on Strikes, (1891), Q.2942, p.105.


On the occasion of the fourth anniversary of the Workingmen's Association, it was reported that men "in constant situations and who could not obtain the desired liberty, refrained from work, and [in] despite this the day was observed by them as a general holiday" (emphasis added) The South Australian Advertiser, 7 Sept 1876 [MQ]. The largest of the stevedoring companies sub-contracted stevedoring services to agents. In fact agents performed two services for these companies; first, the administration of cargo and documentation, second, operational stevedoring. It was the latter that they then further contracted out in one form or another.

This was the case in the UK, where in the period 1860 to the first world war, master stevedores often were closer to dockers than the larger employer, see, Phillips and Whitelock, General Labour, pp.228, Lowell, Stevedores and Dockers, pp.30ff.

On the common and law social ranking of virtually all types of waterfront operational work including supervisors, in Australia, see for example the experiences of Capt. James Gaby who through illness was forced to seek work on the Sydney waterfront as a foreman in the 1920s, Gaby, The Restless Waterfront.


See evidence of McKillop, Minutes of Evidence, RC on Strikes, (1891), Q.1101, p.36, "... in the intercolonial trade the wharfinger employs the men, and the company pays them, except with the South Australian Company [Adelaide S.S. Co.], where they employ a stevedore;" Q.1103, p.4 he notes that the Union S.S. Co. of New Zealand also uses a stevedore.

Evidence of Andrew Lenahan, Sydney stevedore employer, Minutes of Evidence, RC on Strikes, (1891), Q.5040, pp.190-191

The Newcastle Morning Herald and Miners Advocate, 30 July 1879

121 Described in these terms by M. Croft of the Newcastle Wharf Labourers' Union, NSW Court of Arbitration, Transcripts, Vol 3, 1906, NSW Archives, Industrial Commission File 2/85, p.9

122 Minutes of Evidence, RC on Strikes, (1891). Qs.726-730,1136-1139, pp.23,36-37, quotation from Q.730. McKillop believed "wool could be dumped cheaper, and just as well" and wharf labourers agreed to submit a proposal to the Intercolonial Steamship Association for consideration, Q.765, p.24

123 The Advertiser, 22 Sept 1865 [MQ].

124 The Advertiser, 7 Sept 1876 [MQ].

125 The Advertiser, 9 Sept 1875 [emphasis added] [MQ].

126 It was not surprising to see that petty stevedores agreed to pay the union wage demands, with little acrimony, The Newcastle Morning Herald and Miners Advocate, 22 Nov 1882.

127 On the common and law social ranking of virtually all types of waterfront operational work including supervisors, in Australia, see for example the experiences of Capt. James Gaby who through illness was forced to seek work on the Sydney waterfront as a foreman in the 1920s, Gaby, The Restless Waterfront.

128 On the occasion of the fourth anniversary of the Workingmen's Association, it was reported that men "in constant situations and who could not obtain the desired liberty, refrained from work, and [in] despite this the day was observed by them as a general holiday" (emphasis added) The South Australian Advertiser, 7 Sept 1876 [MQ].
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Evidence of Andrew Lenehan, stevedore, Minutes of Evidence, *RC on Strikes* (1891), Q.5103, p.193

The *Advertiser*, 10 Sept 1874 [emphasis added] [MQ]. This key point is missed by those searching for 'leaders' of unions and working class organisations, rather than examining the nature of organisation before 1900.

The *Advertiser*, 10 Sept 1874 [emphasis added] [MQ]. This key point is missed by those searching for 'leaders' of unions and working class organisations, rather than examining the nature of organisation before 1900.

The *Newcastle Morning Herald and Miners' Advocate*, 24 Aug 1888

The Advertiser, 7 Aug 1875; see Schneider and Siegal, *Industrial Relations in the Pacific Coast Longshore Industry*, pp.4–6. In New York the earliest association, the Alongsiders' Union Benefit Society was seen in 1854, granted a charter by legislation in 1864 as the Alongsiders' Union Protective Assn. By the mid–1870s there were 'unions' in Brooklyn, Jersey City and Hoboken, *The Longshoremen*, pp.94–96,255–258.

Meeting of Fri, 2 July 1869, *The Brisbane Courier*, 5 July 1869 [emphasis added]; *The Queenslander*, 10 July 1869

Payment for a doctor and £1 a week allowance in case of accident, *The Advertiser*, 22 Sept 1865 [MQ]

Report of meeting, Oriental Hotel, Tues 17 Sept 1872, *Sydney Morning Herald*, 19 Sept 1872 [emphasis added]. While no name was reported for the society, later reports indicate that there were two sections of the Association, the West Sydney section, based around Darling Harbour and the intercolonial trade, and the Labouring Mens' Union of Circular Quay, based on the overseas (or deep-sea) trade.


*Newcastle Morning Herald and Miners' Advocate*, 23 Mar 1882

Lockwood, *Ship to Shore*, p.74. Also reported an early Melbourne "working-men's association had fallen to the ground, [and] that "boss" men and stevedores should not be admitted...", *Sydney Morning Herald* 30 Sept 1875. It is unclear if this is the same organisation.

*The Advertiser*, 27 Feb 1879, 13,15 Feb 1883

*Lockwood, Ship to Shore*, pp.80–81; *The Argus*, 1 Jan 1886

*Newcastle Morning Herald and the Miner's Advocate*, 23 Mar 1882

*Newcastle Morning Herald and Miners' Advocate*, 25 Sept 1894


J. John Ryan (Sec.) and 7 Officers to Registrar 10 Jan 1883, Rule 1, Industrial Commission, TU File 11, *New South Wales Archives* AO Box 10/42118

The Port Phillip Stevedores Eight Hours Association, *Rules*, 1882 and 1883, some of the smaller ports that formed unions over the next decades had similar rules, see WWF, *Federal Industrial Commission*, p.5.

Rule 9, SWLU *Rules*, 1862, Industrial Commission, TU File 11, *New South Wales Archives* AO Box 10/42118


Speech of Reverend Green, annual dinner of the PAWA, Saturday 19 August, *The Advertiser*, 7 Sept 1876 [MQ]


*The Newcastle Morning Herald and Miners Advocate*, 15 Jan 1885

SWLU meeting 14 Jan 1886 reported in *The Newcastle Morning Herald and Miners Advocate*, 18 Jan 1886

*The Newcastle Morning Herald and Miners Advocate*, 15 Jan 1886

*The Newcastle Morning Herald and Miners Advocate*, 28 Jan 1887

*The Newcastle Morning Herald and Miners Advocate* 29 Sept 1885

One contemporary writer noted the prominent support from wharf labourers. J. Norton (ed), *History of Labour*, p.74

The surviving records of the Port Adelaide Association date back to 1872, the *Working Men's Association Register Book* dated 19 August 1872, *Australian and New Zealand Year Book*, 1872–1873. Moreover, it was reported that the second anniversary dinner of the Association was held on 19 August 1874, *The Advertiser*, 10 Sept 1874, is it was (re)formed in 1872.

*The Advertiser*, 7 Nov 1873 [MQ]

*Newcastle Morning Herald and Miners' Advocate*, 21 Oct 1889

At a general meeting, held a week after the initial meeting *The Advertiser*, 15 Sept 1865 [MQ]

*The Advertiser*, 22 Sept 1865 [MQ]

*The Advertiser*, 6 Sept 1877 [MQ]

*The Advertiser*, 22 Sept 1865 [MQ]

*The Advertiser*, 7 Sept 1876 [emphasis added] [MQ]

Rate was taken as 10s. for a 12 hour weekday (6am–6pm) and 10 hour Saturday (6am–4pm), Police Court 15 Feb 1881, *The Advertiser*, 16 Feb 1881 [MQ]

*The Advertiser*, 25,26 Oct 17,18,20,21 Nov 1882 [MQ]. Wages data indicated that "at times" some men earned over £4 a week, a considerable number at £3, but most £2–£3

*The Advertiser*, 25 Oct 1881 [MQ] It was "unfair" to have different rates.

*The Advertiser*, 30 Aug, 27 Sept, 4 Oct 1887 [MQ]

*PAWA, Rules*, 7 Aug 1899 Rule 14 requires members employing wharf labourers to employ only members of the Association.

*The Advertiser*, 4 Aug 1887 [MQ]

*Newcastle Morning Herald and Miners' Advocate*, 13 Dec 1879

*Sydney Morning Herald*, 1,9 Aug 1872.

*Sydney Morning Herald*, 16 Sept 1872


*The Queen'slander*, 10 July 1869; see Coghlan *Labour and Industry in Australia*, 3, pp.1432–1434

Stevedore A. Leathan, Minutes of Evidence, *RC on Strikes* (1891), Q.5093, p.193
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207 Sydney Morning Herald, 19 Nov, Dec 1878; Morpeth strike Sydney Morning Herald and Miners Advocate, 29 Nov 1878

208 see Fitzpatrick and Cahill, The Seamen’s Union of Australia, pp.14-15

209 later listed as Shipowners’ Association of Australasia, see SOAA Fifth Annual Report, Aug 1889, p.1, McKellar Collection, ML MSS 4548/Box 249, lavish Annual Dinners of Merchants, Shipowners reported e.g. Sydney Morning Herald, 13, 18 Aug 1875, where Alexander Stuart was named as chairman of the Shipowners’ Association.

210 Sydney Morning Herald, 28 Oct 1882

211 The SLU registered 10 Jan 1883, Dept of Industrial Relations and Employment (DIRE), NSW Archives A.O. No 10/42118 TU File 11. This was a formality under the new legislation as the union was already in existence.

212 Sydney Morning Herald, 10, 11 Nov 1882

213 Newcastle Morning Herald and Miners Advocate, 15 Nov 1882. The men were Messrs, A. Lamb, Murray, T. Dawson, A. Leeshan, Chester, Moran, and Keene.

214 Newcastle Morning Herald and Miners Advocate, 18 Nov 1882

215 Sydney Morning Herald, 23,24, Nov 1882; Newcastle Morning Herald and Miners Advocate, 25 Nov 1882

216 Sydney Morning Herald, 7 Dec 1882; Newcastle Morning Herald and Miners Advocate, Dec 1882

217 Age, 27 Feb 1879, 13,15,16 Feb 1883

218 Lockwood, Ship to Shore, p.60

219 Age, 18 April 1883

220 Age 13 Feb 1883

221 Price, Masters, Unions and Men, pp.55-79

222 Newcastle Coal Trimmers Provident Union, Rules, No 7, p.15, [emphasis added] TU 10 NSW Archives, A.O.10/42118

223 Evidence of A. Leeshan, Minutes of Evidence, 1882, 1885, 1901, 1902, TU 21

224 Sydney Morning Herald, 7 Oct 1875

225 The Advertiser, 9 Aug 1881

226 Evidence of A. Leeshan, Minutes of Evidence, 1882, 1885, 1901, 1902, TU 21

227 Evidence of John Doyle, Minutes of Evidence, 1882, 1885, 1901, 1902, TU 21

228 Resist seamen, fitters, engineers and white-livered labourers. I. Burns to Philip, 30 May 1884, Philip Papers, OL, Box 2, OM65-32/2 Series 2

229 Quote from ASNO Annual Report, 31 July 1885, McKellar Collection, ML MSS 4548/Box 9. Evidence of A. Leeshan, I. Burns, Minutes of Evidence, 1882, 1885, 1901, 1902, TU 21

230 I. Muir (QSSCo) to Dawes, 15,19,28 May 1886, James Muir Correspondence, McKellar Collection, ML MSS 4548/Box 159

231 I. Muir to Dawes, 30 July 1886, Muir Correspondence, McKellar Collection, ML MSS 4548/Box 159.


233 Burns to Philip, 30 May 1884, Philip Papers, OL, Box 2, OM65-32/2 Series 2

234 Resolutions 7, 11, 10 June, Conference of Steamship Owners, Sydney 10-16 June 1884, pp.4,5, Trouton Papers, LM Uncat. MSS Set 205; also in SOAA Annual Reports and Meetings, 1884-1908, McKellar Collection, ML MSS 4548/Box 249. The ASOA (formed 24 June 1884) was the reformed SOANSW. It was soon called the Steamship Owners Assoc of Australasia (SOAA) with offices in Bond St. Sydney [henceforth referred to as SOAA].

235 Res. 8, 10 June, res 2 & 3, 16 June Conference of Steamship Owners, Sydney 10-16 June 1884, pp.5,13, Trouton Papers, LM Uncat. MSS Set 205

236 Registration of SOAA, 3 Sept 1887, NSW Archives, A.O. Box 10/42122 TU 58

237 The Advertiser, 21 Nov 1882 [MQ]

238 Ferguson’s position was costed at £200 a year after the SOAA was relaunched in 1884, SOAA, Second Annual General Meeting and Report, 31 July 1886, pp.4,5, meeting 16 & 26 Aug. 1886, McKellar Collection, ML MSS 4548/Box 249. Ferguson was also secretary of the Pastorals and was later replaced by A. B. Cobburn, see Minutes of SOA 27 Sept 1893, VSOA, Minutes Book, p.5 ANU/NBA E217/1

239 Evidence of SOAA Chairman James Burns, Minutes of Evidence, 1882, 1885, 1901, 1906, TU 10 A.O. Box 10/42118; also NCTU

240 SOAA, Fifth Annual Report, 19 Aug 1889, pp.3,7, McKellar Collection, ML MSS 4548/Box 249

241 One was reported to exist in 1888, but employers’ files indicate later, see Defence Society of SOOA 1890 Bond of Alliance, McKellar Collection, ML MSS 4548/Box 249

242 Account from Coghlan, Labour and Industry in Australia, 3, p.1433-1434. Problems over funds also occurred in he Newcastle Coal Trimmers, see correspondence Industrial Commission TU 10 NSW Archives, A.O.10/42118

243 SWLU, General Minutes, 8 Jan 1890, p.7 WWF, ANU/NBA Z248/Box 95

244 SWLU Rules, 10 Jan 1883, 7 Jan, 5 May, 30 Oct 1885, 30 Mar 1887, 1 July 1890, 7 May 1901, 25 Sept 1902 quotes from Rule 10, 1902 and Rule 15A, 1904, Industrial Commission, TU File 11 NSW Archives, A.O. 10/42118; also NCTU Rules, 1882,1885,1889,1901,1906, Industrial Commission, NSW Archives; TU 10 A.O. 10/42118 and TU 183 A.O. 10/42127; PPSA Rules, 1882,1883,1893,1903, WWF Federal Office, ANU/NBA Box 52; SWLU Rules, 1883,1885,1901,1902,1907 TU 21 NSW Archives, A.O. Box 10/42119 and TU 182, A.O. Box 10/42126

245 NGWLU Rules, Rule 6, 16 July 1883, Industrial Commission TU 21, NSW Archives A.O. Box 10/42119

246 Newcastle Morning Herald and Miners Advocate, 16 July 1888

247 Parkinson, Trade Union Organisation, pp.86-7 Appendix X, pp.32-34

248 Working Law No 1, SWLU Rules, 1 July 1890, Industrial Commission TU File 11, NSW Archives, A.O. 10/42118

249 Resolution started at £200, SWLU, General Minutes, 30 Aug 1899, p.1, WWF, ANU/NBA Z248/Box 95

250 Newcastle Morning Herald 6 Sept 1889

251 Union leader E. W. O’Sullivan, claimed £31,000 in February, 1890, Centennial Magazine, Feb 1890, p.545, cited in Phillip, Trade Union Organisation, p.192

252 Newcastle, Launceston, Pt Pirie, and Pt Augusta, Sydney Morning Herald, 27,28 Mar 1890

253 SWLU, General Minutes, 16 April, 4 June 1890, pp.41-44,55, WWF, ANU/NBA Z248/Box 95

254 Newcastle Morning Herald and Miners Advocate, 16 April 1890

255 Phillip, Trade Union Organisation, Appendix X, p.35

256 Chapter of Affiliations of TLC of Queensland, compiled by A. Macdonald, QTCL Files, Coll.118/Box 170, Fryer Library, Univ of Qld

257 The Advertiser, 21 Aug 1883 [MQ]

258 The Observer, 15 Oct 1887. quoted in Bowes, The 1890 Maritime Strike, p.27 [emphasis added]. Members were PAWA, Seamen, Coasting Seamen, Stewards and Cooks, and Licensed Carter’s Association (a body of small employers).
Other members were Sall, Tent and Tarpaulin Makers, Shipmasters' and Officers', Pt Pirie Workmen's Association.


SOAA, Second Annual Report, 26 Aug 1886, p.3, *McKellar Collection* ML MSS 4548/Box 249

The Advertiser, 21, 22 Nov 1882 [MQ]. The employers offered to pay out “their interest in the accumulated funds” of the PAWA. Club secretary was a SA Stevedoring Co-employee C. H. Brown. The PAWA responded by warning members not to approach the Club.


“Formation and Failure of the First Board of Conciliation in NSW”, Appendix M(7), *RCon on Strikes*, p.36; SOAA, Second Annual Report, 26 Aug 1886, pp.2,3, *McKellar Collection* ML MSS 4548/Box 249

The Advertiser, 1 Jan 1886

The Advertiser, 4,5 Jan 1886

The Advertiser, 6,7 Jan 1886

The Advertiser, 9,11,12,13 Jan 1886: 90 men from NZ arrived a week after the strike ended. *The Advertiser*, 22 Jan 1886


Terms of the arbitration committee, *The Advertiser* 16 Jan 1886.

The Argus, 23 Jan, 3,4,5,6,9,10 Feb 1886; full award 9 Feb 1886, p.5


SOAA, Fifth Annual Report, 19 Aug 1889, p.6, *McKellar Collection* ML MSS 4548/Box 249

Sydney Morning Herald, 18 Jan 1886

Sept 1886, Fitzpatrick and Cahill, The Seamen’s Union of Australia, pp.15-16; Evidence of J. Burns, Minutes of Evidence, *RC on Strikes* (1891), Q.5323-5333, p.201; Precis of conference, term “arbitrary influence” is used, Appendix M(4a), *RC on Strikes* (1891), p.35


The Advertiser, 11 June 1890 [MQ]


Evidence of AUSNO wharfinger John Doyle, .. Minutes of Evidence, *RC on Strikes* (1891), Q.2924, p.104

Evidence of McKillop, Minutes of Evidence, *RC on Strikes* (1891), Q.753, p.24; Qs.926-943, p.29, quotations from each.


*The Advertiser*, 31 Jan, 10, 23 Feb 1886, 6 June, 12 Aug 1883, 21 May 1884 [MQ]. A rail goes down the centre of the main street of Semaphore to a jetty where vessels were worked and thus lumpers, clerks, drivers and others disturbed the public.

*The Advertiser*, 7 Feb 1890 [MQ]. Eg. 50 men stowing 4000 bales in 28 hours at 12c. a day are paid £45 for ordinary hours, 18 hours overtime at 2s. an hour £65, plus launch hire £5, making total of £115. Whereas if paid at Is. a bale at contract price the total is £200.

3 The stevedore makes a profit of £85.1

Evidence of G. Herbert, Minutes of Evidence, *RC on Strikes* (1891), Qs.262-269, p.8; Qs.281,298-299, p.9; Qs.336-336, p.10; Qs.340-352, p.11 quotes Qs.265,281,350

Evidence of R. McKillop, Minutes of Evidence, *RC on Strikes* (1891), Q.982-984, p.31 (re: time); Qs.613-618 p.19; Qs.649-652,659, p.20; Qs.666-667, p.21; Qs.763-764,769-772, p.24; Qs.785-788, p.25; Qs.100-1002, p.32; Qs.1033-1034, p.33; Qs.1068-1069, p.35(re: contractors).

Burns, Minutes of Evidence, *RC on Strikes* (1891), Q.5227, p.197; Q.5247, p.198; Q.5322, p.201; Evidence of A. Lenahan, Minutes of Evidence, *RC on Strikes* (1891), Q.5126, p.194

Burns, Minutes of Evidence, *RC on Strikes* (1891), Q.5459, p.206; Q.5489-5491, p.207, quote Q.2484

SWLU, Rules, No 13, TU 11, NSW Archives, A.O. 10/42118

SWLU, General Minutes, 2 Oct, 23 Oct 1889, pp.10,13, 2 April 1890, p.40, ANU/NBA Z248/Box 95

Sydney Morning Herald, 11,12 October 1888

Union officers invited by the Chamber to meeting for its “suppression” *General Minutes*, 2 Oct 1889, p.9, union noted that newspaper reports from the UK indicated pillage was common in Sydney, especially liquor, *General Minutes*, 20 Feb 1890, ABL/NBA Z248/Box 95

Nairn, “The 1890 Maritime Strike in NSW” pp.7,9; Philipp, Trade Union Organisation, Appendix X, p.33A

Dispute discussed in *Bowes,* The 1890 Maritime Strike, pp.42-45


Summary given at Appendix U(2) also M(4) and M(5), *RC on Strikes* (1891), pp.70,35-36

SWLU, General Minutes, 8 Jan 1890, p.20 ANU/NBA Z248/Box 95 Sydney Morning Herald, 30 Jan 1890

Sydney Morning Herald, 13 Feb 1890

Conferences 1,2,1 Feb; SWLU, General Minutes, 19,26 Feb, pp.22,23,25-26, ANU/NBA Z248/Box 95; Sydney Morning Herald, 15,22,27 Feb 1890; Newcastle Morning Herald and Miners’ Advocate, 17 Feb, 19,20 Mar 1890

SWLU, General Minutes, 13,19 Mar 1890, pp.28-29,31, ANU/NBA Z248/Box 95; Sydney Morning Herald; 20 Feb 1890

Motion to make it 1 Sept was lost, SWLU, General Minutes, 24 May 1890, p.49, ANU/NBA Z248/Box 95

Sydney Morning Herald, 14 Feb 1890, was also some criticism from the public for the union’s high entrance fee, which kept unemployed from gaining work, (precisely what the casual men wanted), l to editor, A. Pessimist, Sydney Morning Herald, 5 Mar 1890

Rules of Federated WLU of Australia, *SWLU*, General Minutes, 16 April 1890, pp.41-42, ANU/NBA Z248/Box 95

SWLU, Minutes of Evidence, *RC on Strikes* (1891), pp.15-16; Evidence of J. Burns, Minutes of Evidence, *RC on Strikes* (1891), Qs.753, p.24; Qs.926-943, p.29, quotations from each.


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Chapter Six

312 The Sydney Morning Herald, 31 Jan, 14,21 Feb 1890; Newcastle Morning Herald and Miners' Advocate, 15,23 Jan 1890, see also 13 Sept 1888, 2, 29,30 Oct 1888, 14 Aug 1889 on the non-union issue.
313 Sydney Morning Herald, 22 Feb, 4,5,6 Mar 1890. MLC represented by McKillop, Newcastle Morning Herald and Miners' Advocate, 21 Feb, 6,12 Mar 1890
314 The Advertiser, 15 Jan, 19 Mar 1890 [MQ]. The sliding scale was vessels under 400 tons register 10d. a ton; 400-800 tons register at 1s. a ton; over 800 tons at 1s. 3d. a ton and bagged flour 1s. 6d. a ton. An example given was 4,000 tons of wheat loaded over 28 hours - wages (ordinary and overtime) for 50 men would be £110 plus £5 hire of equipment. Under a tonnage rate of 1s. per ton the 50 men would get £200, an increase of 85% going to the contract stevedore.
315 The Advertiser, 13 Mar, 11 June 1890 [MQ]
316 Stewards and cooks also wanted to abolish responsibility for losses of plates, cutlery, linen and so on, The Sydney Morning Herald, 30 Jan 1890; Naim, "The 1890 Maritime Strike in NSW", pp.9-10
317 The Sydney Morning Herald, 21 Feb 1890
318 The Sydney Morning Herald, 24 June 1890; The Advertiser, 9,11,26 June 1890 [MQ]; Newcastle Morning Herald and Miners' Advocate, 24 June 1890
319 The Sydney Morning Herald, 30 June 1890; J. O'Flaherty (SWLU sec) to J. Ferguson, 4 July 1890, RC on Strikes, (1891), Appendices to Evidence, Attachment L, p.33
320 The Sydney Morning Herald, 28 June, 4 July 1890; SWLU, General Minutes, 6,30 July 1890, pp.56-60,71-74, ANU/NBA Z248/Box 95
321 Manning on the 'Jubilee'; and 'Takapo' went from 60-70 men to 30, men went off 'Nemesis'; The Sydney Morning Herald, 10 July 1890, Bynes resolution, SWLU General Minutes, 16,17,18 July 1890, pp.61-63,67-70, ANU/NBA Z248/Box 95; Newcastle Morning Herald and Miners' Advocate, 17 July 1890
322 The Sydney Morning Herald, 13 Aug 1890; see also Henning, "Steamships and the 1890 Maritime Strike", p.590
323 SWLU, General Minutes, 25 May 1890, p.49, ANU/NBA Z248/Box 95
326 SWLU, General Minutes, 18 Aug 1890, pp.86-87, ANU/NBA Z248/Box 95; resolutions, Appendix I(2), RC on Strikes, (1891), p.27 (from Sydney Daily Telegraph, 19 Aug 1890)
327 Bowes, The 1890 Maritime Strike, p.85
328 SWLU, General Minutes, 13,18 August 1890, pp.82,85 ANU/NBA Z248/Box 95; see also Naim, "The 1890 Maritime Strike in NSW", esp. pp.12-15, Naim does not cite SWLU sources - it is doubtful that McKillop was Spence's "greatest dupe" (p.13); see also J. A. Merritt, "W. G. Spence and the 1890 Maritime Strike," Historical Studies, Vol 15 No 60, pp.594-609.
329 Copy of circular by the Pastoralists', Appendix 1(1)
330 SWLU, General Minutes, 13,18 Aug 1890 pp.80,85-86 ANU/NBA Z248/Box 95
332 SWLU, General Minutes, 18 Aug 1890, p.87, ANU/NBA Z248/Box 95
333 Evidence of G. Herbert, Minutes of Evidence, RC on Strikes, (1891), Q.301, p.9; The Advertiser, 23 Sept 1890 [MQ]
334 List of strike dates, Naim, "The 1890 Maritime Strike in NSW," p.16, fn.12; Newcastle wharf labourers 6 Nov, Newcastle Morning Herald and Miners' Advocate, 7, also 13,20 Nov 1890
335 SOAA, Seventh Annual Report, 17 Aug 1891, p.5, McKellar Collection, ML MSS 4548/Box 249
336 thus Naim's assertion that employers were not well organised is substantially incorrect, Naim, "The 1890 Maritime Strike in NSW" pp.2-3; see also J. Rickard, The Sydney Morning Herald, 3,11,12 Sept 1890, The Australasian Conference of Employers, 10-13 Sept 1890, Appendix M(1b), RC on Strikes, (1891), p.34
337 Australian Conference of Employers, 1890, the fifth resolution, Appendix, M(1b), RC on Strikes, (1891), p.35
338 Evidence of Burns, Minutes of Evidence, RC on Strikes, (1891), Qs.5272,5273,5285-5293, pp.199-200; J. Rickard, Class and Politics, (ANU Press, Canberra, 1976), pp.18-22 offers a similar interpretation.
339 see Rickard, Class and Politics, pp.29ff
340 Open 1. Tom Davis to Burns, Sydney Daily Telegraph, 28 Aug 1890, reproduced in Appendix I(7) RC on Strikes, (1891), p.29
341 Proposed Basis for Settlement of the Great Strike, 11 Sept 1890, Appendix, (T), RC on Strikes, (1891), p.69
342 The Great Strike of 1890, Report by W. Spence, Appendix C(1), RC on Strikes, (1891), p.11
343 Rickard, Class and Politics, p.24
344 Manager reported to the SOAA, see SOAA Minutes of 10 April 1891 in VSOA, Minutes [Book] p.61, ANU/ABL E217/1
345 The Sydney Morning Herald, 23,25 August 1890
346 The Sydney Morning Herald, 27 Aug 1890, reproduced in Appendix N(2), RC on Strikes, (1891), p.36
347 eg The Sydney Morning Herald, 30 Jan (400 unemployed rally) 31 Jan (deputation to Colonial Sec. Parkes) 1 Feb (deput. to Minister of Works), 8 Feb (800 unemployed meeting) 13 Feb (list of govt action from 1886) 14 Feb (900 meet in Temperance Hall) 18,22 Feb (action needed for unemployed, deputation to Parkes) 3 Mar (deputation to Minister) 1890
348 Term used by Seamens' Union secretary Davis, see Open 1. Davis to Burns Sydney Daily Telegraph, 28 Aug 1890, reproduced in Appendix I(7) RC on Strikes, (1891), p.29
349 Transcript, WFE Award 1905, [emphasis added] McKellar Collection, ML MSS 4548/Box 118 Envelope 232
Part 3

Industrialisation and Transition

This Part deals with the organisational conditions in shipping and stevedoring in the aftermath of the 1890 maritime strike and the transitional period in the pattern of industrial relations. The strike marked the end of the predominance of informal authority in the conduct of industrial relations and the 1890s depression gave employers the opportunity to impose their authority over stevedoring. Three organisational changes occurred; shipping companies moved to more closely integrate stevedoring into shipping, companies entered into a series of collusive market agreements culminating in the 1902 'Collins' agreement; and union reorganisation in the form of the Waterside Workers Federation. Yet in many ways these changes were merely a formal framework thrown over the existing web of customary practice of all parties. Stevedoring for example still rested on informal relations. Moreover the reconstitution of the employer association in 1899 prefigured a 'federation' institutional mode of employer coordination in industry and labour policy. The WWF also struggled with problems of national integration and local rank and file solidaristic activity.

The strengthening of formal ties of companies did not remove informal relations and custom in stevedoring. These were sustained by several conditions; the influence of community locales, and the moral authority of tradition, either directly or through a re-interpretation based on political ideas. Second, the links between community organisation and labour supply, the labour market and the pick-up remained in the structure of the employment relation despite the shift in control to shipowners. Third, the contingent nature of labour process remained largely unchanged. It constantly generated specific demands for work control, against first line supervisors, albeit within a system of industrial authority constituted by compulsory arbitration.

Chapters Seven and Eight survey the dimensions of company and employer organisation, and the stevedoring labour force from the 1890s to the 1920s. They were part of a pattern extending beyond the informalist era in industrial relations. Chapter Nine turns to the industrial relations of the transitional period between 1891 and 1910. Over these two decades the institutions of formalised industrial relations emerge. Both employers and labour experienced shifts in internal political balance, but the formation of the Waterside Workers Federation in 1902 marks a consolidation in the shift to modern collective organisation. But given the conditions detailed in Chapter Eight, the shift to the modern representative and bureaucratic union type under Billy Hughes was contradictory and incomplete. Centralisation was assailed by pressures for local autonomy and direct action. Arbitration and formal procedures clashed with the informal authority of solidarist action. The period of transition was thus characterised by the tensions of local informalism and a growing national formalism.
Chapter 7
Company and Employer Organisation in Shipping and Stevedoring, 1891 – 1935

I. Introduction

This chapter is concerned with employers’ organisation during the formalisation of industrial relations. Organisational changes of both employers and workers occurred in the face of the breakdown of the informal pattern of industrial authority as a system of industrial relations. As informalism declined the relation between the employer and the employee became more contractualist, characteristic of modern work relations. The labour process was progressively integrated into the organisational unit of capital, that is, the integrated organisational structure of shipping. Thus the formalisation of industrial authority accompanied the organisational transition of capital and the emergence of integrated control-systems. The deepening industrialisation of shipping marked the beginning of the real subsumption of the stevedoring labour process under the capitalist dynamic.

Shipping companies assumed strategic command of stevedoring, including the co-ordination, direction and management of waterfront industrial relations, and thus a pivotal position on the Australian waterfront after 1890. It was also when national waterfront unionism hesitantly emerged. Although the organisational processes of real subsumption of stevedoring began after 1890 it was not accompanied by any substantial alteration of work methods or work organisation. The labour process remained largely unchanged, despite its absorption into shipping industrialisation. The key to employer domination was the pattern of authority over the organisation of labour. After 1890 the employers took control of the labour market and so labour utilisation in the labour process – employers thus 'controlled' the workplace. To achieve this shipping companies either directly employed labour did so via specialist stevedoring companies which they established or controlled in the larger ports. The era of the independent 'labour contractor' was largely over.

In this chapter I examine the structure of the industry, company organisation and employer organisation from 1891 to the depression. I will show that the employer strategy in the transition to real subsumption does not immediately imply a constant revolution in the means and methods of production. Shipowner 'control' over stevedoring and management 'strategy' was focused as much on the market as on the labour process. Business policy was built on three bases; first, the continued focus on the sea-going component of production, second, attempts to regulate the product market, and third, the desire to minimise disruption of shipping production, whether from industrial trouble, political intervention, inefficient organisation or other factors.
Chapter eight turns to the shape of waterside unionism and chapters nine to eleven consider industrial relations over this period. Both employer policy and worker action displayed contradictory tendencies centred on the role of informalism in a formal organisational and industrial relations context.

The chapter examines, first the structure of the industry and the fundamental change in the nature of the product market. The latter generated the basis for close commercial organisation of shipping companies in this period in all sections of the industry. Second, business organisation and its relation to stevedoring. Third, I will examine the forces that propelled the industrial organisation of employers. It is suggested that the Australian shipping industry displayed a dual structure of employer organisation, where commercial and industrial pressures were complementary.

II. Centralisation and Product Market Organisation of Employers

This section will first, outline the organisation of Australian shipping and second, examine the nature of the product market reorganisation and third, demonstrate the technological effects of widespread market regulation. After 1890 the employers developed a number of covert trade or route agreements which evolved into a comprehensive pooling system in the product market in 1899. Although abandoned in the face of Federal Labor Government legislation in 1910, product market regulation shaped the development of interstate shipping, whether in its 'neo-mercantilist' or later 'rationalist' federation institutional mode. Under these conditions technological change slowed in shipping and continued to be minimal in stevedoring, as discussed in the next section.

Thus many of the stereotypical characteristics of stevedoring and waterfront workers were forged in this period. The trajectory of capitalist development eschewed technological development and modern organisation in favour of cost minimisation, continued casualisation, labour intensification and adversarial labour management relations. Employer policies were based on the strategic use of labour market control and tribunal authority to forestall labour demands and contain wage costs while maintaining managerial prerogative. This continually nourished labour militancy and developed a cycle of antagonistic and obstructionist industrial relations pivoting on shifting power relations

1. Contours of Australian Shipping 1891–1930s

A central feature of the Australian shipping after the 1890 strike was the crystallisation of the dominant players which resulted from economic changes, business organisation and employer organisation. Table 7.1 shows tonnage entered in the major Australian ports to WWII. Outward movements were of the same order, thus the tonnage stevedored is twice the figure. Cargoes increased between 25 percent from 1911 to 1927–28 (to the eve of the 1928 strike and depression) with larger growth in the smaller capital city ports (Brisbane, Port Adelaide and Fremantle, 37, 48 and 70 percent respectively) and lower growth in Melbourne and Sydney (19 and 18 percent respectively). Overall the volume of cargo handled more than doubled.

Table 7.2 and Table 7.3 provide data on major aspects of the Australian shipping industry from the 1890s to WWII. Given, reporting errors (eg. exclusion of small vessels not engaged in regular trades) the data is only indicative. There were approximately 25 companies operating on the coast and probably more up to the 1930s. The official 1907 figures indicate at least this number prior to WWI. Table 7.3 supports this view, showing member companies of the New South Wales based SOAAA, which claimed to cover "all steamship companies of importance in the colonies."
Half of the members were small (eg. Capt. Campbell, 2 vessels; CSR, 1 vessel; J. & A. Brown, 1 vessel; M. Moss & Co. of Melbourne, 2 tugs; Osbourne Wallsend, 2 vessels) paying the minimum annual fee. Membership was steady in the late 1880s, and included all major companies, but fell during the depression.

### Table 7.1 Largest Australian Ports: Tonnage Entered (mill. tons) 1911–1944–45 (selected years)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Syd</th>
<th>Melb</th>
<th>N'kle</th>
<th>Bris</th>
<th>Adel</th>
<th>F'kle</th>
<th>T'kle</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1911</td>
<td>7.7</td>
<td>5.9</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>2.4</td>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>1.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1914–15</td>
<td>8.1</td>
<td>5.6</td>
<td>4.1</td>
<td>2.6</td>
<td>2.6*</td>
<td>1.6</td>
<td>1.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1917–18</td>
<td>5.3</td>
<td>5.3</td>
<td>2.9</td>
<td>1.4</td>
<td>0.9</td>
<td>0.8</td>
<td>0.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1920–21</td>
<td>7.2</td>
<td>8.2</td>
<td>4.6</td>
<td>1.9</td>
<td>2.6*</td>
<td>2.3</td>
<td>0.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1922–23</td>
<td>8.8</td>
<td>7.0</td>
<td>4.6</td>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>2.6</td>
<td>1.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1924–25</td>
<td>9.1</td>
<td>6.9</td>
<td>5.1</td>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>4.9</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>1.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1926–27</td>
<td>9.5</td>
<td>7.3</td>
<td>4.8</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>4.8</td>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>1.0</td>
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<tr>
<td>1927–28</td>
<td>9.2</td>
<td>7.0</td>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>4.6</td>
<td>3.4</td>
<td>1.0</td>
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<tr>
<td>1928–29</td>
<td>9.0</td>
<td>6.8</td>
<td>3.7</td>
<td>3.4</td>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>1.0</td>
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<tr>
<td>1930–31</td>
<td>8.4</td>
<td>6.3</td>
<td>3.4</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>3.9</td>
<td>3.4</td>
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<td>1932–33</td>
<td>9.3</td>
<td>6.7</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>3.6</td>
<td>4.2</td>
<td>3.4</td>
<td>1.1</td>
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<tr>
<td>1934–35</td>
<td>10.0</td>
<td>7.6</td>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>4.1</td>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>1.2</td>
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<tr>
<td>1936–37</td>
<td>10.9</td>
<td>8.1</td>
<td>4.8</td>
<td>4.4</td>
<td>4.9</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>1.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1938–39</td>
<td>11.6</td>
<td>8.6</td>
<td>5.1</td>
<td>4.9</td>
<td>5.5</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>1.4</td>
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<tr>
<td>1939–1942</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1942–43</td>
<td>5.5</td>
<td>3.4</td>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>3.6</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>2.6</td>
<td>1.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1944–45</td>
<td>6.4</td>
<td>4.6</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>1.6</td>
<td>2.6</td>
<td>1.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* excludes coastal shipping as figures were not available

Source: *Official Year Book of the Commonwealth of Australia*, No 10, 1915 – No 38, 1948

The official figures of 1901 appear to indicate significant under-reporting, probably of a third or more. The 1921 (Table 7.2) rise indicates that there were closer to 40 mostly small companies for a number of years before then. The 17 companies added in 1921 operated 29 vessels, totalling only 20,000 net tons of capacity, with apparently no passenger capacity. In short, they were small coastal companies, operating one or two small vessels carrying freight. The decline in numbers after 1926 foreshadowed the demise of small companies during the depression. Consequently concentration of shipping increased as a handful of companies came to dominate the industry.

A second change is focused on the market. Passenger demand peaked just before WWI (no. of licensed berths) and declined from then on. The small recovery in the mid–1920s petered out as the effects of the 1930s depression, WWII, and new rail services (which captured the lower price market⁶) were felt. As I will show later, employers decisions on ships were still influenced by the passenger market. The freight market, in contrast, did recover after 1934. While net tonnage capacity expanded steadily, growing approximately 250 percent between 1901 and 1948, road transport by the late 1930s had an impact on shipping. With the Australian fleet at closer to 150,000 tons in 1901 (under reporting in Table 7.2) the industry expanded less than 90 percent in almost fifty years.

A third feature was a significant fall in the rate of change in ship size – average size grew only 25 percent, from 1000 tons in 1901 to 1231 tons in 1940, indicating a slowing of technological change in comparison to 1850s to 1900. I will return to this point below.
Table: 7.2  Australian Interstate and Coastal Shipping as of 31 Dec (regular service) 1901–1948

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>No. Coys*</th>
<th>No. Ships</th>
<th>Net Tonnage</th>
<th>Av. Net Tonnage</th>
<th>Licensed for First Class Passengers</th>
<th>Licensed for Other Passengers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
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<tr>
<td>1901</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>113</td>
<td>114,574</td>
<td>1014</td>
<td>4617</td>
<td>4490</td>
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<tr>
<td>1907</td>
<td>+22</td>
<td>163</td>
<td>146,143</td>
<td>896</td>
<td>4617</td>
<td>4490</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1908</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>175</td>
<td>156,502</td>
<td>894</td>
<td>7100</td>
<td>6156</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1909</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>181</td>
<td>168,206</td>
<td>929</td>
<td>7087</td>
<td>6460</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1911</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>178</td>
<td>179,996</td>
<td>1011</td>
<td>8616</td>
<td>6256</td>
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<tr>
<td>1913</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>190</td>
<td>206,340</td>
<td>1086</td>
<td>9826</td>
<td>7635</td>
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<tr>
<td>1915</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>174</td>
<td>205,795</td>
<td>1182</td>
<td>9557</td>
<td>6808</td>
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<td>23</td>
<td>148</td>
<td>145,424</td>
<td>982</td>
<td>5459</td>
<td>5029</td>
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<tr>
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<td>23</td>
<td>143</td>
<td>143,143</td>
<td>1001</td>
<td>5229</td>
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<td>154</td>
<td>159,294</td>
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<td>5250</td>
<td>5632</td>
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<tr>
<td>1921</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>183</td>
<td>179,393</td>
<td>980</td>
<td>4226</td>
<td>4642</td>
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<td>35</td>
<td>205</td>
<td>220,042</td>
<td>1073</td>
<td>9184</td>
<td>4756</td>
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<tr>
<td>1925</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>209</td>
<td>216,390</td>
<td>1035</td>
<td>9110</td>
<td>4204</td>
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<tr>
<td>1926</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>216</td>
<td>214,028</td>
<td>990</td>
<td>8686</td>
<td>3650</td>
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<tr>
<td>1928</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>201</td>
<td>208,083</td>
<td>1035</td>
<td>7686</td>
<td>3240</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1930</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>173</td>
<td>196,342</td>
<td>1134</td>
<td>7686</td>
<td>1784</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1932</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>154</td>
<td>171,089</td>
<td>1110</td>
<td>7222</td>
<td>1755</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1933</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>154</td>
<td>172,334</td>
<td>1119</td>
<td>7230</td>
<td>1755</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1934</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>155</td>
<td>168,056</td>
<td>1084</td>
<td>3914</td>
<td>1755</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1936</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>160</td>
<td>197,256</td>
<td>1234</td>
<td>4450</td>
<td>1695</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1940</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>184,656</td>
<td>1231</td>
<td>3147</td>
<td>1360</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1945</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>160,012</td>
<td>1333</td>
<td>2056</td>
<td>961</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1948</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>@163</td>
<td>271,452</td>
<td>1665</td>
<td>1443</td>
<td>339</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* only companies making returns, thus figures are only indicative    # several small organisations included for the first time
+ a number of smaller companies supplied return for the first time although most were operating in 1901
@ includes ships under the control of the Australian Shipping Board

Source: compiled from Year Book of the Commonwealth of Australia No.1 1908; No. 15, 1922; No 19, 1926; No.24, 1931; No.29, 1936; No.37, 1947; No.38, 1948 (various tables)

Table: 7.3 Steamship Owners Association of Australasia Membership, and Ships (1886–1893*)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>No. of Coys</th>
<th>No. of Ships</th>
<th>Total Gross Tonnage</th>
<th>Average Gross Tonnage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1886</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>n.a.</td>
<td>n.a.</td>
<td>n.a.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1889</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>205</td>
<td>164,185</td>
<td>800</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1891</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>156</td>
<td>135,203</td>
<td>866</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1892</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>n.a.</td>
<td>87,174</td>
<td>n.a.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1893</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>n.a.</td>
<td>73,094</td>
<td>n.a.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* years for which information is given

Source: collated from SOAA, Annual Reports, 1886–1894, McKellar Collection, ML MSS 4548/Box 249

After 1900, shipping companies stabilised, centred around a small number of dominant firms as partnerships all but disappeared. Small companies fell victim to rail and later road competition and economic depressions. The industry concentration in shipping underpinned the stability of employer organisation. Yet by 1900 company policies concerning markets resembled merchant capital. The organisation of shipowners, which cohered in the 1880s around the labour question quickly turned its attention to the commercial and political context of the industry. Their interest focused on freight and passenger market regulation and protection, not the transformation of production. The next section examines these developments.

2. Commercial Organisation in Shipping

The deregulation of British overseas shipping before 1850 was replaced by a new version a quarter of a century later – shipping conferences. The latter controlled competition on international
shipping routes. The Australian conference began operation in 1876 and adopted two methods of operation. First, the use of deferred rebates on fixed freight rates which tied shippers to return business. In turn, the conference claimed to match shipping capacity to demand for efficiency and low rates. Second, the conference used its financial resources to fund 'fighting ships' to force (by offering lower and unprofitable freight rates) any outside competition to withdraw or risk bankruptcy.

Similar practices in intercolonial trades before 1890 had generally been unsuccessful because agreements between companies were ignored when severe competition broke out. As I have shown the 1880s saw common industrial interests bind employers together along with some product market regulation. The 1890 strike and the following depression made companies more receptive to private market regulation. Consequently a wider web of agreements appeared – estimated to be at least twenty-four joint agreements by July 1902 when the Collins pool was formed. However this figure may well be an understatement, as company records for the decade before 1902 point to their widespread existence. Market agreements were of three main types. 'Traffic deals', common before 1890, in which sailings and tonnage were manipulated to ensure profitable operation. For example, the withdrawal of tonnage for "the better regulation of traffic" between Melbourne and North Queensland ports was agreed by two companies. The second type was revenue pooling, or 'joint-purse' agreements for certain trades. Here, deferred rebates (usually over three to twelve months) were more likely to be used. Finally, what may be termed exclusive market agreements, where one company operated exclusively in a market subject to agreed payments being made to potential competitors. For example, the Newcastle & Hunter River SSCo granted Howard Smith a "subsidy of 750 pounds per annum for five years" on condition that the latter withdrew the "Balmain" from the Newcastle trade from 1 April 1890.

Recall that the SOAA sought to "promote the interests of owners by unity of action..." over the labour question, it registered under the NSW Trade Union Act, and its Bond of Agreement covered "mutual assistance and unity of action" over "labour difficulties." By 1889 the Association had expanded its functions, it reported favourably on regulating freight payments (termed advance payments and later rebates). A year later, in 1890, the Association formed a Defence Society incorporating a Bond of Alliance directed at commercial regulation, which prohibited trade interference with fellow members (fines of £1 per ton per voyage). It also encouraged collusion – for example, if two or more members worked a trade it was "desirable to arrange for times of departure and to prepare schedules of rates of freight and passage."

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 7.4</th>
<th>Earnings of Pool Routes, AUSNCo 1890–1893</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1890</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expenses as percent of Revenue</td>
<td>95.35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A/c Balance (£s**)</td>
<td>20,096</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* first year of the pool agreement  ** shilling and pence deleted

Source: compiled from AUSNCo, Report on the Working of the Company and Analysis of the Company's Accounts Year to 31 Dec 1893, 17 Oct 1894, p.29

Selective revenue pooling arrangements were operating in 1891 after the strike, amongst larger companies and covering only some routes. Deferred rebates became more established as a business practice, although they became known by the more acceptable term 'bonus' by the end of
the 1890s. The initial effect of the pool is shown in Table 7.4. Profits rose initially, but they were not immune from the effects of the depression. The widespread price-cutting of the pre-1890 period did not re-emerge. Yet price-cutting could break out at any time, but companies attempted to reach agreement quickly and limit damage.

Such agreements were selective and should not be over emphasised. They were not 'fixed', but operated as a continuous process of negotiation, where business policy was subject to adjustments, cancellations and alliances which may or may not include formal agreements. Companies engaged in 'secret deals', forced outsiders to quit trades, cut rates to capture particular trades and so on. AUSNCo and Howard Smith pooled all (except wharfage and wine sales) revenue in their Queensland trade. Yet in other trades, descriptions such as "exceptionally severe competition" were used but the companies soon attempted to overcome this 'problem' by trade and exclusive market agreements. Employers' associations, particularly those in Melbourne and Sydney played a key role in providing an industry-wide co-ordination and stabilisation umbrella to foster inter-company trade regulation. The experience of the 1890s depression bit into the freight and passenger markets and reinforced shipowners' desire to avoid past failures. The Associations sought to foster unity and mutual support but generally side stepped trade issues. In 1893 the VSOA was unwilling to take action against overseas companies in some passenger trades as it "was not desirable to disturb the present friendly relations."

The number of such market arrangements in the 1890s indicates that the initial organisational apparatus to address labour issues quickly became a mechanism to extend trade regulation under tightening product market conditions. Unity against labour was an industry-wide vehicle for neo-mercantilist market regulation. Such arrangements created a 'soft', oligopolistic market, where production costs could be more readily managed relative to revenue. Open price competition gave way to a 'managed' market in which the negotiated adjustment of freight rates was linked to the specific circumstances of companies.

While the pooling and trade agreements of the 1890s were more widespread than hitherto, they began to deteriorate at the end of 1890s as economic conditions improved. Howard Smith adopted a more aggressive market policy, as did Northcote at the ASSCo, which lead to instability in 1899. Suspicions and allegations of rorting between the companies emerged. Macdonald of the AUSNCo was also concerned that increases in tonnage capacity commissioned by the pool members were not based on sound indications that trade was strong enough to support it. However, the desire to contain and control competition persisted and the main companies entered protracted negotiations. These culminated in the extension of the pool agreement through the "Collins" agreement of 1902. It was based on initiatives (a rebate system, now termed a 'bonus' for shippers) began three years earlier under the auspices of the newly formed Australasian Steamship Owners Federation (ASOF).

3. The "Collins" Agreement and Its Effects

The Collins scheme was the most comprehensive private regulation of the Australian shipping market to that date. For the eight years of its life it was shrouded in secrecy, even when disbanded members decided "that all Minutes and documents relating to "Collins" including the old [original 1902] agreement be destroyed." Thus few documents survive.
The importance of the Collins agreement for the argument here is three-fold. First, it represents the last clear example of the neo-mercantilist practice of market exclusion. While comprehensive—it included elements of all three types of agreements mentioned above—the very secrecy of this federation type collusion meant its role would decline. In response, shipowners recast the ideological support for regulation towards a rational economic form. Second, the stabilisation of company revenues was an enabling condition for the formalisation of labour relations. Shipowners negotiated port agreements with waterside workers around the country. Third, the nature of the agreement had the effect of slowing technological development in shipping and stevedoring. I will look at each of these aspects in turn.

The pool agreement operated from 1 July 1902. It had five members, the Adelaide SSCo., AUSNCo., Howard Smith, Huddart Parker, and McIlwraith, McEachern. According to one member the agreement was "drawn up and signed very much in the dark" concerning its practical operation and long term effects, but was nevertheless seen as a "great advantage to all members." Each member was allocated points based on the average profit for previous two years. Proportional building (of ship tonnage) rights were set in relation to these points as was the proportion of pooled revenue claimed. Trade routes regulated, prices set, as well as ship tonnage and building rights as part of Collins. As the managing director of the AUSNCo put it, "one of the principal objects of "Collins" is to retain the Coastal business for Members and other Companies associated with them." It was highly successful in this goal, for with the exception of small coastal trades, the Collins members dominated Australian shipping for the decade. One estimate put it control at ninety percent of the Australian trade by the general pool and complementary agreements, such as the coal vend.

It successfully resisted challenges. John Brown, a Newcastle coalowner and shipowner, challenged the freight arrangements of the pool but was unable to break its monopoly. Although Brown was to be permitted to nominally operate a steamer "with the object of keeping up the semblance of competition". But mounting political concern over shipping 'rings', the Federal Labor Government passed the anti-monopoly Australian Industries Preservation and the Anti-Trust Amendment Acts. In response Collins was abandoned on 30 November 1910, despite successful High Court challenges to the legislation a year earlier. The shipowners were still keen to conclude a new trade agreement into early 1911. A new agreement, called "Hobson", was drafted in January and February and adopted soon after. Federal Government legal action against the coalowners monopoly commenced in April 1911, and "completely unnerved" the shipowners. The AUSNCo narrowly avoided being cited as party to the coal case, for which they could have faced jail. Hobson was soon formally abandoned in May. The Coal Vend members were later found guilty and fined £500. Although subsequently cleared on appeal, the shipping companies avoided any further covert written trade agreement in 1911.

Informally though it appears that Hobson (codenamed "H") continued to collect and distribute revenue through the latter part of 1911. Indeed Macdonald of the AUSNCo was hopeful of a continuation of similar pool arrangements without written agreements, or at least "traffic deals." The companies explored avenues to circumvent the Federal legislation and searched for a new legitimisation for continued regulation. They canvassed ideas such as the absence of government assistance to the industry, the need to make the industry attractive to investors by
removing the instability of unrestricted competition, need for a modern merchant fleet given the high cost of ships (of approximately £100,000 and above) and employers could pay good wages.49 But the political environment rendered Hobson type agreements unattractive and it fell into disuse.50

Collins, Hobson and the fear of damaging freight price cutting competition stabilised the industry. Mounting rail competition and continuing competition by overseas vessels in interstate passenger and freight markets also made members reluctant to forego their cooperative 'federation' regulation. It allowed revenue for the industry as a whole, to be monitored and their combined resources to be used to maintain market power. They explored alternative organisation, including the formation a joint company, and also wanted to maintain the penalties applicable under Hobson – that is, £1000 per day.51 Legal opinions on the proposed schemes, including a single company option, were adverse, in that they almost certainly be in contravention of Sec.7 of the Industries Preservation Act in respect to monopoly organisation.52 Over the next few years industrial relations and the outbreak of WWI took the attention of shipowners. Collins however had unanticipated effects on shipping itself.

Technological change in the 1890s was driven by the search for efficiency and new business in depression conditions – investment in larger, more efficient ships accompanied wage cuts and manning reviews.53 But this emphasis on efficiency waned under Collins. While new vessels were bought in the 1890s,54 many ships were laid up or discarded, particularly smaller, less efficient vessels. The purchase of larger vessels was reflected in the Sydney registrations of steamships. In the 10 years to 1889, 38 of 326 steamships registered were over 500 tons (ratio 1:9, large to small vessels) and included 4 over 1500 tons. In the 1890s 37 of 165 vessels registered were over 500 tons (ratio 1:5), including 17 over 1500 tons.55 Ships were better tailored to more efficient use of capital investment56 as larger vessels decreased the capital cost per ton transported. The average size of SOAA members vessels was approximately 450 net tons in 1889–1890.57 By 1901, the official Australian fleet average net tonnage was more than double that figure (see Table 7.2).58 On a company basis, the AUSNCo average tonnage increased from 933 tons in 1887 to 1336 tons in 1893 in the depths of the depression.59 Capital efficiency in ships rose, so did total capital costs. This increased the cost of port delays and therefore raised the pressures on stevedoring identified in chapter six. It also was to have different effects on the economics of the two main sections of shipping. In sum, on the experience of the 1890s, the pressures of turnaround time, cargo size and volume, and labour requirements were now a permanent part of the industry.

The Collins period 1900 to 1910 in contrast saw a distinct slow down in building. According to members' data, the original agreement (July 1902) covered a fleet of 135,695 (gross) tons and charter money of £984,946. When it was abandoned it controlled 202,622 (gross) tons with charter money of over £1,426,915.60 This raises two points. First, the under reporting in the official figures mainly affected the number of companies. Overall, the 1902 Collins group accounted for approximately 80,000 net tons, or about 70 percent of the Australian coastal shipping capacity. But, since it operated larger vessels61 its control over cargo carried was probably higher. The 1910 figure was proportionately the same.62 The size of the Australian coastal fleet was larger than the official figures reported even for the larger companies. However, more importantly for the
argument here it indicates that the increase in size of the fleet between 1900 and 1948 was smaller than the official statistics indicate, as was noted above.

Second, the fleet capacity increased approximately 50 percent in 1901–1910, less than half the rate in the 1890s. It was further distorted by the Collins agreement which unevenly spread building, creating an inefficient fleet. Table 7.2 and Table 7.3 indicate that in the two decades from 1890 the average vessel size for the Australian fleet rose from just under 500 net tons to slightly under 1000 tons, all of which took place prior to Collins. This is confirmed in company figures. Table 7.5 reports details of the five Collins group members (they were also Commonwealth Steamship Owners Association (CSOA) members63), and the Union SSCo. As expected, their vessels were larger than the Australian average for the whole fleet. Moreover, total tonnage capacity rose from 1905 to 1910, this was largely due to eleven more vessels, as the average size (relative gross tonnage is of interest here) remained about the same. The average size of vessels fell for the ASSCo and Huddart Parker.

Table 7.5 CSOA Membership Register and Ship Details*, (Selected years, 1905–1915)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Company</th>
<th>1905#</th>
<th>1910</th>
<th>1913</th>
<th>1915</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Adelaide SSCo</td>
<td>42.6* (6) [2,662]</td>
<td>47.2 (18) [2,622]</td>
<td>60.9 (18) [3,383]</td>
<td>40.0 (17) [2,353]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>McIlwraith, McEacharn</td>
<td>16.8 (5) [3,360]</td>
<td>24.4 (7) [3,485]</td>
<td>20.3 (7) [2,900]</td>
<td>25.7 (7) [3,671]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AUSNCo</td>
<td>27.8 (8) [3,475]</td>
<td>34.3 (8) [4,287]</td>
<td>39.9 (7) [5,700]</td>
<td>29.9 (7) [4,271]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Huddart, Parker</td>
<td>18.1 (6) [3,116]</td>
<td>25.9 (9) [2,877]</td>
<td>32.5 (10) [3,250]</td>
<td>19.2 (6) [3,200]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Union SSCo</td>
<td>11.7 (8) [1,462]</td>
<td>14.3 (8) [1,787]</td>
<td>14.4 (8) [1,800]</td>
<td>10.8 (7) [1,543]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Tonnage</td>
<td>141.5</td>
<td>179.5</td>
<td>216.2</td>
<td>172.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* columns Total Tonnage (Gross tons in '000s); () = number of ships; [ ] = average gross tonnage  # all May 1915 December
Source: compiled from ASOF Annual Reports (various years) ANU/NBA E215/89–102

The use of the vessel also affected its design. Two considerations arise here; the influence of Collins financial arrangements, and the nature of the Australian shipping market. Under Collins, owners soon discovered that it was more profitable to have heavier and costly ships, as cost was the basis of Chartering under the agreement. In particular smaller companies benefited more, as heavier ships attracted superior interest and depreciation allowances under pool Chartering rates.64

Up to 1902, most ships had been built for competition. Running costs, including port dues (were based on gross tonnage), were minimised resulting in low gross to deadweight ratio. In contrast, the pool effectively discouraged efficiency considerations in investment decisions.65 Some recognised this effect. Macdonald of the larger AUSNCo criticised the basis of the points as "unwieldy and unsatisfactory" and favoured the class and age of vessels as a basis. It was rejected in favour of the financial model.66 Later the short–lived "Hobson" agreement specifically excluded the regulation of ship building after it was "hotly debated".67 Interestingly the pattern for the Union SSCo was the same.

Second, because Australian shipping carried passengers the companies favoured liners. The passenger capacity figures set out in Table 7.2 are reflected in the distribution of the type of ship on the coast. Table 7.6 indicates that in 1910 most of the coastal fleet, 56 percent, of the largest companies were liners. While they carried considerable cargo, the carriage of passengers impeded the efficiency of cargo shipping and handling. If for no other reason than carrying passengers was labour intensive. Table 7.7 shows the wage cost for passenger ships was 50 percent or more higher than cargo vessels up to the late 1920s.
In sum, the abandonment of "Collins" and "Hobson" by mid–1911 marked the end of the period of private federation coordination of the shipping market. The latter was firmly based on profits from general cargo and passenger shipping rather than merchant trading. Thus cargo handling and transport were at the centre of the capitalist shipping industry. But market regulation continued, albeit based on different principles.

4. After "Collins" – Market Regulation and Its Effects

As Collins collapsed AUSNCo's Macdonald predicted that, "with the large increase in expensive tonnage and only a schedule to keep us [the companies] in check, there is sure to be a period of disastrous loss ahead unless something is done." He was wrong. The rationalist economic principles outlined in the unsuccessful battle against the Industries Preservation Act in 1909–1910, ironically came to underpin Federal regulation during the war. Thus Collins set the product market framework in which industrial relations was conducted until beyond the depression. This section will examine the period up to the depression of the 1930s.

WWI changed the nature of the problems facing the industry and halted the increase in coastal shipping tonnage. The latter declined by half (see Table 7.6) as the Government chartered vessels for war service overseas. It also paid fixed cargo rates around the Australian coast as at May 1916. Only one company maintained its fleet, largely due to its role in coal transport for war production industries.

Table 7.6 ASOF Ships, gross tonnage 1910–1932* (selected years)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Passenger Vessels</th>
<th>Cargo Vessels</th>
<th>Total Tonnage (Pass'r &amp; Cargo)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total Tonnage ('000s#)</td>
<td>No. of Ships</td>
<td>Av. Tonnage (actual)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1910</td>
<td>158.8</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1911</td>
<td>165.4</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>2868</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1913</td>
<td>174.9</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1915**</td>
<td>182.6</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>2868</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1917**</td>
<td>107.6</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1919**</td>
<td>60.3</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1921</td>
<td>134.3</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1922</td>
<td>116.9</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>3350</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1923</td>
<td>103.9</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>3420</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1924</td>
<td>102.7</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>3614</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1925</td>
<td>93.0</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>3721</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1927</td>
<td>72.1</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>3662</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1928</td>
<td>77.3</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>3976</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1929</td>
<td>87.8</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>4309</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1930</td>
<td>88.1</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>4303</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1931</td>
<td>84.5</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>4223</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* as at 1 Jan to 1920, thereafter 31 Dec; years are lagged in different reports eg reported as 1930 or 1932 etc; all cargo includes tugs unless in parenthesis (tonnage for the 10 tugs 1931–32 was 2038, 2295 respectively) ** excludes capacity requisitioned for war duty
# to nearest one decimal point - no figures available


With inflation rising during the war, companies wanted higher freight rates. But the Federal Labor Government remained indifferent, claiming wartime constraints. By 1917 the Federal Government had taken over 75 percent of overseas shipping, through the agency of the
Commonwealth Shipping Board. The Board, under Rear-Admiral Sir William Clarkson operated until January 1919, with wartime requisitioning formally ending in April 1920.

Under pressure by the British government for more ships, and freed from the Labor opponents, the Hughes Nationalist government considered a pooling system as early as July 1917. Shipowners were very surprised because Hughes had vigorously opposed Collins a decade earlier. The Government formed an Interstate Central Committee (ICC) in 1917. From early 1918, the ICC under the chairmanship of Clarkson, and with managers of the companies, requisitioned vessels and operated vessels under Commonwealth control as a single fleet, under an interim pool system. Significantly, Hughes was reported to have been concerned at the state of industrial relations, particularly the rail strike and WWF "go slow" tactics, as well as the inefficient management of interstate shipping. The ominous signs of the rail strike in NSW, which included bans by waterside workers in Melbourne, and the war provided an impetus for a greater emphasis on efficiency. For their part the employers formed the Associated Steamship Owners (ASO) to coordinate their position on the ICC and to the government. In other words, this was a successor to Collins but without the secrecy.

The government pool lost money in its first six months and in the post-war recession it was anxious to return vessels to their owners. To hasten this, and ensure ships didn't remain in more profitable operations overseas, the government gave assurances to shipowners that pool arrangements could continue. Vessels were returned from April 1920 and the new ASO pool was operational by early 1921. It was legitimated by a Select Committee Inquiry into Australian overseas and interstate shipping that recommended the 'collective' operation of interstate vessels. Despite the lack of punitive enforcement of earlier schemes (such as per diem fines) the ASO scheme exerted a similar effect on the product market.

It was aided in no small part by the close financial relationship between the ASOF companies highlighted three years later in the Federal Royal Commission on the Navigation Act. The Commission found that the Australian companies were in some manner controlled by the Inchcape group. Yet it concluded that interstate services were adequate and that fares and freights were reasonable despite some adverse effects in several trades. It also found that although fares were high by overseas standards so were costs. Thus companies did not make extraordinary profits. This conclusion was echoed by a Tariff Board inquiry later in the decade.

Overseas shipping also secured political sponsorship for market regulation. The international conference system and world shipping, dominated by British shipping interests was changing. The buoyant state of shipping soon after the war was due to a shortage of ships, so when investment rose sharply it glutted world capacity by 1921. A slump followed. British shipping was increasingly pressured by national governments willing to subsidise their fleets, or as in Australia establish a direct challenge, namely, Commonwealth Shipping Line. Again a series of factors (failure of the Line, falling commodity prices in Europe lowering demand for the homeward (to the U.K.) leg of the trade, rising costs, including port dues) pushed up freight rates for Australian exports and thus political pressure on the government. The Bruce Government responded by setting up the Overseas Shipping Conference. It met in April 1929 in Sydney and resulted in the formation of the Australian Overseas Transport Association (AOTA). It brought together representatives of exporters and
shipping companies to co-ordinate supply and demand to, ostensibly, lower freights. This forum enabled shipowners to broaden their base of political support for 'efficient' market regulation.*

Turning to the technological change from the collapse of Collins to the depression, we find little change in the shape of the Australian coastal fleet. As Table 7.2 indicates the size of the fleet was only about 10 percent larger at the close the 1920s than in 1910. Moreover the fleet tonnage rose in two periods 1910–1913 and 1920–1923 (Tables 7.5 and 7.6). In the latter period it is difficult to assess the extent of building given changes in statistical reporting.

Certainly, the rise in capacity of the Australian fleet before WWI of approximately 20 percent (see Table 7.2), brought heightened competitive pressures. The rise reflected increases by the major companies (lead by Howard Smith and McIlwraith, McEacharn) of approximately 25 percent (Tables 7.5, 7.6). However 80 percent of this expansion went into passenger liners. Moreover, for the ASOF fleet, passenger carrying vessels in 1913 were 63 percent larger than dedicated cargo vessels (Table 7.6). In contrast, the 20 percent expansion between 1921 and 1925–1926, was mainly in cargo vessels for the major companies.81 Cargo vessels rose more than 62 percent and liner capacity fell 30 percent (Table 7.6). Thus the mix of passenger and cargo vessels altered, particularly after 1923. Recall that passenger demand at the lower end of the market fell away in the same period (Table 7.2) as major long distance rail lines were opened. In addition, the industrial provisions of the Navigation Act of 1924 raised labour costs.82 The 30 percent decline in passenger ships (1923 to 1930) was accompanied by a 30 percent rise in the average size of these vessels. But the average size of the Australian fleet as a whole remained static. In other words the rise in investment in more cargo vessels was counterbalanced by the relative increase in the size of passenger vessels. The latter increased from about two-thirds to twice as large as cargo vessels between 1913 and 1930.83 Much of this was directed at first class passenger demand, but this soon after 1930 due to the depression and then the expansion of commercial air services.

Thus by 1930, more than 70 percent of the fleet of larger companies was in cargo vessels compared to 40 percent pre-WWI. Yet the average gross tonnage of the large companies' fleets was only marginally (about 17%) higher than 1913. (Table 7.6). Moreover many were second hand because ships were impossible to obtain during the war, and difficult after it.84 When converted to net tonnage, the increase is less than 20 percent, from the turn of the century. In 1930 the ASOF companies owned half the Australian fleet and operated more than 80 percent of the tonnage.85 The average vessel size (in net tons) of the Australian fleet in total remained almost static from 1901 to 1930 (Table 7.2). However, much of the Australian trade, interstate and local, was conducted in small ports, which were under pressure to increase capacity to handle larger vessels.

These changes had a number of effects. The large proportion of liners diminished the efficiency of the fleet's cargo capacity and pressured cargo handling and sailing schedules because companies had to account for passenger needs.86 Liners were restricted to trades where passengers were,87 whereas cargo vessels could trade in all types of ports. The fit out costs for liners were not commensurate with revenue from passengers. And passengers were expensive because they needed more deck staff, more craft workers for maintenance of cabins and so on,88 and passenger facilities hampered ship design for efficient stevedoring.89 Overall, the economic advantage gained from cargo vessels was offset by their small size, and the design constraints of passenger vessels attenuated efficiency gains in cargo handling which came with larger size. Table 7.7 outlines
several measures of (sea-going) labour costs of passenger and cargo vessels of ASOF members from 1913 to 1931.

Columns (1) and (2) show the higher on-board labour costs for passenger vessels primarily due to the larger crew. Between 1913 and 1928 the average tonnage per crew member on cargo vessels fell marginally while the gain on liners was only marginal despite their much larger size. Indeed the ratio of wages (rate per 100 tons) for liner crews rose marginally in the mid-1920s, despite the 44.2 percent fall in the number of stewards and 23.8 percent fall in cooks on board between 1913 and 1930. Employers pointed to the Federal Navigation Act which came into operation on 1 July 1921 and other government legislation for many of these features.

Table 7.7 ASOF Fleet, Crews and Wages 1913–1922–1931

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Gross Tons per Passenger Vessels</th>
<th>Cargo Vessels</th>
<th>Ratio Monthly Wages/100 tons of Pass'r/Cargo Vessels</th>
<th>Average No of Seamen# per 1000 gross tons</th>
<th>Index of Col (3)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1913</td>
<td>45.5</td>
<td>76.5</td>
<td>1.49</td>
<td>8.77</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1922</td>
<td>42.9</td>
<td>73.9</td>
<td>1.57</td>
<td>8.66</td>
<td>98.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1923</td>
<td>43.4</td>
<td>73.8</td>
<td>1.51</td>
<td>8.69</td>
<td>99.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1924</td>
<td>43.9</td>
<td>75.7</td>
<td>1.52</td>
<td>8.47</td>
<td>96.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1925</td>
<td>44.2</td>
<td>76.7</td>
<td>1.55</td>
<td>8.35</td>
<td>95.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1926</td>
<td>43.6</td>
<td>76.3</td>
<td>1.57</td>
<td>8.28</td>
<td>94.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1927</td>
<td>46.3</td>
<td>76.5</td>
<td>1.45</td>
<td>7.99</td>
<td>91.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1928</td>
<td>46.2</td>
<td>75.2</td>
<td>1.45</td>
<td>8.08</td>
<td>92.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1929</td>
<td>48.1</td>
<td>73.1</td>
<td>1.35</td>
<td>7.95</td>
<td>90.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1930</td>
<td>49.7</td>
<td>74.7</td>
<td>1.33</td>
<td>7.80</td>
<td>88.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1931</td>
<td>50.6</td>
<td>73.3</td>
<td>1.27</td>
<td>7.77</td>
<td>88.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

a Figures based on January 1913 and December of each year 1922 to 1931
b calculated from number of crew carried and total tonnage of passenger and cargo vessels for the month
* ie all ship board crew (officers, engineers, seamen, carpenters, stewards and cooks, pursers, wireless operators, surgeons, musicians and boys)

Table: 7.8 Total Overseas Shipping Entered and Cleared Australia,* Net Tonnage and Average Size, 1890 to 1945–46 (quinquennial)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Vessels (Net)</th>
<th>Tonnage (Net)</th>
<th>Av. Net Tonnage</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Vessels (Net)</th>
<th>Tonnage (Net)</th>
<th>* Av. Net Tonnage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1890</td>
<td>3,363</td>
<td>4,150,027</td>
<td>1234</td>
<td>1891</td>
<td>1,564</td>
<td>4,560,381</td>
<td>2915</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1895</td>
<td>3,331</td>
<td>4,567,883</td>
<td>1371</td>
<td>1895</td>
<td>1,583</td>
<td>5,303,805</td>
<td>3350</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1900</td>
<td>3,719</td>
<td>5,894,173</td>
<td>1584</td>
<td>1900</td>
<td>1,534</td>
<td>5,581,517</td>
<td>3638</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1905</td>
<td>4,088</td>
<td>7,444,417</td>
<td>1821</td>
<td>1905</td>
<td>1,615</td>
<td>6,237,676</td>
<td>3862</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1910</td>
<td>4,048</td>
<td>9,333,146</td>
<td>2305</td>
<td>1910</td>
<td>1,316</td>
<td>5,379,000</td>
<td>4078</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1915–16</td>
<td>3,324</td>
<td>8,538,322</td>
<td>2568</td>
<td>1915–16</td>
<td>1,146</td>
<td>5,563,000</td>
<td>4854</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1920–21</td>
<td>3,674</td>
<td>9,503,018</td>
<td>2586</td>
<td>1920–21</td>
<td>1,146</td>
<td>5,563,000</td>
<td>4854</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* multiple recording excluded by estimation prior to 1904 ** Entered reported after 1921, Average Net Tonnage is comparable
The contrast with overseas shipping to Australian ports indicates significant differences in size. Although they included many liners, the average size of overseas shipping grew markedly over the period (see Table 7.8). In 1901–1910, the Collins period, overseas vessel size rose more than 47 percent with a static number of arrivals and departures. Over 1900–1926 average overseas ship size more than doubled even though there was 50 percent decline in arrivals (and departures).

This was reflected in port activity. The Port of Brisbane is illustrative. In 1900–1910 arrivals increased less than 10 percent but average vessel size rose by more than 130 percent (see Table 7.9). In 1900–1930 ship arrivals remained static but size more than trebled. Local port authorities reported larger overseas vessels as early as 1900. In the 1920s vessels such as the 20,000 ton, 632 foot Orient SSCo's "Orama" entered Australian ports and in so doing "mark[ed] an era in the progress of shipping." In short, overseas shipping reaped gains in economies of scale from 1900 to the 1930s depression and beyond.

Table: 7.9 Port of Brisbane, Number of Shipping Arrivals and Average Net Tonnage, 1860–1970 (quinquennial)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Arrivals</th>
<th>Av. Net Tonnage</th>
<th>Change Av Net. Ton.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1860</td>
<td>124</td>
<td>235</td>
<td>+ 31%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1865</td>
<td>486</td>
<td>309</td>
<td>+ 31%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1870</td>
<td>350</td>
<td>282</td>
<td>- 8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1875</td>
<td>681</td>
<td>306</td>
<td>+ 8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1880</td>
<td>769</td>
<td>358</td>
<td>+ 17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1885</td>
<td>1524</td>
<td>458</td>
<td>+ 28%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1890</td>
<td>1170</td>
<td>603</td>
<td>+ 31%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1895</td>
<td>964</td>
<td>699</td>
<td>+ 16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1900</td>
<td>1181</td>
<td>942</td>
<td>+ 35%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1905</td>
<td>1129</td>
<td>1206</td>
<td>+ 28%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1910</td>
<td>1286</td>
<td>1806</td>
<td>+ 50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1915</td>
<td>1366</td>
<td>1818</td>
<td>+ 1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Arrivals</th>
<th>Av. Net Tonnage</th>
<th>Change Av Net. Ton.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1920</td>
<td>903</td>
<td>1911</td>
<td>+ 5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1925</td>
<td>1001</td>
<td>2946</td>
<td>+ 54%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1930</td>
<td>1138</td>
<td>3161</td>
<td>+ 7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1935</td>
<td>1388</td>
<td>3086</td>
<td>- 2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1940</td>
<td>1182</td>
<td>2618</td>
<td>- 15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1945</td>
<td>812</td>
<td>2877</td>
<td>+ 10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1950</td>
<td>784</td>
<td>3558</td>
<td>+ 24%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1955</td>
<td>1190</td>
<td>3206</td>
<td>- 10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1960</td>
<td>1409</td>
<td>3380</td>
<td>+ 5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1965</td>
<td>1568</td>
<td>4105</td>
<td>+ 21%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1970</td>
<td>1573</td>
<td>4776</td>
<td>+ 16%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: compiled from the Govt of Qld, Annual Reports from the Engineer for Harbours and Rivers, 1908–1928, and Govt of Qld, Annual Reports of the Dept of Harbours and Marine, 1929–1970

Over the same period sailing vessels in overseas shipping declined sharply (see Table 7.10) to a negligible level in 1924. The slight rise during WWI resulted from government demands for steamships forcing companies to use sail (including the Commonwealth Line). Sailing vessels also declined in interstate trades in the same manner. Overall the rise in the average size of ships visiting Australian ports was predominantly due to overseas vessels. Certainly international shipping was better suited to larger ships, nevertheless the contrast highlights the marginal changes to ships by the dominant companies in Australian shipping.

Size and design are only a weak measure of ship technology. But looking at engine type in comparison with overseas confirms the same pattern of slow technological change. Improvements in marine steam engines and fuelling after 1900, where generally outstripped by advantages offered by motor vessels – lower running costs, faster refuelling, lower manning, and lower fuel space yielding greater freight capacity. The marine diesel engine appeared in 1912 and quickly expanded in Europe quadrupling from 1914 to 1920. In contrast, diffusion in British shipping in the Australian trade was slow. Diesels were first used in the Europe–Australia run in 1913, but only in 1922 by a British owned vessel. Diesels accounted for less than 20 percent of overseas arrivals by 1929. British overseas companies were more concerned over high initial investment cost and the cost and availability of oil rather than their advantages. In the 1920s few motorships
Chapter Seven

appeared in the Australian fleet and only in the late 1920s were they introduced in interstate shipping.\(^\text{102}\) This was reflected in the operational ratings labour force of ASOF companies. In 1913 the Federation operated 136 vessels employing 2694 seamen; and in 1930, 116 vessels with 2239 seamen or 14.7 percent fewer vessels but only 9.3 percent less men. Columns (3) and (4) of Table 7.7, show that labour input fell only 11.1 percent over the same period.\(^\text{103}\) Since oil burning motor vessel required no stokers, and fewer ratings in the engine room, it appears motor vessels had only a marginal impact on the sea-going labour force.\(^\text{104}\)

Table 7.10 Overseas Vessels, Entrances by ship type 1904–1924/25 (even years)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Steam (Tons)</th>
<th>Sailing (Tons)</th>
<th>Ships</th>
<th>Ships</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1904</td>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>2.1</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1906</td>
<td>5.9</td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1908</td>
<td>6.9</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1910</td>
<td>7.8</td>
<td>1.4</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1912</td>
<td>8.9</td>
<td>1.2</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1914–15</td>
<td>8.0</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>94</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1916–17</td>
<td>7.2</td>
<td>0.4</td>
<td>94</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1918–19</td>
<td>5.5</td>
<td>0.6</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1920–21</td>
<td>4.4</td>
<td>0.30</td>
<td>93</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1922–23</td>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>0.13</td>
<td>97</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1924–25</td>
<td>5.5</td>
<td>0.06</td>
<td>99</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* all years after 1925 less than 0.1%

Source: Commonwealth Yearbooks (various years)

Finally, shipowners concern with market regulation in shipping misjudged the effects of rail transport. Rail construction was initially complementary to shipping – linking the hinterland to coastal ports usually in response to political pressure on colonial governments. This expanded ports and the freight market. However, from the 1890s to 1930 the ground work was established for a significant erosion of the shipping freight market. Governments were keen to see regions link to the capital cities and later inter-city links. Thus rail bypassed ports. As early as the 1880s railways negatively affected local shipping trades – companies servicing western Victoria (e.g. Western SNCo., the South Australian Gulfs, NSW, South Coast (Illawarra SNCo.), Newcastle (Newcastle SNCo., Hunter River New SNCo.) and later the Northern Rivers trades ( Clarence, Richmond and Maclean Rivers SNCo) were the first affected.

Shipowner Associations\(^\text{105}\) and large interstate companies monitored rail competition and lobbied governments, but the development policies of governments were paramount.\(^\text{106}\) In the 1920s long distance and interstate rail links were completed – Brisbane to North Queensland in 1922, the Nullarbor line a year earlier and the Sydney–North Coast a few years later although the final bridge over the Clarence River and link to Brisbane was not completed until 1932. But interstate links – such as Melbourne to Sydney – required double-handling due to different rail gauges. Road transport only eroded long distance shipping freight from the late 1930s. These factors delayed the competitive effects of rail and road for most of the period covered in this chapter and until after WWII. Particularly in heavy freight shipping, retained a "practical monopoly"\(^\text{107}\) until the 1930s depression.

5. Summary and Conclusions

In this section I have shown that the shipping industry was stabilised through the commercial influence of a small number of dominant companies. The instability before 1890 gave way to a
period of growing commercial cooperation after the 1890 strike – towards a federation institutional mode. Control of the freight market initially relied on a neo-mercantilist approach (traffic deals, joint purse agreements and dubious exclusive market deals) and emerged as an extensive revenue pooling, route and tonnage allocation arrangement under the 'Collins' scheme in 1902. Business practices, such as billing, payment, ticketing and documentation systems were introduced or extended. The ASOF companies controlled half the vessels and at least three-quarters of the tonnage capacity and were thus able to organise a wide-ranging web of commercial rules.

Over almost a decade Collins ensured the dominance of the main companies and protected their profits. Eventually prohibited by Federal Labor Government legislation, sporadic informal agreements continued until WWI. War pressures then forced the Federal Government to regulate shipping. It turned to a pooling system. This passed into private control after 1920 through the Associated Steamship Owners. It was a state sponsored form of market organisation, albeit recast in a 'rational' economic form.

War-time pressures saw the state embrace a new understandings of industry, regulation for efficiency. PM Hughes dismissed arguments against a shipping pool in precisely these terms, arguing that "the whole trend of modern business was towards the formation of combines, both Capital and Labour – which proved [ie provided] for efficiency and economical management." The 1929 Tariff Board report into shipping concluded, felicitously for shipowners, that post-war pool arrangements were, a decided benefit to both the Interstate shipping industry and the community in that it made for 'rationalisation' of the services without which it ...[was] doubtful whether ... efficiency and ... the same freights and fares as now obtain [could have been attained].

The language, rhetoric and rationality of economic activity shifted from a neo-mercantilist to rationalist form through the federation mode of coordination. Conferences another writer noted, were "merely the same movement towards large-scale industry ... prominent in all modern production." In short, market regulation was seen as central to production rationalisation in Australian shipping after 1900. Interestingly shipowners viewed shipping as neutral service, CSOA Chairman and ASSCo manager Edward Northcote stated on the eve of WWI that, "we are only intermediaries, that is, we must pass it [higher wage cost] on to the general public...".

Federation coordination inhibited technological innovation in ships, in part because owners perceived that 'commodious' passenger vessels gave companies prestige. But factors such as – war requisitioning, post-war recession, economic slow down after 1925 and rail competition also played a part. By the depression, vessels in Australia were relatively small and inefficient, with unbalanced manning (high deck labour component for passengers). The industry was not well placed to handle external challenges.

This was the context of the early years of the formalised industrial relations and the development of labour management. Employers focused primarily on costs and continuity of production, particularly labour costs and stability as I will show in chapter nine. Moreover, slow technological change in ships was matched by slower change in cargo handling and stevedoring, as I shall show below. This meant that work intensification was the 'natural' labour policy in cycles of recession. So, in 1911–1914, 1917–20 and 1927–1933 onwards the employers repeated the 1890s policy of tightening labour control, work intensification and cutting wages and conditions. I will show that labour market structure was a vital component in this process, since work intensification
relied on informal control under the industrial authority of arbitration, rather than reconstruction of the labour process. Consequently the workers dependence on workplace informalism and the effort bargain (salient for manual work) was unintentionally sustained.

The remainder of this chapter further examines the context of industrial relations in terms of business organisation and the coordination of employers' labour policies.

III. Business Organisation and Stevedoring Operations

In this section I will discuss the re-organisation of companies, with particular reference to stevedoring. In the wake of the 1890 strike shipping companies sought to extend their authority over the stevedoring labour process. The section emphasises the choices available to companies in forging control-systems in an increasingly integrated capitalist organisational structure. It also examines the technological and production effects of attempting to integrate stevedoring. Bearing in mind the product market regulation, I argue that little technological development occurred in stevedoring.

1. Organisational Framework

When employers attempted to regulate the market after the 1890 strike they also turned to control over internal business organisation. Company size, number of vessels and trades covered all required information and control. Before 1880 only the AUSNCo was large enough for the development of internal operational regulations. After 1890 trade pressures, labour conflict and economic depression all triggered demands for improved control-systems as companies moved to integrate their operations. It represented the emergence of business management in the transition to real subsumption of labour, but was not exclusively directed at the control of labour.

As I have argued, post-1890 marked the stabilisation of shipping. This included the rationalisation of companies where several companies amalgamated or were taken over. Starting in the Queensland trades the British owned Queensland SSCo. had driven the ASNCo into bankruptcy. Its assets were purchased by the Inchape group and combined with QSSCo to form the Australian United S.N.Co. (AUSNCo) managed under the British India group. Commencing trading in January 1888,114 it was the largest Australian–based company on the coast, with approximately forty vessels. Only the Dunedin–based Union SSCo of NZ operated more. The latter amalgamated with the Hobart–based Tasmanian SNCo in June 1891 bringing the Union company fleet to fifty–four vessels, totalling over 40,000 gross tons.115 In 1896 the USSCo purchased the small coastal company of T. A. Reynolds & Co. running between the Tasmanian East Coast and Melbourne.116 The effects of the depression and railway competition forced an amalgamation of the Newcastle SSCo and the Hunter River SNCo to form the Newcastle and Hunter River SSCoLtd in 1893.117 Other local coastal companies were under increasing pressure as cargo and passenger traffic drifted to rail.118 The Illawarra SNCo, reconstructed in 1904, then formed the Illawarra and South Coast SNCo Ltd and was reconstructed again in 1920, eventually abandoning the passenger trade in 1928.119 The Adelaide SSCo took over the local gulf trader, the Coast Steamships Ltd in January 1915.120 Huddart Parker reorganised its Bass Strait operations through the formation of the Tasmanian Steamships at the end of the first world war. AUSNCo under the direction of James Mackay purchased the Eastern and Australian Co. soon after the end of WWI.121
After 1890, the deepening depression prompted companies to review their operations. Their significance for argument here is that the myriad of operational changes demonstrated the deepening of capitalist production relations in the organisational configuration of companies. In response to problems of cargo control from 1889, the managing director of Howard Smiths, dispatched Harry Lotherington to "inspect and report on the different offices of this Company" in mid-1891. He uncovered fraud in Brisbane, Maryborough, Rockhampton and Melbourne offices, along with reports on several Queensland ports. ASSCo general manager Edward Northcote, moved his office to Sydney in February 1899. On 20 February, the Board of Directors resolved that all agencies and branches "refer to him all matters of management and policy of the Company." Northcote sought direct information from offices and shipmasters on company affairs, and over the following decade it flowed to him on everything from coal supplies to the food supplied to opposition ships' crews. AUSNCo management was reorganised under the command of James Mackay in London. James Mackay visited Australia, following the resignation of Bland as general manager of AUSNCo, to address the management problems which had plagued the company for several years. Over six weeks he reorganised management which affected the company for a generation, since B. W. Macdonald headed the company for the next twenty years.

Overall, the development of internal control systems extended the capacity to organise which was unnecessary in the discontinuous organisational structure and undeveloped in the coordinated structure. Even the SOAA was forced to cut costs in the depths of the depression in 1893–1895, dismissing staff and reducing salaries. Company integration also required the acquisition of functional areas that were necessary for command over production as a whole.

The USSCo made several purchases in New Zealand, most significantly the Wellington Patent Slip Co. in November 1907. The Adelaide SSCo took over the Adelaide Steam Tug Co. Ltd in August 1918 and added ship engineering and repair to its holdings. The ASNCo's large Sydney engineering works, dating from the 1850s, was supplemented in 1891 with a workshop at Kangaroo Point in Brisbane. It was expanded over the next 30 years. The ASSCo established an engineering works at Pt Adelaide in the mid–1890s, adding one in Sydney before WWI. The acquisition of these and other functions (mainly in coal) expanded related business operations but not the integration of production. Rather it was centred on ownership and administration of the unit of capital, which had production effects. Acquisitions of new functions were not directly accompanied by organisational integration. New control systems were often more directed at reducing costs rather than streamlining system or increasing productivity. ASSCo general manager M. Anderson, remarked to the Board in 1920, the "task of administering large industrial undertakings becomes more arduous as the system becomes more complicated." Complexity emerged over the forty years covered here from the growth of functions and number of locations. Assuming control over stevedoring contributed to the expansion of locations. Turnaround speed, the capital invested in ships, operating costs such as harbour charges and industrial disruption all pressured shipowners to integrate stevedoring into shipping production. Yet stevedoring was seen as an ancillary and subordinate function, essentially unproductive and expensive. As a result technological change in stevedoring was negligible, despite the financial pressure on shipping capital. This pressure generated by the industrialisation of shipping absorbed
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and subsumed stevedoring more through exigency rather than production redesign. Stevedoring progressively came under the direct and indirect control of shipowners.

There were three mechanisms used to more closely integrate the stevedoring labour process into shipping production. First, an extension of the agency network, second, establishment of permanent offices in more ports, where stevedoring could be directly undertaken or sub-contracted under tighter control. Third, shipping companies established specialist stevedoring companies either as subsidiaries or as jointly owned undertakings.

The use of the traditional agency structure was indirectly extended where agents, such as Burns Philp and Dalgety, (holding agent agreements for several shipping companies) built extensive branch networks. Burns Philp, headquartered in Sydney, had 11 branch offices in Queensland and Western Australian ports. Developing new procedures to improve information was merely a further step in an existing system. The Adelaide SSCo expanded its agencies from 44 in 1895 to 56 (with 3 more overseas) in 1914 and 58 in 1919. Other companies followed suit. The pool arrangements provided a financial impetus for shipping companies to monitor cargo types and quantities, as well as data on vessels. Thus the framework for control systems continually matured.

Labour management also played a role – as labour matters were increasingly centralised under the ASOF. Agents had to operate under ASOF negotiated agreements with the WWF, storemen and packers, tally clerks, coalworkers and so on. Soon after its formation in mid-1899 the ASOF negotiated an agreement with the MWLU. Companies, such as the AUSNCo, issued instructions to its stevedores and agents regarding agreed port working rules, covering, rates of pay, hours of work, broken time, payment of fares, waiting time, and holidays. The ASOF coordinated policy meetings with other employers of waterside labour in Melbourne (stevedoring companies and 'outside' shipping interests). Company instructions were issued for later negotiated agreements in other ports.

This process transformed the traditional, relatively autonomous agencies into quasi-branch offices or franchised operations where shipping companies specified more conditions of their business operations.

The second mechanism of functional integration was the establishment of more permanent offices. From about 1900 to the 1920s the major shipping companies extended branch offices in all capital ports, as well as regional and smaller ports depending on a company's routes. For example the Adelaide SSCo had 12 permanent offices in 1900 employing about 90 staff, 13 in 1914, 14 offices in 1918, as the Sydney agency of G. S. Yuill & Co. was discontinued and Northcote's office established as a full branch, and 16 offices in 1921. Clearly central control over operations was easier for internal company branch offices. The latter were predominantly concerned with administrative support for shipping and general company affairs. Stevedoring departments were established or contract stevedores were more closely monitored by the companies. This reflected overseas practice.

For production operations, the marine superintendent and superintending engineer were the two key positions. There were three main changes in company offices after the 1890s. First, the autonomy of local managers in commercial activities was curbed as business decision-making was centralised and communication improved particularly via the telephone. Second, branch offices could monitor their activities more closely, particularly stevedoring. The latter was often absorbed
into the firm structure, although operationally not tightly coupled. The establishment of the Howard Smith's Adelaide office is illustrative. The company specifically stated that a "competent man [to] ... be engaged and employed solely ... for the management of the cargo and passenger business in Adelaide [and outports]." This position was in effect an operations manager.

The third change was the nature of labour management as noted earlier. For a labour intensive industry, industrial relations was critical for operations. Labour issues were handled centrally via federal industrial relations policy by the employers association. The spread of company branch offices prompted the formation of state employer committees, so that federal policy was implemented through state committees. Thus company management and supervisory personnel came to depend more on state employer organisations for policy and information. But in one case at least management staff were seen as poor. An internal AUSNCO report on its 24 shipmasters concluded, "most were too old, not active enough" and variously described as "tactless", "overbearing" and "not good administrators." One man given a stevedoring job - as wharfinger - was subsequently returned to sea, "owing to his violent treatment" of workers. In general policy, companies ceded a significant role to the employers association, which became a de facto labour management in the industry.

The third mechanism of integrating stevedoring into shipping production was via specialist stevedoring companies that were owned by shipping companies in some way. Again the employers' desire to organise labour was central. Concern over the industrial effects of labour instability, dating from the 1880s, combined with centralised control over engagement in the 1890 Labour Bureau made stevedoring companies attractive.

New stevedoring companies included; Howard Smith's partnership with two local companies to form the Queens Wharf Co. at Port Adelaide in 1892. Company "management [was] vested in a wharfinger independent of the firms" although each partner undertook to "work the business to the best interest of the property." AUSNCo purchased shares in the newly established Sydney Lighterage Co. in 1902. Burns Philp and AUSNCo formed the Carpentaria Lighterage Co. in 1900, for lighterage and stevedoring in North Queensland, as part of a broader agreement in December 1899. The Maryborough Wharves Ltd was formed in 1906 by AUSNCo as part of an agreement with Howard Smith Co. The Federal Wharf Co. Ltd was formed by Howard Smiths and the ASSCo in July 1901 to operate in Port Pirie and other ports. Later the Yarra Stevedoring Co. (in Melbourne) and the Port Jackson Stevedoring Co. (in Sydney) were formed by several shipping companies in 1917. Both centralised stevedoring labour employment in those ports. Companies such as the Victorian Stevedoring Co. held a central place in the development of industrial relations policy.

Australia's largest shipping company, the Brisbane based AUSNCo extended its activities under general manager B. W. Macdonald. Initially managed through the British India and Queensland Agency Co. (BIOA), James Mackay (then Baron Inchcape) ordered BIOA wound up in 1915 and replaced by the newly created Macdonald Hamilton & Co. This firm began business in October 1915 in shipping and stevedoring operations. AUSNCo stevedoring contractor in Fremantle, Robert Laurie & Co., was bought out by Macdonald Hamilton and Elder, Smith & Co. In Adelaide, the same two companies, with Gibbs Bright & Co. and John Darling & Sons owned the SA Stevedoring Co Ltd. In Newcastle, four shipping companies, including Macdonald
Hamilton set up the Newcastle Stevedoring, Tug and Lighterage Co. Ltd in 1904. In 1914 the company, with Gibbs Bright and Dalgety, formed the Great Northern Stevedoring Co. AUSNCo undertook its own stevedoring in other ports.

Finally, shipowners strongly opposed stevedoring operations by public authorities. In early 1906, ASOF members successfully appeared before a Melbourne Harbour Trust inquiry into establishing wharfinger operations. The inquiry recommended against such operations. Only Fremantle Harbour Trust undertook significant stevedoring operations, employing about half of the waterside workers at the end of the 1920s. Eight private companies handled the remainder of the work in Fremantle. Several of these were directly owned by the interstate companies and held shares in the remainder.

The organisational changes discussed so far were directed at operational integration rather than market dominance. Yet they were built on the federation institutional mode providing market and revenue stability in an industry sensitive to the level of economic activity. Gaining control of stevedoring was largely driven by the search for certainty. In this process stevedoring was formed as a capitalist industry dependent on the shape of shipping.

However, there were obstacles to greater shipowner control over stevedoring. In Sydney, the 1899 closure of the Labour Bureau, which had centrally engaged labour from the 1890 strike, occurred amid an interest in forming a stevedoring company. However they soon faced the attention of the newly established Arbitration Court in NSW. The Court wished to inspect Company accounts as part of its award investigations. Shipowners quickly sought ASOF advice and they found in January 1902, that the use of contractors avoided the Court. One scheme proposed the formation of a single company to employ all wharf labour for the Sydney interstate trade, although no action was taken. It was in the wake of this action that the AUSNCo purchased 750 shares in the Sydney Lighterage Co. mentioned above. Three years later, in 1905, the threat of union action in response to the first Sydney waterside workers Award prompted the Collins group to plan a single stevedoring company. The SWLU recognised its potential impact and Hughes persuaded the employers to negotiate an agreement with the WWF to avoid its establishment.

In early 1910 the Adelaide SSCo suggested a stevedoring company in Sydney. Accordingly the Sydney state committee submitted a joint company proposal to the ASOF. It was rejected as inopportune at the time. Yet lengthy discussions took place in which there was clear support for the proposal. It took the 1917 strike for the formation of the Port Jackson Co., mentioned above.

Finally, looking at the company level, the managerial control of stevedoring was generally under a marine superintendent. However this management provided a framework, rather than a mechanism of practical change on the wharf. The possibilities for greater managerial control were not realised between 1890 and the 1930s, in that no reconstruction of the labour process occurred. Indeed direct operational aspects of stevedoring remained in the hands of ex-sea-going personnel and foremen, who were often recruited from waterside workers. Employers were content to reap the economic advantages of informalism at the local level within a more integrated company framework. The nature and boundaries of first line supervisors' work were altered as pressure increased for improved labour utilisation. But then foremen and superintendents were constrained by new managerial control—systems and industrial relations regulations so that formalisation
narrowed the scope of local informal practices. The transition to an integrated organisational structure was marked by such inconsistencies.

2. Effects on Technological Change

There was little technological development in stevedoring up to WWII. British specialist port administrator Sir George Buchanan was appointed to a Federal government inquiry into Australian ports that reported in 1926 on their conditions, including ship accommodation, loading equipment and handling methods. He noted the existence of several hand, hydraulic, steam and electric powered cranes in Sydney and Melbourne, but compared to British, American and even Indian ports, there were no wharf cranes for stevedoring or handling cargoes on wharves. So, "all lifting is done by ships gear [in Sydney]" and "all discharging and loading done by ships gear [in Melbourne]." His report concluded that Sydney was "almost devoid of mechanical equipment and ... deficient in railway communication and the port of Melbourne had "practically no mechanical equipment ... faced ... congestion in the future ... unless railway communications [were] improved" and the dock lay-out was uneconomic. Port Adelaide, had practically no mechanical equipment, road and rail communications were deficient and the layout of future dock construction was poor.

Brisbane and Fremantle were different. Brisbane was the only major port where most wharfage was in private hands. But the port lacked adequate administration, and required a Trust to co-ordinate investment. Stevedoring still relied on the ships' gear. Adelaide SSCo had one 10-ton crane, AUSNCo three, there were five cranes in the coal trade and several smaller ones on other wharves, but these were not used in direct stevedoring operations. In contrast, Fremantle was under public control and was the most developed. The Harbour Trust controlled the port's physical assets and undertook a large proportion of stevedoring and the use of mechanical equipment was "far ahead of any other port in Australia." Although its rail and road connections were inadequate. However, recent research on Fremantle up to WWII indicates that this equipment was not used for direct stevedoring operations. The port still used ships' equipment for loading and discharging. Moreover handling on the wharf was manual using hand-pulled or pushed equipment as in other ports. Around 1900 shipowners themselves pointed to inadequate sheds, shortage of trucks and discharging delays as the source of Fremantle's poor reputation.

Thus both public and privately operated ports had poor infrastructure and provision of stevedoring technology up to the 1930s depression. Only minor exceptions were found in some bulk cargoes - such as coal, wheat and certain bagged cargoes - where straights, chutes or conveyors were used in some ports. A 1920 federal inquiry into shipping noted the "antiquated methods of discharging coal at the main ports of Australia." Indeed, the conclusion is that technological change in stevedoring was more limited than in shipping.

Wharf accommodation in Australian ports was also poor. Small sheds, small berths, narrow wharf aprons, slow road access and narrow roads all contributed to poor port performance. To be sure many of these issues were addressed by Harbour Boards but the lack of funds and government pressures were major problems. The first concrete wharf apron in Sydney was constructed in 1923 at Darling Harbour but it was not until the end of the decade that tests confirmed the need for stronger aprons as wheel loads increased on wharves.
In reference to the Australian port system, Buchanan concluded that Australia operated too many ports, especially in overseas trades. Consequently some were ill-equipped or ill-designed for efficient stevedoring. The pattern of hinterland and railway development, government policy and finances and port administration were key problems. In Queensland, for example, separate Harbour Boards were elected, essentially on parliamentary franchise, rather than on the conventional basis of industry interests and government representation. Each port became a competitive beacon for their region resulting in thinly spread resources. Eight of the 15 ports in Queensland accepted overseas vessels. Buchanan's assessment was confirmed by a Queensland government inquiry a decade later in which it was recognised that a smaller number of large, well equipped ports was more efficient for shipping.

Moreover, port expansion to the 1930s was largely extensive rather than intensive. More wharfage was added, or improved, but little or no investment went into mechanical equipment to increase the rate of cargo handling across the wharf. The maximum rate of cargo handling in the 1920s for 500 foot ship was estimated at about 2,000 tons per 8 hour day, if wharf equipment and good ship's gear were used. Using only the ordinary ship's gear, the rate dropped to 1,200 tons. In Buchanan's view Sydney and Melbourne had "almost phenomenal lengths of quay space", 60,000 and 50,000 feet respectively, significantly out of proportion with trade of 6.78 and 4.89 million tons annually. Ports, such as Bombay and Calcutta, handled marginally less cargo with more than 60 percent less wharfage.

The lack of technological change in ports replicated the pattern in ship technology in Australia. More importantly for stevedoring, the lack of shore based technological change meant that the rate of tonnage handled per day per vessel could only be increased by extending the working day through longer working hours or two or three shifts. For three shifts, the maximum handling rate for a 500 foot vessel would be about 5,000 tons and 3,000 tons using average ship's gear. The importance of the general pattern of technological change is pivotal for the conduct of the labour process and industrial relations. This is particularly so, despite numerous workers' reported increase in the burden of work as a consequence of technological changes.

3. Summary and Conclusions

In this section I have argued that organisational control in shipping companies was tightened from the 1890s depression to the 1920s. Control over markets stabilised the environment and amalgamations and better internal controls consolidated shipping companies. The moves to vertical integration marked the transition to an integrated organisational structure. However horizontal integration was very limited, due largely to federation type market regulation established by the leading companies after 1900. Integration was driven by operational requirements rather than direct product market competition since shipping remained the major long distance supplier. Rail displaced shipping in short haul and intra-state trades, but was yet to greatly affect interstate trade. The emergence of a more integrated organisational structure relied on market regulation, rather than as a method of securing such an advantage.

The integration of stevedoring took two predominant forms; branch offices of shipping companies undertook the management of stevedoring, and second, the formation of wholly or jointly-owned stevedoring companies. The third form, the agency structure, continued, albeit under conditions of an increasing reduction on agents' operational autonomy as its nineteenth century
advantages atrophied. The coupling of the stevedoring labour process to shipping was achieved by converting the semi-autonomous form into a subsidiary form (whether internal, specialist stevedoring company, or monitored agency). That is the form of the dependency of stevedoring changed, but its operational characteristics — labour process content — remained largely unchanged.

Stevedoring was still seen merely as service function and cost to shipping. Management's interest focused primarily on shipping, with negligible investment in stevedoring resulting no technological change to raise productivity. The emergence of stevedoring as a capitalist industry was on a cost-plus basis. This pattern constrained employer options in labour management and industrial relations for more than fifty years after 1890.

IV. Industrial Organisation of Employers

This section is concerned with employer organisation from 1891 to 1928. I will argue that concern over industrial matters remained a key plank of this organisation and it was supplemented by concerns over government legislation and commercial interests. Industrial matters and legislation triggered the renewed need for better co-ordinated policy and action, but commercial interests made this a complex process. Of course much government legislation was focused on industrial matters, particularly that which established arbitration. The events of 1928 demonstrate a unique fusion of Federal government labour legislation and arbitration.

While concern over labour issues were the foundation of employer coordination the covert system of market regulation was also critical. Employer organisation in shipping was effectively dualist, where both the industrial and market dimensions generated mutually supportive pressures. The co-operation developed from demands for product market regulation enhanced organisational coordination and capacities of the employers' industrial policy examined in this section. The dualist nature of collective organisation was an essential enabling condition for the bifurcated management of labour mentioned above. The changed form of dependency that emerged after the 1890s markedly affected the structure of industrial authority. This organisational change externalised labour management in Australia, through an increasingly formalised pattern of industrial relations, based largely, but not exclusively on centralised arbitration. The arbitration system required collective organisation of employers. Whether part of an agreement or award or not, employment conditions and labour policy were decided outside the stevedoring 'industry', narrowly conceived. The centralisation of industrial relations in the absence of technological change limited the options at the centre as much as operational management in the labour process.

1. Organisational Continuity of Australian Employers

I have noted that shipowners established committees in the large ports of Melbourne and Sydney, to address the industrial organisation of workers, both sea-going and shore-based. The two key associations, the Sydney based SOAA and the VSOA in Melbourne, played a central role in the employers attempts to establish a national body. Initiatives came from the SOAA. Although it claimed intercolonial status, most of its membership was primarily NSW based with a few interests from other colonies and overseas companies. It was most prominent in the 1890 strike, but its influence waned considerably.

After the 1890 strike the SOAA still reported a working relation with associations in Melbourne and Adelaide. It also developed information and support links with the British Shipping Federation, as did the VSOA. The SOAA became an honorary member. The two
associations exchanged "valuable information of mutual interest" through year to June 1891 and maintained contact in succeeding years. Indeed Shipping Federation President Thomas Devitt visited Australia in 1892. The VSOA also established contact with the British body. And as noted, the two central colonial associations regularly exchanged information, circularised important information for members of both associations, and the VSOA Minute Book contains the minutes of several SOAA meetings. Both associations maintained an administrative secretariat.

These associations both addressed two issues through the 1890s, the amalgamation of the separate colonial bodies and the organisation of overseas shipping. Both associations were keen to reorganise shipowner groups. The SOAA prepared a federal scheme in 1893, only to see it lapse "due to unsettled conditions" meaning that trade issues had resurfaced. Three years later, following consideration by a committee, the VSOA pushed for reorganisation of shipowners "on a broader basis" through a single association of intercolonial and local companies based in Melbourne. Support came from Munro of AUSNCo, and Houghton of the USSCo of NZ, under condition that there would be no split with the SOAA. Both were members of the SOA. Consequently, in July 1896, the Victorian committee resolved to form a federation, based on the British Shipping Federation model. A draft constitution was circulated to members in mid-September. The Port Adelaide association supported the proposal, nominating itself as a representative before any details were even decided. In November 1896, all companies had agreed in principle on the formation of an intercolonial federation, with details to be settled later that month. A draft constitution was approved in early December, subject only to legal opinion. But the initiative collapsed.

The VSOA reaffirmed the importance of federation over the next two years, but several forces stalled any positive action. Its main supporters, J. Leresche of the AUSNCo, W. Appleton (Huddart Parker) and James Burns (Burns Philip) were located in different cities, Brisbane, Melbourne and Sydney respectively. While most major companies favoured federation, those opposed were able to marshal smaller intrastate companies that feared being engulfed to block any action. The only apparent success was the formation of the Fremantle Branch of the SOAA in 1896. Fremantle shipowners requested information from the VSOA early in that year about forming an association. Yet it became a branch of the Sydney group, despite a membership of almost entirely Melbourne based intercolonial companies.

In October 1898 the federation issue resurfaced and was referred to a subcommittee in Victoria. The latter waited two months for ASSCo's Northcote return from overseas, since ASSCo membership was seen as "absolutely necessary" and his past reluctance to join. By early 1899 Northcote still appeared unwilling to accept the proposed conditions, being intent on pursuing a more aggressive commercial and organisational policy after taking over from Turnbull as general manager. He had clashed with others over trade regulation and differences that were still apparent in 1898, the year the Melbourne SSCo withdrew from the Victorian Association.

This discord and the lack of progress was viewed with dismay by the committee. In mid-January 1899 the association was dissolved by unanimous vote, effective from 28 February, in hope that a reorganisation "upon a broader and more equitable basis" would not be forlorn. Triggered by a major dispute in Fremantle, impending political federation and the scale of trade deals,
employers soon recommenced negotiations. Indeed Northcote himself moved to support a new association a week before the official dissolution of the original VSOA.\textsuperscript{207}

Negotiations through April and May produced agreement in June and the new ASOF met in Melbourne for the first time in September 1899.\textsuperscript{208} The founding members were Huddart Parker, ASSCo, McIlwraith McEacham, Union SSCo and AUSNCo., later joined by the Melbourne SSSCo in November 1902.\textsuperscript{209} The SOAA soon lost influence on national employer policy, despite an optimistic report in mid-1899. Its position was described as "thoroughly sound" and Rules were updated at the annual meeting.\textsuperscript{210} But the SOAA accepted a motion in October to wind up the association, holding its last meeting eighteen months later in early 1901.\textsuperscript{211} The ASOF quickly established a Sydney branch in March, 1901.\textsuperscript{212} These developments marked the end of the first phase of employer organisation that had begun haltingly in years 1878 to 1884.

Other state bodies soon became branches of the ASOF or worked more closely with it. The Fremantle association became a branch of the Federation the year before, and registered under the Western Australia Arbitration Act in 1905.\textsuperscript{213} In Queensland, the Federation monitored activities through its member companies,\textsuperscript{214} since the Brisbane Waterside Employers Association retained its independence until 1922. Then a branch of the ASOF was formed under secretary T. W. Brook.\textsuperscript{215} Adelaide shipowners closely cooperated with the Federation.

The second goal of shipowners was to include the overseas companies. After the 1890 strike, attempts to organise overseas companies or their representatives were unsuccessful. SOAA attempts to establish a separate section under its own charter also failed.\textsuperscript{216} In 1891 the association gained the support of overseas representatives, but no definite proposal\textsuperscript{217} developed since they required head office approval. Continued SOAA efforts the following year were rejected. Some companies feared possible restrictions on their "liberty" that such an organisation may entail\textsuperscript{218} although they continued to cooperate with Sydney shipowners, through the Free Labour Bureau. Overseas companies obtained labour through the Bureau, were involved in joint advertising to save money,\textsuperscript{219} and "liberally contributed donations to the funds of the Association [SOAA]"\textsuperscript{220} to maintain employer unity rather than contribute to policy.

In contrast, the VSOA apparently made few moves to organise overseas companies, as divergent commercial interests outweighed mutual interests. The Melbourne based intercolonial owners competed directly with overseas companies when the latter carried passengers around the coast, particularly between the east and west coasts. The VSOA had consistently criticised this practice. Despite their higher fares the overseas companies still took market share.\textsuperscript{221} The Association only succeeded in discouraging the Inchcape owned P. & O. Co, through the influence of AUSNCo's (a P&O company) manager Leresche,\textsuperscript{222} while other companies continued to carry coastal passengers.

No continuous organisation developed from the limited and \textit{ad hoc} cooperation\textsuperscript{223} that did occur, a situation that changed little under the ASOF. This was not surprising since the ASOF was dominated by Melbourne interests. Thus up to WWI overseas companies had little direct influence over national employer policy. Indeed, after 1901, shipowners pressed the new Federal government to prohibit overseas companies engaging in the coastal passenger market, and continued to complaint to the companies.\textsuperscript{224} Indeed overseas companies formed a separate organisation on the eve of the war, a issue I will return to below. One final point needs to be made.
The emergence of the ASOF alienated small local companies, in contrast to the inclusiveness of colonial associations, particularly the SOAA. SOAA Rules allowed for autonomy for special interests in separate sections. The effects of the 1890s depression saw the smaller, local companies withdraw, for a variety of reasons. The Newcastle SSCO and Hunter River SSCO withdrew claiming the SOAA could not deal with the problem of competition, and the Tasmanian SSCO and two small operators disappeared due to takeovers.225 The newly amalgamated Newcastle companies rejoined two years later, but six coal companies left and the membership fell to thirteen.226 The Newcastle & Hunter River SSCO resigned again in May 1894, claiming in adequate representation, particularly given the fees charged.227 In a similar manner, the Portland & Belfast SSCO withdrew from the VSOA in late 1893,228 reflecting the disaffection of small firms, and the declining importance of local trades, and takeovers by interstate companies.

In sum, the formation of the ASOF represented the shift in dominance of Australian shipping to Melbourne and national organisation of shipowners before similar organisation of wharf labourers. The Melbourne shipowners remained in a predominant for more than fifty years. For stevedoring the dominant influence of interstate229 companies in industrial matters arose directly from the increased organisational integration of these companies and their command of the labour process. In contrast overseas companies depended on agents and/or the same stevedoring companies as the Australian shipowners and thus remained unorganised for another decade.

The head offices of major interstate companies was in Melbourne, as was the seat of Federal Parliament between 1901 and 1927. The ASOF sought to consolidate and integrate the organisational basis of employers nationally and in each state. Finally, the close physical location of company and industry decision-making in Melbourne, was an important condition for the dual type of employer organisation that developed. Strong personal connections between ASOF company principals and senior management was an important factor in the continuity of employer organisation, management hierarchies and careers in the pattern of personal capitalism identified by Chandler.230

2. Labour Troubles and Employer Organisation

A key factor underpinning this formal organisation of employers was 'labour troubles'. While the industrial relations from 1891 onwards will be discussed in later chapters a brief consideration of its organisational impact is necessary. For industrial issues provided the impetus and opportunities for all sections of shipping employers to organise over this period.

As discussed in chapter six employer organisation in the 1880s emerged from the perceived challenge to employer authority. After the 1890 strike the SOAA and VSOA urged members to maintain vigilance against unions, SOAA Chairman Burns implored employers in 1891, to maintain their

"watchfulness in order that ... freedom of action may be retained and that the Companies ... may continue to manage their business free from the dictation or tyranny of [union] leaders.... With ordinary combination amongst shipowners they need never revert to the humiliating and harassing conditions which existed prior the recent struggle, a condition which was unsatisfactory to the shipowner, detrimental to the trade of the colonies and distasteful to all honourable workers."231
The condemnation of the 'tyranny' of union leaders at work was supplemented by concern over "dangerous socialist views" of union leaders and others\textsuperscript{232} which added another layer onto the ideology of industrial disruption.

The intense activity of the SOAA during the 1890 strike and for the year to 30 June 1891, slowed in subsequent years.\textsuperscript{233} While the suppression of unions was a primary goal, the SOAA established a Labour Committee to administer the Labour Bureau and handle industrial matters. It held "numerous" meetings in 1892.\textsuperscript{234} Recall also that Labour Bureau arrangements included the cooperation of overseas companies. Impending labour agitation in Fremantle spurred the interstate company offices in that port to form the association mentioned earlier. Wage demands of the Fremantle Lumpers were in fact granted late in the year due to unique circumstances.\textsuperscript{235} A little over two years later, employers vigorously pursued a reversal of those worker gains.

Following the 1890 strike victory employers turned to the wages of sea-going workers. All employers agreed cuts were needed but action was stalled in 1892 because they differed over the extent of cuts. McIlwraith McEacharn's unilateral cut of seaman's and fireman's wages of £2 a month succeeded in "bringing all sections of the two S.S. Owners' Associations together", particularly as workers went on strike.\textsuperscript{236} Engineers wages were cut in late 1893 with close cooperation between the two associations.\textsuperscript{237}

This pattern of cooperation on industrial issues was well established by the late 1890s. It was illustrated by James Mackay's advice to Macdonald (AUSNCo) that emphasised the great importance of absolutely united action on the part of employers in dealing with labour troubles ....[and that a] split amongst employers would be much worse than the loss occasioned by a strike."\textsuperscript{238} Despite this desire for unity, the search for an acceptable commercial formula for federation still took years. The ASOF merely formalised the existing centralisation of industrial relations in the interstate trade. Overseas and intrastate companies were excluded from the ASOF. By 1900 only New South Wales had an intrastate industry large enough to sustain any organisation.\textsuperscript{239} The British dominated overseas companies followed the lead in industrial matters of the interstate firms.

State industrial legislation, particularly in NSW, gave local and overseas firms more independence on labour issues. The NSW Industrial Arbitration Act of 1901, provided a mechanism for industrial organisation for stevedores in both trades. Five representative organisations of employers in shipping registered under the NSW Act in its first year. They included the NSW Coastal Steamship Owners Association (NSWCSOA), representing intrastate shipowners operating on the north and south coasts; the Sydney Stevedores', Wool-dumping and Lighterage Association (SSWLA), covering the stevedores working overseas ships and individual companies and coalowners. The SSWLA was not an overseas company association, but it was party to the NSW Deep-sea award covering Sydney overseas stevedoring.

The ASOF was initially equivocal, but registered under the NSW Act as the NSW Interstate Steamship Owners Association (NSWISOA) in early 1902, largely in response to the registration of Newcastle and Sydney wharf labourers.\textsuperscript{240} ASOF members also registered under the 1904 Commonwealth Conciliation and Arbitration Act, in July 1905, as the Commonwealth Steamship Owners Association (CSOA).\textsuperscript{241} The 1908 Qld Wages Board Act saw a deep-sea wages board cover the Brisbane overseas trade.\textsuperscript{242} The Fremantle owners sought registration under the 1900
State Acts prompted the formation and membership of scores of employers covering maritime employment (see Table 7.11 below).

But tensions between overseas and interstate interests continued, in this case between SSWLA and the Sydney interstate shipowners. The SSWLA was restricted to industrial matters and thus had negligible influence over general employer policy. Even its influence over industrial issues fell after 1910, when the CSOA concluded an extensive series of port level agreements in 1911 with the WWF around the country. This strengthened the position of Australian interstate owners over other employers.

Overseas companies maintained conference arrangements after federation but had no separate organisation in Australia. Official contact between the ASOF and overseas companies, or the SSLWA, appeared to be infrequent on either policy or industrial matters. The issue of coastal passengers remained, but more importantly the economics of the trades differed. In 1901, for example, the ASOF did not support the overseas companies in a suggested action against the Sydney waterside workers' ban on permanent men working on the wharf. The interstate companies opted to protect their own recent agreement rather than antagonise the union. The ASOF also resented earlier unilateral action by the overseas companies in granting union demands. In general the ASOF preferred to deal directly with London on industry matters, reporting "considerable correspondence" with the British Shipping Federation in years after 1900, and the British Chamber of Shipping throughout the period covered by this chapter.

Even within the interstate organisation the balance between Melbourne and the states moved to the former when the ASOF moved to a national scope for industrial agreements in 1907 and 1911. In addition, the Navigation Act eventually passed through Federal parliament in 1912. Both of these events spurred overseas companies into organisation. A Sydney-based Overseas Shipping Representatives' Association (OSRA) was formed in 1912 to focus on commercial interests and regulation. Industrial matters such as rising wages, costs of slow turnaround and industrial delays, and Arbitration Court decisions soon pressed OSRA into closer cooperation with ASOF. Compulsory conferences ordered by Judge Higgins in early 1914, required the two associations to adopt a common position. Government policy during WWI saw cooperative joint committees of employers in Melbourne and Sydney emerge, albeit with some discord. They both faced the 1917 general strike and the maritime unions which galvanised the wartime frustration amongst employers into broader cooperation, despite differences over competition on the coast and industrial matters. Even, 'outside' companies, such as James Patterson & Co., joined the ASOF, in September 1917.

With the background in wartime joint committees, OSRA suggested a new joint federal committee for industrial matters in early 1920 to counter the unions. The proposal envisaged "jurisdiction over other ports ... in order to endeavour to arrange for uniformity in connection with special cargoes and other matters arising out of the [WWF] award." While initially supportive, if it was Melbourne based, the ASOF decided three week later to do nothing. The Sydney Joint Committee circulated a draft constitution and a revised version was approved in April 1920. But apart from the appointment of the ASOF secretary as its representative to the council in June,
nothing came of it. The existing practices on industrial and political issues continued over the next few years.

In 1927 WWF industrial action again prompted calls for closer cooperation. The Union SS Co proposed a standing committee, that was established by the ASOF "to deal with the disputes which frequently arise in connection with the various awards, thus securing unity of action." From this initiative a federal joint employer committee emerged to deal with a WWF overtime strike in 1927. It allowed shipowners to act "for the first time in complete accord" which "apparently came as a shock to the strikers." To the employers' chagrin Arbitration Court intervention prevented an anticipated "successful" conclusion to this dispute. The joint committee was then renamed as the shipowners' Central Committee the following year. Based in Melbourne, it soon set up joint counterpart committees in each states to coordinate implementation of federal industrial relations policy. Its first official meeting was in early July 1928, only a matter of weeks before the 1928 waterfront strike.

This was the core of employer organisation. But it must be kept in mind that by the late 1920s there were many employer organisations in the industry. The average membership of these from 1922 to 1939 was 250. Table 7.11 provides indicative data.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year (Dec 31)</th>
<th>No. of Associations</th>
<th>No. of Branches</th>
<th>Membership</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1922</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>165</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1923</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>2</td>
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</tr>
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<td>1924</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>310</td>
</tr>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>1926</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>2</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>1927</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>2</td>
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</tr>
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<td>15</td>
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</tr>
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<td>1929</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>241</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1930</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>240</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year (Dec 31)</th>
<th>No. of Associations</th>
<th>No. of Branches</th>
<th>Membership</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1931</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>275</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1932</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>263</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1933</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>254</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1934</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>237</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1935</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>226</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1936</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>269</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1937</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>263</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1938</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>265</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1939</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>277</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* limited to "only the returns of those associations where members are unified for their own protection, and in order to be represented unitedly in cases before the Arbitration Courts, Wages Boards and other Wage Fixing tribunals" Labour Report, No. 13, 1922, p.15

** no figures in relation to employer associations were published in Labour Report No.31 (1940) or subsequent years

Source: CBCS, Industry Classification XI Shipping, Labour Reports, No.13 – No.30 (various years)

In summary, I have argued that between 1891 and 1928 industrial relations was a key factor in the formation of employer associations. Joint employer action was a priority in facing the industrial demands and action of shore-based and sea-going workers. Central shipowner organisation moved from Sydney to Melbourne in the 1890s with the formation of the ASOF in 1899 representing the major interstate companies. Attempts to draw other sections of shipping together earlier faltered, but industrial conflict in the early 1890s, 1914, 1917 and 1920 triggered greater cooperation. Finally comprehensive organisation was achieved in 1927 when interstate and overseas companies formed the Central Committee. Indeed, only the largest waterfront strike to that date, in 1928, finally cemented a formal Central Committee of Interstate and Overseas Shipowners.

3. The Politics and Economics of the Industry

The crucial importance of industrial matters was shaped by legislative context and economic conditions. In this section I argue that legislation adversely affected labour relations and that
changes in the pattern of overseas trade focused the overseas employers attention on port costs, including poor stevedoring labour relations, resulting in closer cooperation between the two employer groups.

In the legislative context, two main areas had an impact on shipping and stevedoring, the operational regulation of shipping and arbitration. The latter will be considered in later chapters. For operations, concern over freight prices, vessel safety, competence of personnel, and other issues emerged after the 1860s. However early regulation, such as competency certification for officers, did not result from widespread public concern. Twenty years later numerous government inquiries, between 1891 and the 1930s, changed this. They marked the end of unregulated shipping operations. Three areas of legislation had an impact on shipowners.

First, direct operational requirements. Regulations were introduced covering ship safety, load size, machinery, standards for equipment, provision for passenger and workers' safety and so on, primarily aimed at minimum production standards. The Commonwealth Sea Carriage Act, state Marine Board regulations and Industrial Codes fall into this category. Second, legislation that entailed the extension of employer social responsibility for employees. This is illustrated by the SA Employers Liability Act which was strongly resisted by the VSOA and precipitated joint action with overseas companies mentioned earlier. Employers rejected the costs involved. The SA Workers Compensation Acts, the Qld Workers' Compensation Act, the 1922 Qld Unemployed Workers Insurance Act and similar legislation over this period were also resisted by employers.

The third aspect of legislation affected commercial decisions of shipowners. The payment of a wide variety of government dues, and industry protection directly affected costs and market decisions on pricing. The two primary concerns were the Navigation Act and the range of port charges. Interstate companies resisted competition from overseas companies on the Australian coast before and after Federation. Moreover the ASOF was concerned at the myriad of state regulations and lobbied for standardisation in operational and commercial areas.

Shipowners rejected early federal government protectionist initiatives. They reported that the first Navigation legislation in 1904 evoked "extreme dissatisfaction". Similarly, shipowners rejected the Sea-Carriage of Goods Act, claiming it was drafted with "utter lack of consideration shown [sic] to the interests of shipowners", but it provoked continuing debate. Shipowners believed the cost of protection was too high. But since the legislation could not separate political and industrial issues, the shipowners and successive federal governments were caught in the dilemma. Interstate shipowners clearly wanted protection since as we have seen they objected to overseas companies carrying coastal passengers. This was especially acute after overseas companies dropped their rates in 1905. But the ASOF members were under pressure from anti-monopoly political forces – primary producers, public opinion and then the ALP – and could not openly campaign for market protection. Many politicians, Labor included, similarly faced the dilemma between extending 'new' protection (to ensure the viability of jobs and payment of 'reasonable' wages) and condemning monopoly. Federal protection for interstate companies would merely reinforce the de facto monopoly of the Collins group. Not surprisingly the initial Navigation Bill was shunted to a Royal Commission chaired by the Labor politician Watson. A similar federal inquiry into shipping mail services soon followed. Meanwhile, the passage of the Tariff Act
addressed employment and wages, and anti-monopoly legislation, modelled on the American Sherman Act, was directed against monopolies. Unfortunately for the shipping industry, the 1906 Industries Preservation Act, was central to Labor's political strategy to legitimate its 'new protectionism'. Protection for interstate companies, via the coastal clauses of the Navigation Act, required a quid pro quo – the abolition of monopoly, in addition to adequate pay and conditions for maritime workers. The Watson Royal Commission inter alia recommended work rate limits for firemen, minimum accommodation regulations, improvements in shipboard conditions and it condemned the rebate system and as well as protection for the coastal trades.275

Employers opposed this equation and took steps to block the initial legislation or push through amendments to leave Collins untouched.276 Pressure from overseas interests and London also delayed the Bill. The Federal government deferred consideration of the Commission's report pending an Imperial Shipping Conference,277 and the British Government subsequently called its own Royal Commission on Shipping Rings. Thus the Australian Navigation Act was not passed until 1912,278 the year OSRA was formed. Remember, that from June 1906 when the Industries Preservation Act first appeared, shipowners were occupied in protecting Collins. But they were stung by the loss of the Coal Vend case, and thus muted their opposition to trade-off provisions of the Navigation Act. It was the British government on the outbreak of WWI that pressured the Australian government to delay the Bill's introduction.279 It finally came into force in 1921. By this time Australian shipowners had stepped up pressure on the federal government regarding the costs of the Act's provisions.280

Through the 1920s the ASOF monitored the Act281 to protect their interests. Protests from the Tasmanian government, overseas companies, and others saw the federal government introduce licences in late 1922 for overseas companies to carry passengers and cargo on the coast. The ASOF ensured Australian wages were paid to the overseas crews,282 and lodged protests where Australian berths or tonnage was available. Similar actions were taken over any adverse proposal or change to the Act by shipowners.283 In short, despite its cost implications, the employers supported the Navigation Act but continually pressed for favourable conditions and emphatically rejected any claim of monopoly. They argued to the Associated Chambers of Commerce for example that "it was quite open for Oversea Companies to operate on the coast on precisely the same conditions as the Interstate Companies had to comply with."284 This statement belies the regulatory web of market control the ASOF already enjoyed.

The operations of overseas companies were regulated. Cabotage closed of most coastal business, despite the permit system. The Commonwealth Line of Steamers established by the Hughes Labor Government just before the conscription split,285 brought unwelcome competition. Although it required resources to oppose it also brought the overseas and interstate companies together in opposition to state ownership. The ASOF opposed the West Australian State Shipping Commission (from 1911).286 Internationally other countries enacted similar legislation to restrict British shipping. Partly to compensate for this British companies sought to expand their activities in the Australian trade, beyond their existing 75 percent of the market.287 To overcome cabotage they invested in Australian companies.288 The permit system itself gave British companies some access to coastal shipping,289 as did amendments to the Act after the 1924 Royal Commission. A key
point is that the trajectory of the national politics over shipping induced a commonality of interests amongst all shipowners, despite their apparent sectional and commercial differences.

In sum, the tortuous road of the Navigation Act indicates the influence of shipowners. Concern over legislation operated to centralise employer organisation and representation in the first decades of this century. The Navigation Act was particularly important as it spanned operational, industrial and commercial provisions. The ASOF was effective in monitoring Federal and State legislation which had an impact on shipping.\(^\text{290}\) Finally, politics served to realign the interests of Australian and overseas companies, with important consequences for industrial relations at the end of the 1920s. The impact of legislation also had an impact on costs, and I will now turn to the economic pressures on the industry.

Economic pressures came from both government generated costs and conventional production costs. Recall that all major ports, except Brisbane, were administered by public authorities by the 1920s. I argued above that the marginal status of stevedoring in shipping, and the political and economic constraints of port authorities slowed technological innovation. Port charges levied by port authorities and governments covered wharf, port, lighting, berthage, towage, mooring, landing fees, and similar charges.\(^\text{291}\) Since most charges covered all vessels, all shipowners were united in their opposition. Many charges were part of merchant business for centuries. But as state responsibility for port infrastructure and administration rose so did the charges. Political pressure over facilities and cost before 1900 were addressed by Harbour Authorities over the following twenty years but little improvement materialised. In the 1920s many ports were in financial trouble,\(^\text{292}\) despite steep rises in charges (more than double the pre-war level).\(^\text{293}\) High costs slowed innovation.\(^\text{294}\) At issue was the relation between operating and capital costs.

The ASOF noted changes in wharfage and similar rates from time to time before WWI. A wartime government proposal to levy a light house charge in addition to state government charges, triggered protests by joint meetings of OSRA and ASOF. The light charge came on top of wartime inflation, wage demands and the fixed charter rates paid by the Government. Although the 8 pence/ton a quarter was presented as only short-term funding for maintenance and capital costs, employers condemned it as a duplication of state charges and so a "penalty on oversea and Australian shipowners, Shippers and consignees."\(^\text{295}\) Moreover shipowners argued capital costs should be spread over at least twenty years to lower annual charges. This issue spilled over into the post war period.

Ironically, the federal government maintained that high port charges were a state responsibility.\(^\text{296}\) Shipowners stepped up their political pressure by pointing to a Prime Ministerial statement in London of May 1923, that port charges should be limited to cost recovery and not revenue raising.\(^\text{297}\) From 1920 to 1923 for example tonnage dues in Melbourne, Sydney and Brisbane increased more than fifty percent.\(^\text{298}\) In 1923, shipowners and commercial interests approached the WA government to remove a 20 percent surtax on port charges, but no action was taken. A joint OSRA and ASOF deputation lobbied the Prime Minister over high port, harbour and light dues, with little effect. In May 1923 the Associated Chambers of Commerce Conference also condemned high pilotage, light dues and port charges.\(^\text{299}\) Continued joint protests brought some successes in the following years.\(^\text{300}\)
Thus while the Hughes government deflected criticism via a series of inquiries,301 it did accept the continuation of the wartime pooling system, outlined above. A primary target of shipowner criticism were the financial practices of state governments – ports as direct sources of funds or via 'concealed' taxation based on dubious loan arrangements. Shipowners estimated almost £4 million was transferred to State consolidated revenue or retained by port authorities between 1924 and 1928302 (see Table 7.12). Furthermore, overseas companies objected to the imposition of direct company tax. They maintained that company tax rose 284 percent from 1914 to 1928.303 Sir George Buchanan estimated the income tax rises on shipping companies at 700 percent from 1914 to the mid-1920s.304 In short, rising costs from several sources was felt by both overseas and interstate shipping companies.

For overseas companies the impact of port charges was compounded by a rise in the number of port calls as the war and protectionism altered the voyage pattern of overseas vessels. The British share of world merchant shipping fell from almost half in 1900, to one third by 1920, to less than a quarter by 1939.305 To compensate British companies expanded their Australian trade, aided by the need to supply Britain in wartime. OSRA soon announced, in February 1915, its interest in taking freight from regional ports.306 The Imperial Government appointed Owen Cox of OSRA to co-ordinate frozen meat exports from Queensland ports,307 which became crucial in organising beef and mutton exports.308 Post-war economic conditions deteriorated and international freight rates declined by 17 percent in the middle 1920s.309 The depression brought more dramatic falls.

<p>| Table: 7.12 Surplus Funds Derived from Shipping Paid to State Consolidated Revenue, 1924–28 |
|---------------------------------|----------------|----------|-------------|---------|</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>State</th>
<th>Agencies</th>
<th>Revenue (£000s)</th>
<th>Total Expenditure</th>
<th>Surplus Paid to Treasury</th>
<th>Surplus Retained</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>NSW</td>
<td>Syd Harbour Trust; Navigation Dept</td>
<td>6,634</td>
<td>4,934</td>
<td>1,700</td>
<td>–</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vic</td>
<td>Melb Harbour Trust</td>
<td>3,757</td>
<td>2,779</td>
<td>711</td>
<td>267</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sth Aust</td>
<td>SA Harbours Board</td>
<td>3,265</td>
<td>2,644</td>
<td>621</td>
<td>–</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>West Aust</td>
<td>Fremantle Harbour Board; Fremantle Harbour Trust</td>
<td>2,256</td>
<td>1,588</td>
<td>616</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Qld</td>
<td>Revenue only – shipping++</td>
<td>408</td>
<td>417</td>
<td>(-)9</td>
<td>–</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tas</td>
<td>Marine Boards</td>
<td>880</td>
<td>871</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National</td>
<td></td>
<td>£17,200</td>
<td>£13,233</td>
<td>£3,639</td>
<td>£328</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Year to June 30th  
++ Figures not given for Harbour Dues paid by exporters and consignees


| Table: 7.13 Average Port Visits per Voyage, Overseas Cargo and Liners, 1926–1928 |
|---------------------------------|----------------|----------|----------|
| Vessel Type | Trade | 1926 | 1927 | 1928 |
| Cargo Ships | Outwards | Loading | 4 | 4 | 4 |
| | | Discharging | 5 | 4 | 4 |
| | Homewards | Loading | 5 | 6 | 6 |
| | | Discharging | 5 | 5 | 5 |
| Liner Ships | Outwards | Loading | 2 | 2 | 2 |
| | | Discharging | 4 | 4 | 4 |
| | Homewards | Loading | 5 | 6 | 6 |
| | | Discharging | 3 | 3 | 3 |

Source: Compiled from Report of Overseas Shipping Conference, Appendix A, pp.2196–7, APP Vol 2, 1929
However, the Australian trade lacked of sufficient volumes of Australian rural exports during the 1920s. Imports increased at twice the rate of exports, resulting in excess capacity on the homeward leg. To fill this freight capacity British ships had to call at more ports. In 1913–1928, vessels calling at 4 or 5 ports declined from 74 to 58 percent of overseas liners, while those calling at 6 or 7 ports rose from 8 to 18 percent.\(^\text{310}\) Table 7.13 shows the average number of homeward leg port visits (to load) was higher than the outward leg (to load and discharge), especially for liners. The political pressure for overseas services in small ports reinforced this and thereby contributed to the thin spread of port investment. Some 40 ports had overseas trade but most were inadequate. Eleven accounted for 75 percent of cargo shipped in 1923–24.\(^\text{311}\)

Table: 7.14 Index of Bunker Prices, UK & Australian Ports, 1913–1928 (Selected Years, 1913=100)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Port</th>
<th>1913</th>
<th>1921</th>
<th>1923</th>
<th>1925</th>
<th>1927</th>
<th>1928</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>UK Ports</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average of Hull, Liverpool, Glasgow</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>221.4</td>
<td>196.4</td>
<td>142.9</td>
<td>135.7</td>
<td>125.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Australian Ports</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sydney</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>229.6</td>
<td>196.3</td>
<td>196.3</td>
<td>216.7</td>
<td>222.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average of Melb, Pt Adel, Fremantle</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>160.0</td>
<td>172.0</td>
<td>174.0</td>
<td>176.0</td>
<td>172.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Derived from Table 2.10, B.M. Deakin, Shipping Conferences, p.41

Chasing cargo brought mixed results for overseas companies. Under-utilisation was kept to an average 10 percent over the 1920s, but some cargoes, such as refrigerated cargo at 50 percent below capacity, where higher.\(^\text{312}\) But more time in port meant higher port charges, bunkering and labour costs. Post-war Australian bunkering costs stabilised, but fell over 40 percent in Britain, closer to the pre-war level than Australia\(^\text{313}\) (see Table 7.14).

Labour costs will be discussed in later chapters, but wage costs and industrial conflict were of increasing concern to overseas and interstate employers. But as Buchanan pointed out, "the high costs of labour complained of [by employers] are due less to the standard of wages than to low output, both in loading and discharging."\(^\text{314}\) This pointed to the absence of mechanisation, poor physical condition of wharves, sheds and port facilities.

Thus economic factors lead to poor profitability and losses. In evidence to the Overseas Shipping Conference in early 1929, shipowners showed substantial losses were incurred (some trading losses of over 20%) on the Australian run in the three years to 30 June 1928.\(^\text{315}\)

4. **Summary**

I have argued here that the collective organisation of shipping employers was unified by labour and industrial relations. Continuity of organisation was initially achieved through the port-level associations in each colony. The Sydney and Melbourne associations continued to coordinate policy after 1890. Yet commercial interests and 'industrial troubles' continued the centralising tendency of employers and after a decade attempts, the two formed a united ASOF in 1899. This marked the shift in shipping dominance to Melbourne. State committees, based in the principal ports, became administrative arms of the national body over the next twenty years.

Local and overseas companies remained outside the ASOF but cooperated with it. Arbitration legislation, particularly the 1901 NSW Industrial Arbitration Act, provided an impetus and avenue for organisation for local and overseas companies to cover stevedoring and sea-going workers. The most significant were, the NSW intra-state shipowners, and the Sydney Stevedores...
representing overseas companies, but both lacked a federal role. Thus national industrial relations policy was primarily determined by the ASOF.

The OSRA, formed in 1912, gave overseas interests a national voice and combined the impact of WWI conditions cemented closer relations with the ASOF. The centralisation of industrial relations and common political concerns pushed the associations together, albeit with some dissension. The first federal Waterside Worker Award in 1914, common concern over industrial action during and after the war, and the formation of joint state committees, politics (legislation and government inquiries into shipping), economics (changing nature of world shipping and rising costs) and industrial relations in the 1920s were all enabling conditions that culminated in the formation of the Central Committee in 1927. It was consolidated on the eve of the 1928 waterside workers strike. It was in fact the culmination of a dual model of employer organisation.

V. The Organisational Imperative – Conclusion

The argument in this chapter addressed business conditions and policy of employers. Section II examined the stabilisation of the industry in the years after 1890. The implementation of the Navigation Act in July 1921 marked the maturation of shipping in Australia – with cabotage protection, an overseas shipping line (the weak Commonwealth Steamship Line), market certainty, employer organisation, unionisation and so on. The transition to this stage relied heavily on market regulation – both the ‘neo-mercantilist’ and ‘rationalist’ versions – as a key enabling condition for concentration of ownership and employer cooperation. The major companies controlled between 80 and 90 percent of the shipping market. One key effect of this development was the retarding of shipping technology.

Section III examined the nature of this new organisation, focusing on how functional integration occurred and the subsumption of the stevedoring labour process. While options were open to shipowners for stevedoring, they chose a combination of direct casual employment and subsidiary stevedoring companies or agencies. Independent contractors were marginalised. Managerial and internal organisation of companies was directed at building a common line of authority, vital in the transition to an integrated organisational structure. This was, in essence, the movement from formal to real subsumption of component functions and labour processes under the capitalist company structure. The line of industrial authority over stevedoring was structurally more systematic than it was in practice. The marginal status of stevedoring saw little or no change in stevedoring technology. It remained as dependent on heavy manual labour in the 1930s as in 1891. Only the disappearance of sailing ships marked any difference.

Finally section IV examined the collective organisation of employers. Two sets of factors were the key to coordination and cooperation amongst employers. Market control and employer unity on industrial issues combined to produce sectional organisation. Through WWI and the 1920s, the two main sections increasingly combined. Industrial conflict in 1927–28 and commercial/economic conditions precipitated national employer organisation – the Central Committee of Interstate and Overseas Shipowners.

The implications of the chapter are that a central aspect of the transition from formal to real subsumption is an organisational imperative. It spanned the company and industry levels. Although constrained by its industrial context, key choices are made by employers. Company organisation did not depend on the wholesale reconstruction of the stevedoring labour process. Indeed
employers were keen to maintain the perceived advantages of informal organisation in the workplace, albeit under their expanded industrial authority on the wharf.

This chapter demonstrates that employer preparations for industrial action – especially 1890 and 1928 – based on close cooperation and co-ordination of action, proved key resources against unions. The irony of industrial history shows that in both instances waterside unionism displayed marked optimism in what appeared to be robust industrial conditions just before significant losses from strike action. The remaining chapters address the issues of worker organisation and industrial relations over the same period covered in this chapter.

2 eg exemplified in public discussion, see in academic work, Miller, "The Dockworker Subculture and Some Problems" pp.302-314 and Kerr and Sigel, "The Inter-Industry Propensity to Strike," pp.189f
3 Where figures were not reported or under-reported. Yet additional vessels were only small, as the addition of 16 companies in 1921 indicates (adding only approximately 20,000 tons to the fleet). Eg in 1924, there were 954 steamships on Australian Registers, totalling 393,520 net tons – the addition of 747 vessels totalled only 175,911 tons, an average of 290 tons (tugs, dredges, hulls and barges are excluded). Of the 1,181 sailing vessels on Registers, only 114 were more than 50 tons. In short, these vessels were not important for industrial organisation of Australia shipping. Statistics from Report on Transport in Australia with special reference to Port and Harbour Facilities, 2 Vols. by Sir George Buchanan, Vol. 1, Oct 1906, APPS, 1926-27-28 Vol.5 p.105 [hereafter the Buchanan Report]
4 SOAA, Second Annual Report, 16 Aug 1886, p.3, McKellar Collection ML MSS 4548/Box 249
5 Indicated by the fall in the ratio of first-class to second class and steerage berths. Two long distance rail lines opened, Brisbane to Cairns in 1921, and the trans-Australian to Perth in 1924.
6 Bach, A Maritime History of Australia, pp.159-186. About 20 overseas shipping interests were involved in the Australia–Europe pool arrangements, see Report on Proceedings at Meeting Shipping Interests, held at Dalgety 7 Co. Sydney 1 Feb 1906, there were several meetings, copy in AUSNC, Correspondence, 1886-1961, Letter Book No 1, pp.373-410, McKellar Collection ML MSS 4548/Box 127.
8 The most extensive had been between AUSNC, Howard Smith, Adelaide SSCo and Huddart Parker in 1887, but had effectively collapsed by 1890, Bach, A Maritime History of Australia, p.203
9 McKellar, From Derby Round to Barkerton, pp.220-221, Bach, A Maritime History of Australia, p.208
10 Agreement between Howard Smith and AUSNC Directors Minute Book [catalogued as Chairman's Minute Book] 27 Feb 1891, p.409, further agreement between AUSNC, and Howard Smiths on the Gulf trade 1. E. Bland (AUSNC sec Brisbane) to AUSNC sec London, 20 Aug 1891, AUSNC, Correspondence, 1886-1961, McKellar Collection, ML MSS 4548/Box 126; agreement between Howard Smiths and CSR re sugar trade Mackay and Bundaberg to southern capitals includes tonnage and freight rate, Is. E. Bland (AUSNC Bris.) to AUSNC sec London, 17 July, 8 Sept, 18 Sept 1891, AUSNC, General Correspondence, McKellar Collection, ML MSS 4548/Box 126; numerous references to agreements between AUSNC and other coys, see Correspondence, 1886-1961, McKellar Collection, ML MSS 4548/Boxes 126-128; pool agreement with AUSNC yielded approx. £6,000 a year for Howard Smiths, see Directors Minute Book [catalogued as Chairman's Minute Book], 19 May 1892, p.432, both in HSL, Records, ML MSS 3565/2x; agreement between Huddart, Parker and Union SSCo. (owners of Tasmanian SSCo) from 1 July, 1892, for regulation of Bass Strait trade, Arbou, A History of the Union Steamship Co. of NZ, p.59; agreement with Huddart, Parker and Union SSCo., December 1894, regulation of trans-Tasman trade and reciprocal ticketing arrangements for many Aus and NZ ports, Arbou, A History of the Union Steamship Co. of New Zealand, Vol. 1, p.61.
11 Various forms of the Coal Vend Pool distributed earnings by shares from its introduction in late 1883. An agreement between Huddart Parker, Patersons and Howard Smith of Dec 1883 was designed for "preventing an injurious competition between one another in their business for the period over which such contracts extend", Special Directors Meeting, Howard Smith and Sons Directors Minute Book [catalogued as Chairman's Minute Book], 23 Dec 1883, p.16, HSL, Records, ML MSS 3565/2x; the distribution of earnings continued in the years following, see eg, Howard Smith and Sons Directors Minute Book [catalogued as Chairman's Minute Book], 19 May 1892, p.432, HSL, Records, ML MSS 3565/2x; reports of pool arrangements for AUSNC see l. Bland to AUSNC sec London, 20 Aug 1891, General Correspondence, McKellar Collection, ML MSS 4548/Box 126.
12 Howard Smith and Sons Directors Minute Book [catalogued as Chairman's Minute Book], 10 April 1891, p.411, received the Company seal, 31 Mar 1892, p.428, HSL, Records, ML MSS 3565/2x; AUSNC and Howard Smith formed an agreement with Brydon Jones & Co. (owners of two small coal vessels) in which "they [Jones & Co] agreed not to interfere with the general trade in consideration of the Company and Messrs Smith protecting them in the Coal trade, [which] ... worked satisfactorily during the year [1891]" AUSNC, Report on the Working of the Company and Analysis of the Company's Accounts, to 31 Dec 1893, 17 Oct 1894, p.8, McKellar Collection ML MSS 4548/Box 125 Envelope 364/16, p.327.
13 see report of conference of steamship owners in Sydney 10-12,16 June 1884, from the Trustom File, McKellar Collection, ML MSS 4548/Box 249
14 Signed by members, SOAA, Second Annual Report 26 Aug 1886, p.3, McKellar Collection, ML MSS 4548/Box 249
15 eg Mills of the USSCo of NZ complained in Nov 1896 that all companies in the VSOA "were not adhering to the rule requiring prepayment of freights or a deposit." The secretary of the association was instructed to report to the committee after enquiries from each of the members, VSOA, Minutes, 26 Nov 1896, p.248, ANU/NBA E217/1
16 6 Bach, Fifth Annual General Meeting and Report, 19 Aug 1889, p.5; McKellar Collection ML MSS 4548/Box 249
17 SOAA 1890 Bond of Alliance, Para.4, [emphasis added]; see also Para 1.2 McKellar Collection, ML MSS 4548/Box 249
18 The joint pursure agreement was between AUSNC and Howard Smith negotiated in Dec 1890. It was not without problems however. Further agreement (coal trade to Adelaide) between, Howard Smith, ASSCo, Harrolds, Huddart Parker and Simpsons was conclude in Oct 1891, see McKellar, From Derby Round to Barkerton, pp.142-145
19 Eg the AUSNC Annual Report for 1892, reported the outbreak of the "most unprompted competition" in the Old trade from a company that had been "hitherto been working in friendly alliance", but still made a profit of £21,978, AUSNC, Sixth Annual Report, (to 31 Dec 1892), 17 June 1893 p.1, McKellar Collection, ML MSS 4548/Box 9

21. AUSNC Report on the Working of the Company and Analysis of the Company's Accounts, to 31 Dec 1893, 17 Oct 1994, p.7, also "very vigorous" opposition in the Normanby trade, "strong opposition" from the ASSCo and so on, McKellar Collection ML MSS 4548/Box 125 Envelope 363. The directors of Howard Smith & Sons Pty Ltd noted the "excessive competition" on the coast in 1891. Section one of this, the Queensland trade, was solved by an agreement with the AUSNC. Also their recent membership would "tend to improve the position of the Company's business," see Directors Report (to June 1891) 8 Oct 1891, pp.38-39. Similar complaints were made in 1892 and the first half of 1894 mainly in reference to the coal trade, but not subsequently, see Directors Reports (to June 1892) p.40, (to Dec 1892) p.43 and (to June 1894) p.47 HSL Records ML MSS 3565/4X.

22. Page, Fitted for the Voyage, p.147 notes that shipowners preferred the division of the coast into sections where each company had exclusive rights to operate or worked to a mutual agreement on fares and freights.

23. VSOA Minutes, 24 Nov 1893, p.46 ANUNBA E2171.

24. The Association's 1886 report noted "a prolonged depression in shipping", although this was more the result of the significant expansion in capacity in the period from 1881 as was discussed in chapter eight Second Annual Report, 26 Aug 1886, McKellar Collection ML MSS 4548/Box 249.

25. Although the term mercantilist is not strictly applicable to these practices as there was not state sponsorship of the forms of regulation employed. Indeed it was these very practices that were eventually to be made illegal by the State. The point to be emphasised is that the strategic direction of employers policy-making owed much to the traditional policies of merchants and shipowners than the industrial trajectory of capitalist development.

26. Smith operated outside established agreements in 1899, 1. Mackay to Macdonald, 4 Dec 1903, James Mackay Correspondence, 1900–1906, McKellar Collection ML MSS 4548/Box 160.

27. Mackay believed that Northcoote of the Adelaide SSCO was rotting the pool agreement in a range of ways, such as overcharging for lighterage services in Queenston, as well as in other areas of operation, he suggested that Macdonald do the same and have the difference rebated back to the USNCo, 1. Sir James Mackay [later Lord Inchcape] to Macdonald, 24 May 1901, Mackay Correspondence, 1900–1906, McKellar Collection ML MSS 4548/Box 160; 1. Macdonald to Mackay, 14 Sept 1901, Mackay Correspondence, 1900–1906, McKellar Collection ML MSS 4548/Box 160. Such suspicions did not cease after the formation of Collins, there was a suspicion that Northcoote attempted to hide income from the pool in 1903, 1. Mackay to Macdonald, 8 May 1903; that the Howard Co. were "disagreeable" and "insatiable in their demands" to amend the pool for their advantage, 1. Mackay to Macdonald, 4 Dec 1903; that in general there was too much "grab" in the methods of the members, 1. Mackay to Macdonald, 20 Nov 1903, and so on, all in Mackay Correspondence, 1900–1906, McKellar Collection ML MSS 4548/Box 160. Northcoote was a man of forceful personality, and his actions on the Collins committee were described very dictating and assertive, 1. Macdonald to Mackay, 6 Dec 1902, Correspondence, 1886–1961, Private Letter Book No.1, p.255, McKellar Collection ML MSS 4548/Box 127.

28. Beginning in early 1898 negotiations continued over the next 4 years in various trades, see Epitome of Principal Events, 1895–1900, McKellar Collection ML MSS 4548/Box 214. Only in 1901 did the basis of a comprehensive scheme, proposed by a director of the Howard Smith & Co. emerge. While problems were identified, Macdonald agreed with Siddalley that the scheme could "strengthen the amicable working of the different companies on the cost", 1. Macdonald to Mackay, 5 Nov 1901, p.2, also refers to proposal Hector McLennan to Macdonald 1 Nov 1901. Detailed proposal, McLennan to Macdonald 14 Nov 1901, Macdonald Private Letter Book No.1, pp.87,88,90,114, McLeddar Collection ML MSS 4548/Box 127.

29. ASOF, File 'Private; Huddart Parker Papers', cited in Bach, A Maritime History of Australia, pp.207–208. The scheme was first introduced in trades between 10 ports from Geraldton in WA to Newcastle. It was extended in Sept 1901. Bach, however conflates trade related regulation and industrial organisation. It is the case that both functions are performed by the one association. However he notes that a scheme for a "coastal combine" put forward in 1889 by the Hunter River Co was rejected under the auspices of the SOAA. He notes that this organisation, being Sydney based, was only one among others in Adelaide, Melbourne, and Fremantle. Furthermore it was not until the ASOF that genuine unification took place. First, as Bach notes, the SOAA drew members from other colonies as well as NSW. Second there was no Victorian Association until the Sydney–based association helped establish one in the 1880s. Third, there was no shipowners association in Fremantle until the mid–1890s. It too was established with the advice and support of the SOAA. Finally, all these associations were primarily industrial in function.

30. Bach, A Maritime History of Australia, p.207. Although there was a degree of discord at the time of the dissolution of the VSOA and the foundation of the ASOF, which will be discussed below. The Coal Vend members were the core of the ASOF, although the Melbourne SSCO were not members. The original proposal from McLennan, paras.1 & 2 involved only the five companies, with options to be offered to the USNCo, the Melbourne SSCO and James Patterson.

31. 1. Macdonald to Mackay [Lord Inchcape] 20 Jan 1911, p.2. This was restated in advice from solicitors in mid–1911 in the wake of the court action against coalowners for monopoly practices. Macdonald reported that "a very large number of documents" had been destroyed, and that although it may not be required in London, "the law is far reaching" 1. Macdonald to Mackay, 9 June 1911. Further documents were reported as destroyed, 1. Macdonald to Mackay 4 Aug 1911, all letters in Coal Vend Case file, ML MSS 4548/Box 259. The coal vend and the joint purse agreement of 1 July 1902 referred to in Page, Fitted for the Voyage, pp.166–167. Page notes that a 10 page agreement remains in the ASSCo files, however he argues that it was introduced as a defense mechanism of the Big Five (shipping companies) against the competition of overseas companies prior to 1902.

32. 1. Macdonald to Mackay 25 Feb 1909, AUSNC, Coal Vend Case file, McKellar Collection ML MSS 4548/Box 259.

33. The ASSCo had a 31% interest, AUSNCs, 24%, HSCO, 23%, Huddart–Parker and McGwarth McEeachan 11% each, 1. Macdonald to Mackay 25 Feb 1909, AUSNC, Coal Vend Case file, McKellar Collection ML MSS 4548/Box 259; 1. McLennan to Macdonald, 14 Nov 1901, para. 7, that the profits were to be distributed in proportion of the net profits of the companies for the two years prior to the agreement, Macdonald Private Letter Book No.1, pp.114–115, McKellar Collection ML MSS 4548/Box 127. Note that the Melbourne SSCO were not members. The original proposal from McLennan, paras.1 & 2 involved only the five companies, with options to be offered to the USNCo, the Melbourne SSCO and James Patterson.

34. 1. Macdonald to Mackay 19 Oct 1906, AUSNCs, Coal Vend Case file, McKellar Collection ML MSS 4548/Box 259; see also table of building rights 1. Mackay to Macdonald 8 Sept 1905 Mackay Correspondence, McKellar Collection ML MSS 4548/Box 160.

35. The original proposal from McLennan of Howard Smith, included provision for accountants to inspect member company books, control byba central committee, with functions to include, reorganisation of shipping services "to the mutual advantage" of members, introduce and lay up tonnage where necessary, charter or purchase additional tonnage, 1. McLennan to Macdonald, 14 Nov 1901, paras.6,8,9 Macdonald Private Letter Book No.1, pp.114–115, McKellar Collection ML MSS 4548/Box 259; 1. McLennan to Macdonald 30 Nov 1901 [missing added] AUSNCs, Coal Vend Case file, McKellar Collection ML MSS 4548/Box 259.

36. Eg John Burke & Co. in the Qld coastal trade, especially in 1890 and after, (it began as a local operator in and around Moreton Bay in 1887). It ran sugar after WWI, see McKellar, From Derby Round to Burketown, pp.410–426; and Patrick SS Co. operating from Sydney.
38 Estimate from legal opinion if other competition continued to be excluded, 1. E. Mitchell K.C. to Northcote (of Collins group) 25 Oct 1910, AUSNCo. Coal Vend Case file, McKellar Collection. ML MSS 4548/Box 259; the Royal Commission on Ocean Shipping had put the figure at 95%, with Collins controlling 188,000 tons of interstate shipping leaving less than 10,000 for the rest, Royal Commission on Ocean Shipping, Report, 15 June 1906 p.23. APPs, 1906, Vol 3
40 The "Hobson" agreement was draw up at a series of meetings in Sydney at the end of 1910 and early 1911 and was to operate from 1 December 1910, the day after Collins ceased. The new agreement was to be for 7 years with 6 month notice of termination by members.
41 Shipowners were "dejected and nervous" lot and few meetings had been held, 1. Macdonald to Mackay 19 May 1911. Later, Macdonald reported to Mackay, in correspondence dated 9 June, that the agreement had been cancelled, both letters in AUSNCo, Coal Vend Case file, McKellar Collection ML MSS 4548/Box 259
42 The Adelaide SSCo appeared to the High Court which reversed the judgment on the grounds that the arrangement had not be to the detriment of the public. The Federal Government in turn appealed to the Privy Council, which was lost in 1913, Bach, A Maritime History of Australia, pp.213–214.
43 McKellar gave it this code in March 1911. 1 to Mackay 17 Mar 1911, drafts of the new agreement were transmitted in code form, a copy was attached to 1. Macdonald to Mackay 20 Jan 1910, both in AUSNCo, Coal Vend Case file, McKellar Collection ML MSS 4548/Box 259
44 see 1. Macdonald to Mackay, 30 July & 4 Aug 1911, AUSNCo, Coal Vend Case file, McKellar Collection ML MSS 4548/Box 259
45 No. 1 to Mackay 24 Aug & 9 June 1911., AUSNCo, Coal Vend Case file, McKellar Collection ML MSS 4548/Box 259
46 Memo 21 Dec 1910, enclosed in 1. Macdonald to Mackay 4 April 1906, AUSNCo, Coal Vend Case file, McKellar Collection ML MSS 4548/Box 259
47 McCormack (ASSCo.) made claims against Hobson as late as 1915, claims, Macdonald felt could not be sustained 5 years after the agreement was discontinued. He noted ASSCo and Howard Smith Co. never submitted their final accounts for Hobson, 1. Macdonald to Northcote (ASSCo, for Collins) 25 Dec 1910, also Is. MacDonald to Mackay, 30 Dec 1910, 12 Jan 1911, and 28 Feb 1911, all in Coal Vend Case file, McKellar Collection ML MSS 4548/Box 259
48 in terms of design, in the 1880s 63 vessels were paddle steamers, only 23 were in the 1890s, figures compiled from Parsons, Steamships Registred Sydney, 1834–1899. These changes point to a fundamental industrialisation of shipping technology during and after the 1880s.
49 Some previous years of ship expansion were, 1860s and 1881–4, figures based on Table 5.4 in chapter five
50 The Adelaide SSCo represented 9 companies, handling 350,000 tons of coal. They sought approximately 18% of the freight market, even though the shipowners and coal proprietors had engaged in discussions in early 1906 to get a "material increase in the price of coal or in the freight", Brown and other 'outsiders' (eg Scott Fell & Co.) were to be excluded, 1. Macdonald to Mackay 4 April 1906, AUSNCo, Coal Vend Case file, McKellar Collection ML MSS 4548/Box 259
51 The Secretary of the Sydney and Manly Ferry Employees' Union, Henry Mitchell, in answer to a question on the tonnage of sailing vessels (which the members of his union moved around Sydney harbour) stated, "[i]n the old days the average ship was about 1,000 tons; now they are from 1,500 to 2,000 tons; they are all extraordinary [sic] large ships", Court of Arbitration, Transcript, 5 Dec 1905, Vol 16 1905, p.76 NSW Archives Industrial Commission File 2/72.
52 The number of ships fell from 30 to 25 in that period as well, AUSNCo, Report on the Working of the Company and Analysis of the Company's Accounts, 31 Dec 1893, p.9, McKellar Collection ML MSS 4548/Box 259
54 Opinion of Mitchell K.C. as it would have the same effect as any arrangement that pooled revenues which would amount to (a) gaining or attempting to gain exclusive right to trade or (2) lack of competition, 1. Mitcheu to Northcote (ASSCo, for Collins) 25 Dec 1910, also Is. MacDonald to Mackay, 30 Dec 1910, 12 Jan 1911, and 28 Feb 1911, all in Coal Vend Case file, McKellar Collection ML MSS 4548/Box 259
55 Manning Report considered by VSOA, Minute Book, 11 Sept 1896, p.217, ANU/NBA E21/1; "unduly high rates of wage" needs to be cut, SOOA, Eighth Annual Report, 16 Aug 1892, p.4, McKellar Collection, ML MSS 4548/Box 249
56 In terms of design, in the 1880s 63 vessels were paddle steamers, only 23 were in the 1890s, figures compiled from Parsons, Steamships Registered Sydney, 1834–1899. These changes point to a fundamental industrialisation of shipping technology during and after the 1880s.
57 Gross tonnage (See Table 7.3) is a measure of the total enclosed space of the ship and net tonnage is the volume of its cargo space. While the conversion of gross to net tonnage is difficult, (variation in construction characteristics and space configurations) I have taken net tonnage to be approximately 60% of gross tonnage.
58 Even the size of sailing vessels increased in this period. The Secretary of the Sydney and Manly Ferry Employees' Union, Henry Mitchell, in answer to a question on the tonnage of sailing vessels (which the members of his union moved around Sydney harbour) stated, "[i]n the old days the average ship was about 1,000 tons; now they are from 1,500 to 2,000 tons; they are all extraordinary [sic] large ships", Court of Arbitration, Transcript, 5 Dec 1905, Vol 16 1905, p.76 NSW Archives Industrial Commission File 2/72.
70 Final Report, Select Committee on Sea Carriage. APPs, Votes and Proceedings, 1920–1921 Vol 1, p.887, (hereafter SC on Sea Carriage, Final Report (1920)); McKellar, cited in Bach, A Maritime History of Australia, p.309 (fn. 5, p.325). From the data shown here the figure was accurate, as more than half of ASOF tonnage was requisitioned by the Government. The ASOF member fleet accounted for between 70% and 80% of the Australian merchant fleet and assuming that small local companies continued to operate (Table 9.2).

71 A. S. Elford (Chairman of Central Committee of Shipowners), "Interstate Shipping" The Economic Record, Vol 6, Supplement, 1930, p.198; also McKellar, From Derby Round to Barkerside, pp.329–331.

72 B. Macdonald (AUSNC), "It is strange that "Collins" which was condemned by the then Attorney-General... as illegal, should be the very system now suggested by him as Premier [it PM]." I. MacDonald to Inchcape, 3 Aug 1917, Correspondence, 1886–1961, Letter Book No.10, p.208, McKellar Collection ML MSS 4548/Box 131.

73 B. Macdonald, A Maritime History of Australia, pp.309–311

74 Macdonald reports that the government was finding it difficult to control the pool before the end of year (1918) and the companies were continually pressing for more management input. I. Macdonald to Inchcape, 4 Nov 1918, Correspondence 1886–1961, Letter Book No.10, pp.466f, 466 McKellar Collection ML MSS 4548/Box 131.

75 Macdonald reported that the PM had attended a Interstate Control Board (of shipping) earlier in the week, I. MacDonald to Inchcape, 3 Aug 1917; Hughes reported to have reaffirmed the efficiency aspects, when temporarily shelving the pool proposals in mid–Sept 1917, he stated that under a pool "all steamers [would be]... worked to the best advantage". I. MacDonald to Inchcape, 7 Sept 1917, both in ASUsNC, Correspondence, 1886–1961, Letter Book No.10, pp.207, 208, 209, 255, McKellar Collection ML MSS 4548/Box 131.

76 The Association was formed in 1918 as a trade association to press for political concessions for the industry. Members were Adelaide SSCO, AUSNC, Huddart Parker, Melbourne SSCO, Australian Steamship Co, McIvorah, McEacham, Patee's, Scott Fell, and J. Brown, Melbourne Steam Ship Co. Paper, 7.ii.; cited in Bach, A Maritime History of Australia, On 10, p.325.


79 Three reports from the 7 commissions resulted. The Chairman, J. Prowse and A. Seaikow, were critical of inter–state companies and concluded that the cabotage provisions should be repealed. RRC on Navigation (1924) Vol 2 1923–24, pp.1053–1055; the report by F. Anstey, G. Yates and C. McHugh recommended the maintenance of the provisions, RRC on Navigation (1924) pp.1085–1087; and the report by W. Duncan and H. Elliott focused on the shipping companies financial performance concluding that their profits had not benefited from the Act and cabotage be repealed and replaced by duties on foreign shipping. The ASOF itself reported optimistically that the Royal Commission was favourable to interstate owners, see ASOF, Report for Year 1924, p.5, ANU/NBA E217/92.

80 The AOTA was in fact an umbrella organisation encompassing other bodies. The critical point for the argument here is that the Federal Government sanctioned this market regulation of the British trade to the extent of amending the Industries Preservation Act which prohibited such closed agreements prior to the introduction of these provisions were staggered over a 27 month period from 1 July 1921 to 1 Oct 1923, RRC on Navigation (1924) p.1024. From the shipowners point of view, "the combined effect of the requirements of the Act resulted in very heavy additional expenditure and a considerable addition to the running costs consequent upon the increased manning...", ASOF, Report for Year 1922, pp.4, ANU/NBA E217/90.

81 In 1913, the average size of passenger vessels was 62% larger than cargo vessels, 1925, 60% larger, 1926, 68%, 1927, 73%, 1930, 108% and 1932, 88% larger, calculations from Table 9.6.

82 Page, Fitted for the Voyage, pp.218–219. The Adelaide SSCO offered a 3 for 1 share issue in early 1920 to raise capital for purchasing vessels. The following year it purchased 5 vessels (two smaller vessels, 1 at 3,000 tons and 2 in the 5,000 ton class) all of which were secondhand.

83 Calculated net tonnage as 60% of gross tonnage, the 1930 ASOF Fleet was approximately 170,000 (net) tons of the Australian Fleet of approximately (Table 9.1) 200,000 act tons. The Australian Fleet in 1930 consisted of 173 vessels, the ASOF Fleet was 116 vessels, of which about 10 were tugs (Table 9.5).

84 Clearly cargo capacity per ship ton was decreased by the space taken by cabins, passenger baggage, service areas (such as entertainment, restaurants etc) and the space of additional crew. Often cargo holds were more difficult to work from a stevedoring view as they were located under cabins or other service areas just mentioned and had to be carried or trucked to the hook. Finally ships could not get depart early due to advertised schedules, and were subject to criticism for late departure. These factors all placed additional pressure on stevedoring.

85 "Tourist traffic to the various states is only seasonal, and steamers built for certain routes cannot always be diverted to others", Elford, "Interstate Shipping", p.196.

86 An internal report on ship design by AUSNC notes that "extra passage money... for suites has not compensated us [the company] for the heavy expenditure... these involved. I. Turnbull to Macdonald, 6 June 1917, (based on Tyree's report), AUSNCs Correspondence 1886–1926 Letter Book No.10, p.107, McKellar Collection ML MSS 4558/Box 131. Moreover, painters, joiners and polishers were needed to maintain the panelled and polished hardwood walls and fittings, indeed the saloon was "too luxurious", Report from Capt Tyrer to Macdonald, 5 June 1917, AUSNC Correspondence 1886–1961 Letter Book No.10, pp.109–110 McKellar Collection ML MSS 4558/Box 131.

87 Complaints covered issues such as; the swimming pool "prevents us from having a cargo port on the port side, which,... is of great assistance in the cheap and expeditious handling of cargo" and those on the starboard side were too low, insufficient hatches which meant that the sections of the gear obstructed others resulting in downtime of 25% when men had to wait to "prevent fall [rope with the hook] of assistance in the cheap and expeditious handling of cargo" and those on the starboard side were too low; insufficient hatches (3 instead of 4 or 5) for efficient working of the cargo amongst others, Report from Capt Tyrer to Macdonald, 5 June 1917, AUSNC Correspondence 1886–1961 Letter Book No.10, pp.109–110 McKellar Collection ML MSS 4558/Box 131.

88 All categories fell, with the exception of boys (rising 320% from a low base of 20) with a total fall in employment being 21.2% from 1913 to 1930. However wireless operators (between 71 and 76 employed between 1922 and 1930) were not employed prior to 1921 as they were a requirement under the federal Navigation Act. The largest category figures from ASOF, Report for Year 1920, Appendix, "C" p.37, ANU/NBA E217/98.

89 Elford, "Interstate Shipping" pp.197, 199–200

90 ASOF, Report for Year 1927, Appendix, "D" p.33, ANU/NBA E217/95
The differences in the passenger markets may be seen in the occupancy rates for different class berths. For example, on the in the Sydney to Melbourne route in 1921, first class occupancy was 46% while only 25% for third class (overall 44%), in 1923 it was 63% and 32% respectively (overall 56%) a similar pattern was found on 9 other routes for which statistics appear, calculated from ASOF, Report for the Year 1923, Appendix “C”, p.28, ANU/NBA E217/91.

In 1913, out of a labour force of 5568, 1839 were either stewards, cooks or boys (33%), in 1923 the figures were 4880, 1365 (27.9%) respectively. M. P. Richards, in 1917, out of a labour force of 5568, 1839 were either stewards, cooks or boys (33%), in 1923 the figures were 4880, 1365 (27.9%) respectively. No separate figures for stokers or engineering ratings exist, but the constant numbers of marine engineers suggests that the engine technology in such ships, such as the 228 ton “Wortanna” in the Nth Qld sugar industry (originally an iron-hulled paddle-steamer in 1875). Larger vessels appeared later, e.g. the ASSCo vessels, “Momba” (1,175 tons), “Mundalba” (3,021 tons) and “Murcera” (3,018 tons) arrived in Australia in late 1925 and 1926 from Burmeister and Wain of Copenhagen, the “Mimipo” arrived in mid–1927, Page, Fitted for the Voyage, pp.144-219,222-328; the “Ormondo” and the “Orvognal” came into service on the Qld coast in 1927, ASOF, Report for Year 1927, p.3, ANU/NBA E217/95. In an internal report on the proposed purchase of a motor vessel (the “Ormiston”), AUSNCo Superintendent Engineer, A Burwood, commented “Seeing that our practical experience with the Diesel engine ship is so limited on the Australian coast, it is not possible for me to express a definite opinion regarding its suitability for our coastal trade.” A 12 cylinder Burmeister Wain diesel engine was advised, M. W. Mathers, Suggestions for Proposed New Motor Passenger Vessel, 20 Sept 1926, appendix, p.1, [emphasis added], McKellar Collection, ML MSS 4458/Box 2. See also Purchase of the O Ships file McKellar Collection, ML MSS 4458/Box 7.

Ship numbers from Table 7.6 below. Note that the number of marine engineers (ie officers) was constant at 418 and 423 respectively. No separate figures for stokers or engineering ratings exist, but the constant numbers of marine engineers suggests that the engine technology was largely unaltered over the period. Steamer (as defined here) as a proportion of the sea–going labourforce increased marginally in this period from 48.3% to 51%, ASOF, Report for the Year 1930, Appendix “C”, p.37, ANU/NBA E217/98.

The early SOAA noted that the new Newcastle rail line was in competition with some of its members. The railway had lowered freights from Table 7.6 below. Note that the number of marine engineers (ie officers) was constant at 418 and 423 respectively. No separate figures for stokers or engineering ratings exist, but the constant numbers of marine engineers suggests that the engine technology was largely unaltered over the period. Steamer (as defined here) as a proportion of the sea–going labourforce increased marginally in this period from 48.3% to 51%, ASOF, Report for the Year 1930, Appendix “C”, p.37, ANU/NBA E217/98.

Of course passengers generated revenue, but the argument here is that the labour costs for the revenue generated did not compensate for the efficiency debits for cargo transport outlined above. Queensland Government, Report of the Marine Department for the Year 1899–1900, 30 June 1900, p.5. The Portmaster reported that in 1899 54 ocean going vessels over 2000 tons visited the port and this increased to 157 for the year ending mid–1900.

Queensland Government, Report of the Marine Department for the Year ended 30 June 1921, p.1; the vessel arrived and “berthed without incident” on 29 Dec 1924. The department had also noted the increase in tonnage of overseas vessels in its Reports 1901–1902, where vessels of up to 11,000 tons were listed, p.2, also 1921–1922, p.1.

Eg. E. T. D’Eyse Tooth, “Fuel for Ocean Steamers” Queensland Government Mining Journal, 15 Feb 1929 pp.58-60; motor vessels increased freight space per deadweight ton at least 20%, engines were smaller, required less fuel per given knot speed (40–50% greater calorific value of a ton of oil), Henning and Trace, “Britain and the Motorship” pp.368–9


Fables 2 and 3, Henning and Trace report overseas arrivals in Melbourne in 1929 16% of British ships were diesel powered and 42% of European. Asian countries listed in Table 1 had a lower percentage of diesel powered vessels and of which 9.7% arrivals from other nations were likely to have a low average. Since British vessels held only 75% of the Australian trade overseas the trade average overall is likely to be close to the British figure, see Henning and Trace, “Britain and the Motorship” pp.354,358–359

This excludes small vessels, such as the 228 ton “Wortanna” in the Nth Qld sugar industry (originally an iron-hulled paddle-steamer in 1875). Larger vessels appeared later, e.g. the ASSCo vessels, “Momba” (1,175 tons), “Mundalba” (3,021 tons) and “Murcera” (3,018 tons) arrived in Australia in late 1925 and 1926 from Burmeister and Wain of Copenhagen, the “Mimipo” arrived in mid–1927, Page, Fitted for the Voyage, pp.144-219,222-328; the “Ormondo” and the “Orvognal” came into service on the Qld coast in 1927, ASOF, Report for Year 1927, p.3, ANU/NBA E217/95. In an internal report on the proposed purchase of a motor vessel (the “Ormiston”), AUSNCo Superintendent Engineer, A Burwood, commented “Seeing that our practical experience with the Diesel engine ship is so limited on the Australian coast, it is not possible for me to express a definite opinion regarding its suitability for our coastal trade.” A 12 cylinder Burmeister Wain diesel engine was advised, M. W. Mathers, Suggestions for Proposed New Motor Passenger Vessel, 20 Sept 1926, appendix, p.1, [emphasis added], McKellar Collection, ML MSS 4458/Box 2. See also Purchase of the O Ships file McKellar Collection, ML MSS 4458/Box 7.

One enthusiastic writer painted a most positive picture of these events, so that “[i]nstead of fighting each other the shipowners drew...” Macdonald to Inchcape, 10 Aug 1917, [emphasis added]. Correspondence 1886–1961, Letter Book No.10, p.212, ML MSS 4548/Box 67.

A similar observation 2 years earlier on the basis of falling share prices (he held stock in the company) “ASNCo are pretty shaky” and the public appeared to lose confidence in the company, 1. Bums to Philp, 25 Mar 1884, Philp Papers Oxley Library Box 3 OM65-323/19.

For example, even on the newer motor ships operated by the ASSCo from the late 1920s, ornamental funnels were fitted to improve their appearance. Page, Fitted for the Voyage, pp.14-15. In 1904 it took over the assets of its predecessor, and in 1920 it sought to align nominal and called up capital. Rail competition had affected the company since the turn of the century.

121. McKellar, From Derby Round to Burketown, pp.345–346.


125. "Quoted in Page, 'Fitted for the Voyage,' p.153 [emphasis added]."

126. Much of which was recorded in Mr Haggard's information Book (Peter Haggard was a close assistant of Northcote, and company secretary in 1899). Page, 'Fitted for the Voyage,' pp.155–165. Interestingly much of the information was on the details of company ships, their movements and so on, as well as those of competitors. Markay of AUSNCo in London often complained of Northcote robbing the pool and Collins. It is likely that Northcote used a superior information system.


128. Discussion of management changes and short biography of AUSNCo, see McKellar, From Derby Round to Burketown, pp.210–215.

129. "In response to the resignation of the Newcastle and Hunter River SSCo (which complained of high rates and lack of appropriate service) the Association dismissed a clerk (salary of 104l.) and reduced the secretary's salary from 416l. to 260l. per year, SOAA, Minutes, 1 May 1894, VSOS, Minutes Book, p.61, ANU/NBA E217/1.

130. Williamson, Markets and Hierarchies. This view adopts an artificial separation of market based organisation, closer to my discontinuous organisation (and assuming spot markets) and integrated hierarchical organisation in business organisation. This discounts the type of linked integration organisation that shipping companies developed in the period under discussion here. This type of networked organisation is the subject of much research in the last decade or so.


133. "The engineering works were transferred across the Brisbane River to Alice Street in 1916 with the acquisition of Smith & Faulkner's engineering, in Sydney moved to premises of Schmidt and Muller engineering once this company had been acquired, McKellar, From Derby Round to Burketown, p.347."


135. The ASSCo owned 50% of Abermain-Leaham Collieries Ltd and 35% of North Bulli Colliery; Howard Smiths shipping through wholly owner Australian Steamships Pty Ltd, also controlled Caledonian Collieries, Invincible Collieries, Australian Sugar, Commonwealth Steel Products and Brisbane Wharves Ltd; McBeath McEacham held 45% of Bellambi Coal Co.; Huddart Parker, had a large holding in Abermain-Leaham Collieries, Hebburn Collieries and 88% of Metropolitan Coal Co.; Burns Philip had controlling interests in several south sea companies. Two of the three reports of the RC on Navigation (1924) referred to these holdings, drawing a parallel between the American Meat Trust and Australian interstate shipping – both had "a grip on the key industries of Australia" and "the fortunes of the shipping companies of Australia (a branch of the overseas shipping combine) are bound up in those of Australian industries, and ... constitute an enormous trust which controls the economic destinies of Australia", RRC on Navigation (1924) pp.1049,1116, quote from the most critical report by Duncan and Elliott, at p.1116.

136. "In remarks to shareholders in 1920, quoted in Page, 'Fitted for the Voyage,' p.341 [emphasis added]."


139. "Working Rules and Regulations for the Port Of Brisbane 22 Dec 1906 (agreement between the Brisbane Waterside Employers Association and Brisbane WWF), McKellar Collection, ML MSS 4548/Box 115 Envelope 229." "Between 1900 and the 1920s the number of commercial and handling agents expanded. They undertook commercial functions undertaken by early shipping/merchant interests in 1800s and before. Proudfoot places most of these agents in and around Bridge, Spring, Bent and O’ConneU Streets, P. R. Proudfoot, Maritime Land-Uses in Central Sydney, 1890–1970", The Great Circle Vol 16 No 2, 1984, p.219.


141. "Because of the more intimate with the shipping company, some of the stevedore organizations, have lost their identity and have become subsidiary agencies of the shipping company. Some of the larger shipping companies now do their own stevedoring work, having merely added a stevedore department...", Stern, Cargo Handling and Longshore Labor Conditions (1932) p.2.

142. See McKellar, From Derby Round to Burketown, pp.214–215 for details of AUSNCo personnel in these positions in the pre-WWI period.

143. HSL, Directors' Minute Book, 16 May 1890, p.394, [emphasis added] HSL Records, ML MSS 3565/2X.

144. Report by Capt Tindall, referred to in 1. Macdonald to Mackay, 8 June 1906, AUSN Correspondence 1886–1961, Letter Book No.2, p.175, McKellar Collection, ML MSS 4548/Box 127.

145. First proposed in mid–1890 the Queens Wharf Co. took two years to organise. The joint venture partners were Simpson & Sons and Harold Bros, two local Port Adelaide shipping companies, Directors’ Minute Book, 26 Sept 1890, 8 Oct 1891, 19 May 1892 pp.403,419,432, HSL Records, ML MSS 3565/2X. The main object of the company was "carrying on the business of wharfingers and warehousemen" Sec.II para.6, Memorandum of Association (1897) p.3, AUSNCo., Companies, 1886–1956, McKellar Collection ML MSS 4548/Box 248.

146. "Howard Smith Co., Directors’ Minute Book, 26 Sept 1890, p.403, [emphasis added] HSL Records, ML MSS 3565/2X.


148. The shareholders of this company were Forsyth, Macdonald, Barnes of the AUSNCo or its agents and a local shipmaster, Capt. T. W. Robinson. The main object of the company, para.3 was to "carry on conduct manage and maintain the business of lightermen, ... and that of freight contractors", in fulfillment of the agreement of 7 Dec 1899 between the companies and Robinson, para.4, Memorandum of Association, AUSNCo., Companies, 1886–1956, McKellar Collection ML MSS 4548/Box 248.

149. The great bulk of shares held by AUSNCo and HSL; the salient objects were to carry out an agreement of 5 Mar 1906, between the companies and Alexander McNab, para.3(a) and to "carry on the business of wharfingers, warehousemen, owners or lessees of graving, floating, and other docks, shipbuilders, shipwrights and shipowners", para.3(0), AUSNCo., Companies, 1886–1956, McKellar Collection ML MSS 4548/Box 248.

150. Federal Wharf Company Ltd, Minutes of Board of Directors, Adelaide Steamship Co, ANU/NBA N46/1238.
154 The company was formed (Jan 1918) in the aftermath of the formation of a labour bureau. The shareholders were ASSCo, AUSNCo, Australian Steamships Ltd, Huddart Parker, McIlwraith and MeEham, MSSCo, and the USSCo of NZ, see Report of the Royal Commission on Troubles on Melbourne Wharves, Chairman George I. Dethridge, 27 June 1919, APPs, 1920-21, Vol 4, p.689 (hereinafter Dethridge Report).

155 ASOF Minute Book, No 5, 20, 26,28 Sept 1917, pp.193,203,206 respectively, ANU/NBA E21/75

156 Capt. Ogilvie, of the Victorian Stevedoring Co. attended meetings with ASOF or negotiated agreements with Melbourne WLU, see ASOF Minutes, 27 May, 22 Aug 1902, pp.43,73 ANU/NBA E21/72, conference of ASOF, OSRA, and Coastal companies, ASOF Minute Book, No 5, 17 Sept 1917, pp.199-204 ANU/NBA E21/77.

157 Shares held by McIlwraith and MeEham, ASSCo, HSCO and Macdonald and Barnes of the Macdonald Hamilton & Co./AUSNCo, in addition James Brown and others from Newcastle (held 1 share each) Balance Sheets and General Profit and Loss Accounts, 1904 and several other years, shareholder book 1919, AUSNCo, Companies, 1886-1956, McKellar Collection ML MSS 4548/Box 248.

158 McKellar, From Derby Round to Barkers Point, p.465

159 The members were Appleton, Syme and Hamilton, ASOF Report for 1904,1905,1906, p.23, ANU/NBA E21/79


161 The Sydney Branch Committee sought the advice of Dr George Sly. In addition the status of Interstate Companies operating NSW but not registered there was unclear, ASOF Minute Book, Meeting No 48, 23 Jan 1901, p.105 ANU/NBA E21/72.

162 Sydney Branch committee report, ASOF Minute Book, Meeting No. 49, 6 Feb 1902, p.108, ANU/NBA E21/72

163 Initially, authorisation was given by Mackay to purchase 1500 shares l.Mackay to McEwan 1 Nov 1901 Mackay Correspondence, McKellar Collection ML MSS 4548/Box 127

164 In the wake of the first award of the NSW Court of Arbitration in 1905, I. MacDonald to Mackay 17 Nov 1905, ASOF, Correspondence, 1886-1916, Letter Book No.1, p.141, McKellar Collection ML MSS 4548/Box 127

165 I. Macdonald to Mackay, 22 Dec 1905, AUSN Correspondence, 1886-1916, Letter Book No.1, p.310 McKellar Collection ML MSS 4548/Box 127

166 The vote was split 4-2 against with one abstention, ASOF Minute Book Meeting No.244, p.33, ANU/NBA E21/74

167 Meetings of Marine Superintendents and stewards of ASOF members were organised and held in the Federation's rooms. The majority of superintendents were qualified captains, Minutes of meetings, 20 May, 17 June 1909 ASOF, Minute Book, pp.295, 299, ANU/NBA E21/73, 28 Feb 1910, ASOF, Minute Book, p.31, ANU/NBA E21/74.

168 Buchanan Report, Vol 1 1926, for Sydney, p.393, p.198 Moreover the report quotes the 1924 Royal Commission on proposals for a new state, that although the port of Sydney was not congested at the time, the "...wharf equipment leaves much to be desired", quoted in para.115, p.71. For American ports see Stern, Cargo Handling and Longshore Labor Conditions, (1932), ch.I, pp.4-16. Although the majority of ports had the older narrow wharf area where the use of mechanical equipment was difficult and often inefficient, there were numerous instances of modern pier design and use of equipment.

169 Buchanan Report, Vol 1 1926 for Melbourne, para.423, p.204. Melbourne had the largest cranes on the Australian waterfront, one 60 ton steam crane and 2 hydraulic cranes, one at 30 tons and one 15 ton. (By contrast the largest crane in Sydney was 7 tons, although 10-15 tons cranes were found in other ports). The large cranes were, however, only used for heavy lifts. The Harbour Trust reported that the large steam crane was 70 tons and was installed in 1901, followed by a 35 ton hydraulic steam crane "Port of Melbourne: Progress in the 20th Century" Port of Melbourne Quarterly, Vol 3 No 4 1950.

170 Buchanan Report, Vol 1 1926, for ports mentioned, para.552, p.237

171 Buchanan Report, Vol 1 1926, for Brisbane, para.309,440,441,552, pp.197,208-209,237.


174 SC on Sea Carriage, Final Report (1920) p.892. The Report noted the "extreme shortage" of coal in Victoria over recent years resulting from inadequate mechanical equipment and recommended "the immediate provision of the most up-to-date mechanical appliances at ports where the volume of trade warrants it providing adequate shipping facilities for the future" (p.892).

175 Cf. overseas ports, despite new technology, intensification of traditional methods still occurred. In Liverpool, from about 1890 to 1920, the introduction of fixed and floating grain elevators, similar coal elevators, allowed 100 men to do the work of 300 or 400 men of a couple of weeks, in 2 days, electromagnetic cranes (for pig iron, template, iron and steel sheets) occurred. Taplin concluded, the "need for a rapid turn-round [was met] by using traditional labour methods more intensively". The Dockers' Union, pp.9-10.

176 For example owners noted the poor condition of wharves in many small ports, eg Minutes of Maryborough Wharves Ltd chronicle alter ala the years of neglect, lack of maintenance, and little investment; 23 May 1916, deeding in bad repair, iron roof on sheds bad, pot holes in the yard (inspected by Directors); 18 Dec 1917, extensive repairs; 28 Aug 1923, complaints of lack of heavy lift facilities for consignees, timber derrick erected, cost £15 and second-hand double purchase winch (Lift 2 to 3 tons); 29 Jan 1924, AGM told what was very old, 24 Feb 1925 gas lights abolished and electric lights extended; and so on over the next 25 years until the wharves were demolished (23 June 1933) with accumulated company losses of £5,308 (17 April 1933) Extract from Minutes, McKellar Collection ML MSS 4548/Box 248.

177 W. T. Bell, "Development of the Design of Wharves and Sheds in the Port of Sydney", Port Of Sydney Journal, Vol 6 No 2, 1958, p.35. Cheap timber made it an economical material for wharf construction to this time, despite a life of only about 10 years.

178 Buchanan Report, Vol 1 1926, for ports in general and Queensland, see paras.133-144,538,546,549, pp.44,143,145-146. For the social and political context of Qld port development, see John Lewis, Port Development In Queensland and political context of Qld port development, see John Lewis, Port Development In Queensland (University of Qld Press, St Lucia, 1973).

179 Port of Qld, Royal Commission on Transport, Transcript of Evidence, 4 Vols, 29 Jul 1936-12 Jan 1937, Qld State Archives, ROY/35-38


182 This policy was found overseas, Barnes noted inadequate innovation in 'mechanical devices' in New York and London (although improving) at the start of WWI. Hamburg was an exception having the "finest docks in the world" with "widespread use of labor-saving machinery". The Longshoremen (1915), pp.39,189,210-212. New Zealand ports had little or no mechanical equipment, Green, "Spelling, Go-slowes, Gliding away and Theft", p.102

183 Under the title: _Market, Firms and the Management of Labour_, ch 1
Agents of overseas lines for example followed instructions of overseas companies' head office. In contrast stevedoring remained essentially localised industry (geographically and different sections of each port) in Britain despite the efforts of the Ships' Piano Federation. A myriad of local arrangements resulted, see eg. Lord Shaw, United Kingdom, Transport Workers – Court of Inquiry, Vol 1, Report and Minutes of Evidence, Cmd. 920, 1920.

Of the 25 members in 1889 (see Table 9.2) 8 were engaged in intercolonial and coastal trades, 9 in coastal trades, 6 in coal, 1 tug company and 1 foreign (A. Carrie & Co. in Melbourne). Of the 25 member companies, 7 (Union SSCo, Howard Smiths, Huddarts, Tasmanian SSCo, ASSCo, Harrolds (S.A.) and Carrie were based outside NSW, SOAA, Fifth Annual General Meeting and Report, list of members, p.10, McKellar Collection, ML MSS 4545/Box 249. Moreover, Burns Philp described itself as shipping agents and merchants, Ferguson, was also secretary of the Pastoralists Union, and several of the members were agents for overseas companies and the ASSCo was part of the In shows group. There was a turnover of members in 1891, but of the 19 members, 6 were intercolonial and coastal, 6 coastal, and 7 coal, again with many of the same companies based outside NSW, Seventh Annual Report, p.10, McKellar Collection, ML MSS 4545/Box 249.

Seventh Annual Report, 17 Aug 1891, p.4, McKellar Collection, ML MSS 4545/Box 249

This organisation was as a result of the Dockers strike in 1889 as was anti-union, see Brown, Waterfront Organisation in Hull, pp.465,524,60,66, Lovell, Stevedores and Dockers, pp.123,129,139; Saville, "Trade Unions and Free labour", pp.323-340.

See communication reported in VSAA, Minutes, 25 Sept 1893, 6 Feb 1896 (correspondence 10 & 20 Dec 1895), 15 May 1896, 26 Nov 1896, pp.1,174,191,247 respectively, on the other hand the association urged the Federation to lobby the British Government to amend the Merchant Shipping Act to allow for casual pick-up of seamen at the mercantile bureau, 24 Nov 1893, pp.317,334,339, ANU/NBA E217/1.

Seventh Annual Report, 17 Aug 1891, p.5, McKellar Collection, ML MSS 4545/Box 249

SOAA, Eighth Annual Report, 16 Aug 1892, p.6, McKellar Collection, ML MSS 4545/Box 249

However the shelving of the idea was by 'common consent', SOAA, Ninth Annual Report, 21 Nov 1893, pp.5-6, McKellar Collection, ML MSS 4545/Box 249

Based on correspondence advocating a federation of employers, VSAA, Minutes, 11 June 1896, p.201, ANU/NBA E217/1

VSAA, Minutes, 16 July 1896, p.212, ANU/NBA E217/1

The resolution read, "That it is desirable to form a Shipowners Federation or Association for all the colonies with Melbourne as the central office", VSAA, Minutes, 16 July 1896, p.212, ANU/NBA E217/1

The Adelaide shipowners nomination of a representative was received before the draft constitution was approved for circulation, both appear in the minutes of the same meeting, VSAA, Minutes, 11 Sept 1896, pp.217,218, ANU/NBA E217/1

VSAA, Minutes, 26 Nov, 30 Nov, 3 Dec 1896 pp.247-248,250 ANU/NBA E217/1

VSAA, Minutes, 5 Aug 1897 p.295 ANU/NBA E217/1

McKellar, *From Derby Round to Burketown*, p.203

The Fremantle association issued annuals reports from 1897 under this title, see First Annual Report 31 Dec 1896, Reports for 1897 and 1900, McKellar Collection, ML MSS 4545/Box 249.

VSAA, Minutes, 20 Mar 1896, p.186, ANU/NBA E217/1

The founding members were, Howard Smith Co., ASSCo, AUSNCo, Huddart Parker, McDwraith McEacham, MSSCo, plus local shipsowners, George Shenton, and Trinter, Anderson and Co. FSOAA, First Annual Report 31 Dec 1896, p.1, by 1900 the membership was only the 6 interstate companies, McKellar Collection, ML MSS 4545/Box 249

VSAA, Minutes, 13 Oct, 1 Dec 1898, 17 Jan 1899 pp.335,337,343, ANU/NBA E217/1


VSAA, Minutes, 17 Jan 1899, p.343, ANU/NBA E217/1

While I have found no evidence of any direct connection between the 8 week wharf jumper (and truckers) dispute in Fremantle, from 1 March to 27 April, 1899, all the major intercolonial companies (AUSNCo, ASSCo, MSSCo, Howard Smith, Huddart Parker and McDwraith McEacham) were involved. The Fremantle Association while under considerable pressure was able to prevail. This dispute will be discussed in the next chapter, see, I. H. Vanden Driesen, "Confrontation and reconciliation on the waterfront: the Fremantle jumpers strike—1899", Labour History, No.40 May 1981, pp.29-47.

VSAA, Minutes, 21 Feb 1899, p.345, ANU/NBA E217/1. The committee met on several occasions up to late April to wind up the Association.

ASOF First Annual Report to 31 Dec 1900, McKellar Collection, ML MSS 4545/Box 249

Discord between the ASSCo and the Melbourne SSCo delayed the membership of the latter, but MSSCo's David Syme attended meetings. The overseas companies considered the bureau to be in the interests of all the companies, SOAA, Ninth Annual Report, p.15, McKellar Collection, ML MSS 4545/Box 249

Motion for dissolution proposed 15 Oct 1899 and discussed again 2 Nov 1899. Morro, A.B. Cockburn Special Meeting of SOAA Thurs 7 Feb 1901 to wind up the Association meeting to be held within a month for final details, McKellar Collection, ML MSS 4545/Box 249.

ASOF, Minutes, 21 Feb 1901, p.17, ANU/NBA E217/2. The Sydney branch reported regularly and issues were discussed and decisions taken on Sydney matters from this date, eg. 5 Sept, 19 Sept, 12 Dec 1901, pp.75,78,97.

ASOF Report for years 1904, 1905, 1906, p.4, ANU/NBA E217/89


ASOF, Report for Year 1923, p.18, ANU/NBA E217/90

Pans.43,44 of the SOAA Rules, 24 Jan 1887, permitted divisions for intercolonial, coastal and colliery sections, each entitled to separate sectional meetings and chairmen and the committee clearly envisaged an overseas section. The Rules were registered, 3 Sept 1887, under the NSW Trade Union Act of 1881, NSW Archives, A.O. Box 10/42212 T.U.58

Meeting 17 July 1891, SOAA, Seventh Annual Report, 17 Aug 1891, p.7, McKellar Collection, ML MSS 4545/Box 249

SOAA, Eighth Annual Report, 16 Aug 1892, p.5 McKellar Collection, ML MSS 4545/Box 249

SOAA, Seventh Annual Report, 17 Aug 1891, p.8, McKellar Collection, ML MSS 4545/Box 249

The overseas companies considered the mercantile bureau to be in the interests of all the companies, SOAA, Ninth Annual Report, General meeting 21 Nov 1893, p.8, McKellar Collection, ML MSS 4545/Box 249

Criticism were made, protests lodged, or interviews with overseas were constant after 1895, see VSAA, Minutes, 24 Nov 1893, p.4; 8 Aug 1895, p.140; 12 Mar, 15 May, 11 June, 26 Oct, 26 Nov, 1896, pp.196,191,198,229,248, 26 Nov 1897, p.307; 3 Feb 28 Apr, 1 Dec 1898, pp.317,334,339, ANU/NBA E217/1.

Reply to the Association protest of 12 Mar 1896, on 15 May was "not considered satisfactory", but a direct approach to London, brought a "very satisfactory reply" by the manager of P&O in London, in that such competition would be discontinued, VSAA Minutes, 12 Mar, 15 May, 26 Nov 1896, pp.196,191,248, ANU/NBA E217/1.
223. Joint action against the South Australian Employers Liability Act in mid-1895, with a conference with overseas companies and a committee formed to oppose the Act, VSOF, Minutes, 30 Aug 1895, p.143, ANU/NBA E217/1.

224. Complaints on the agenda, ASOF, Minutes, 7 Aug 1902, 30 April 1903 p.137 ANU/NBA E217/2. British and foreign companies, reported by the Association, altered their policy on Feb 1905, to match interstate rates, which was a matter of concern to the Association, ASOF Report, 1904,1905,1906, p.6, ANU/NBA E217/8.

225. SOAA, Seventh Annual Report, 17 Aug 1891, p.8 McKellar Collection, ML MSS 4548/Box 249

226. membership see Table 7; SOAA, Ninth Annual Report, 21 Nov 1893, p.8 McKellar Collection, ML MSS 4548/Box 249

227. SOOA, Minutes, 1 May 1894, copy in VSOF, Minute Book, p.61, ANU/NBA E217/1.

228. VSOA, Minutes, 24 Nov 1893, p.32 ANU/NBA E217/1.

229. Of course the intercolonial companies became interstate on Federation on 1 Jan 1901.


231. Principle of freedom of contract, which was successfully asserted at the time of the great strike of 1890, has been guarded against every attempt at encroachment", "S.S. owners need constant watchfulness" and need to guard against making any opportunities for "labour agitators", SOAA, Eighth Annual Report, 16 Aug 1892, p.3,4; efforts of disaffected union leaders and others to "gain control and dictate terms to employers" can have no effect with the Labour Bureau, Ninth Annual Report, 21 Nov 1893, p.4, both in McKinell Collection ML MSS 4548/Box 249.

232. The report reminds employers, "that the aspirations of the labor leaders, and others holding dangerous socialistic views without having any actual stake in the country " have not changed and such elements would attack employers if they could, SOOA, Eighth Annual Report, 16 Aug 1892, p.5 McKellar Collection ML MSS 4548/Box 249

233. SOAA, Seventh Annual Report, 17 Aug 1891, p.5, it met 27 times in 1892, SOAA, Eighth Annual Report, 16 Aug 1892, p.5 McKellar Collection ML MSS 4548/Box 249

234. SOOA, Eighth Annual Report, 16 Aug 1892, p.5, McKellar Collection ML MSS 4548/Box 249

235. Hourly rise from 1sr to 1sr.5d. and equivalent time and a half overtime, _The West Australian_ 16 Nov 1896, cited in Vandeen Driessen, "Confrontation and Reconciliation on the Waterfront" p.29. The high cost of living in the west, but employers were also attempting to establish Fremantle as the main WA port and trade was expanding.

236. SOOA, Ninth Annual Report, 21 Nov 1893, p.3, McKellar Collection ML MSS 4548/Box 249


238. In response to information on 'labour troubles' in the latter half of 1900, 1. Mackay to Macdonald 7 Dec 1900 [emphasis added], James Mackay Correspondence, 1900–1906, McKellar Collection ML MSS 4548/Box 160.

239. Not the least of the reasons for this was the decline in these sections of the industry by the end of the first world war. The Victorian local companies were largely forced out of business before the war due to rail competition and that many of the interstate companies were headquartered in Melbourne and looked on Victorian trades as their own, see Bull & Williams, _Story of Greyfriended Shipping_, and Logan, W. S., "The decline of Victoria's southwestern outports, 1890–1900", esp pp.35–46. The North and South coast trades in NSW had several companies serving them, but were under constant pressure from rail. The small South companies were amalgamated and then taken over by the ASSCo, as discussed above. The remaining states were served by a combination of small local companies and interstate and overseas companies. While political criticism was directed at the interstate companies, only Western Australia took practical steps to challenge them, through the formation of the Western Australian State Shipping Commission in 1912, by the Scadden Labor Government, see _A Maritime History of Australia_, pp. 244–245.

240. Burns Philip and the Port Jackson Co-operative Steamship Company (which operated very small steamships on Sydney harbour); other associations were the Sydney Steam Colliers Owners & Coal Stevedores Association and the Newcastle Master Stevedores Association, _NSW Industrial Arbitration Reports_, 1902 Vol 1, pp.145,146–148; the ASOF members recommended registration in Jan 1902, but were ambivalent only two weeks earlier, ASOF Minutes, 27 Dec 1901, 9 Jan 1902, pp.99,103 ANU/NBA E217/2.


243. In May 1901 the Interstate Committee was established to investigate the possibility of registering under the Act. Little appears to have been done, ASOF, Minutes, 16 May 1901, p.35, ANU/NBA E217/2. It was reported several years later that the Fremantle Branch registered in 1905, ASOF, Report for 1904,1905,1906, p.4, ANU/NBA E217/8.

244. The ASOF Minutes have very few instances of direct cooperation on policy or industrial issues in the decade after 1900. The ASOF explicitly sought cooperation over federal legislation, (in mid-1901) eg Customs Bill, Post and Telegraph Bill and the Immigration Restriction Bill, under review by ASOF Legislative Committee, particularly for amendments to the Customs Bill, and financial contributions, ASOF Minutes 11 July, 5 Sept 1901, pp.66, 76. ANU/NBA E217/2. Meeting of 20 August attended by overseas companies and supported a petition to the Senate, 1. Macdonald to Mackay, 23 Aug 1901, _Private Letter Book No 1_, p.123, McKellar Collection ML MSS 4548/Box 127. Informal contact, eg. on the retirement of Siddeley (of the Melbourne based Siddeley & Co.), in late 1902, P. & O., Orient Co. and Messageries Co. representative attended a gathering on 25 Nov., L. Macdonald to Mackay, 29 Nov 1902, _Private Letterbook No 1_, p.123, McKellar Collection ML MSS 4548/Box 127.

245. ASOF, Minutes, 19 Sept 1901, p.78 ANU/NBA E217/2.


247. See eg. reports such as, "During the year through the courtesy of the United Kingdom Chamber of Shipping, this Federation was kept in constant touch with maritime matters overseas", ASOF, Report for Year 1917, p.27, ANU/NBA E217/9.

248. An offer of secretarial assistance was made by the ASOF in response to the correspondence by the Federation to Capt Webb (of the SSWLA) and Johnson, ASOF, Minutes, 17 June 1912, p.195, ANU/NBA E217/4.

249. OSRA represented all the conference lines trading to Australia, and is reported to have had trade agreements covering services, tonnage and freight rates. It later played an important part in the AOTA arrangements after 1929 see Bach, _A Maritime History of Australia_, pp.301–302. Bach dates OSRA from 1913.

250. EG Meeting of ASOF and OSRA, 18 Feb 1915, ASOF, _Minute Book_, No 5, p.11, ANU/NBA E217/5. Capt Bull was appointed Chairman of the Melbourne board in early 1916, ASOF, _Minute Book_, No 5, 6 Jan 1916 p.41, ANU/NBA E217/5. The Sydney ASOF branch resolved to discontinue Joint Committee meetings in Sept 1916, rescinded later in the month under pressure from Melbourne. Melbourne OSRA were keen to continue joint meeting there, ASOF, _Minute Book_ No 5, 7 Sept, 29 Sept and 5 Oct 1916, pp.76,80,82, ANU/NBA E217/5.


267. "To take a star ... Qualifications for Seafarers", p.28

268. Eg. the Victorian Association protested at the unsubstantiated allegations against shipowners made at the Sangster Board of Inquiry in mid-1896. It approached the Premier for indemnity of costs, VSOA Minutes, 11 Sept, 24 Sept, 26 Nov 1896, pp.217,233,247, ANU/NBA E217/1; 

269. Howard Smith Co., settled a compensation claim by a widow of a labourer killed on the "Rodonda" (a 'gin brake while discharging' under threat of action - £400 was considerably less than a £1,000 under the Act, HSL Directors' Minute Book [catalogued as Chairman's Minute Book] 28 Mar 1890, p.383, HSL Records, ML MSS 3565/2X. Other compensation, eg £25 to lumper John Sperry, for work injuries on the "Time" (1892); £275 to widow of Langford, killed on the "Iceberg" (1892), Directors' Minute Book [catalogued as Chairman's Minute Book] 30 Sept 1892, pp.440,441, HSL Records, ML MSS 3565/2X. Also payments to passengers injured on HSL vessels.


273. ASOF, Report for Year 1925 p.29 ANU/NBA E217/93 refers to Worker's Compensation legislation in several Labor Government states.

274. Shipowners had 4 priorities for federal regulation of shipping, (1) the consolidation of all maritime laws, (2) repeal of all state Acts which conflicted with the federal Act, (3) regulations to be included in the federal Act, and not be prescribed at the discretion of the Minister and (4) all dues to be clearly defined, see ASOF, Report for 1904,1905,1906 p.13, ANU/NBA E217/89; ASOF Minutes 7 April 1904, pp.241–142 at which a motion was passed that sought to have included in the Act (as Schedules) regulations that were at the discretion of the Minister, clearly defined the position of various dues and the role of marine Boards, safety requirements to be included in the Act rather than as a matter of regulation, prevent ticket scalping and include clauses which would tend to develop the Australian Mercantile Marine.

275. ASOF Report for 1904,1905,1906 p.16, ANU/NBA E217/89. Many meetings of the ASOF through 1903 and 1904 were concerned with the Act see Minutes, 5 Mar, 30 Apr, 26 Aug 1903, pp.170,183,202; 7 April, 21 July, 18 Aug, 1 Sept, 1904, pp.241–242,269,272,275, ANU/NBA E217/2. The meeting on 7 April 1904 adopted a long resolution which began "(1) That the Members of the Australian Steamship Owners' Federation, whilst recognising that Federation having been accomplished a Commonwealth Navigation Act is essential for uniformity, record their extreme dissatisfaction with the Navigation and Shipping Bill..." (p.241). They were particularly concerned over regulation of the Bills of Lading. However lobbying federal parliamentarians made the Act "less obnoxious", ASOF Report for 1904,1905,1906 p. 11. ANU/NBA E217/89.

276. ASOF, Report for Year 1902 p.23 ANU/NBA E217/90; ASOF, Report for Year 1913, pp.13–14. ASOF Minutes 7 April 1904, pp.241–142 at which a motion was passed that sought to have included in the Act (as Schedules) regulations that were at the discretion of the Minister, clearly defined the position of various dues and the role of marine Boards, safety requirements to be included in the Act rather than as a matter of regulation, prevent ticket scalping and include clauses which would tend to develop the Australian Mercantile Marine.

277. ASOF Report for 1904,1905,1906 p.16, ANU/NBA E217/89. Many meetings of the ASOF through 1903 and 1904 were concerned with the Act see Minutes, 5 Mar, 30 Apr, 26 Aug 1903, pp.170,183,202; 7 April, 21 July, 18 Aug, 1 Sept, 1904, pp.241–242,269,272,275, ANU/NBA E217/2. The meeting on 7 April 1904 adopted a long resolution which began "(1) That the Members of the Australian Steamship Owners' Federation, whilst recognising that Federation having been accomplished a Commonwealth Navigation Act is essential for uniformity, record their extreme dissatisfaction with the Navigation and Shipping Bill..." (p.241). They were particularly concerned over regulation of the Bills of Lading. However lobbying federal parliamentarians made the Act "less obnoxious", ASOF Report for 1904,1905,1906 p. 11. ANU/NBA E217/89.

278. ASOF, Report for 1902 p.23 ANU/NBA E217/90; ASOF, Report for Year 1913, pp.13–14. ASOF Minutes 7 April 1904, pp.241–142 at which a motion was passed that sought to have included in the Act (as Schedules) regulations that were at the discretion of the Minister, clearly defined the position of various dues and the role of marine Boards, safety requirements to be included in the Act rather than as a matter of regulation, prevent ticket scalping and include clauses which would tend to develop the Australian Mercantile Marine.

279. ASOF Report for 1904,1905,1906 p.16, ANU/NBA E217/89. Many meetings of the ASOF through 1903 and 1904 were concerned with the Act see Minutes, 5 Mar, 30 Apr, 26 Aug 1903, pp.170,183,202; 7 April, 21 July, 18 Aug, 1 Sept, 1904, pp.241–242,269,272,275, ANU/NBA E217/2. The meeting on 7 April 1904 adopted a long resolution which began "(1) That the Members of the Australian Steamship Owners' Federation, whilst recognising that Federation having been accomplished a Commonwealth Navigation Act is essential for uniformity, record their extreme dissatisfaction with the Navigation and Shipping Bill..." (p.241). They were particularly concerned over regulation of the Bills of Lading. However lobbying federal parliamentarians made the Act "less obnoxious", ASOF Report for 1904,1905,1906 p. 11. ANU/NBA E217/89.

280. ASOF, Report for 1902 p.23 ANU/NBA E217/90; ASOF, Report for Year 1913, pp.13–14. ASOF Minutes 7 April 1904, pp.241–142 at which a motion was passed that sought to have included in the Act (as Schedules) regulations that were at the discretion of the Minister, clearly defined the position of various dues and the role of marine Boards, safety requirements to be included in the Act rather than as a matter of regulation, prevent ticket scalping and include clauses which would tend to develop the Australian Mercantile Marine.
Between 1924 and 1928, B. M. Deakin, tel. British Colonial Office to Governor (Qld) 11 Mar 1915, the Shipowner Committee was to determine the best method of dealing with.

Owen Cox (OSRA) to D. Denham (Qld Premier) 16 Feb 1915, Correspondence from the General System, Queensland State Archives.

Selert Committee on Sea Carriage, 4 Reports, all printed in.


The attitude of the various Harbour Authorities may be seen in their response to calls for cost reduction. A conference in Oct 1923 they rejected the calls as both construction and maintenance costs were continually rising, reported in ASOF, Report for Year 1924, p.9, ANU/NBA E217/92.

Port Charges on Overseas Ships at the Central City Ports of the Commonwealth, 1922, AUSNCo, see.

Commonwealth Acts, see Vol 24 (1926), para.510, p.225. The impact and complexity of various fixed port, ship and tonnage charges may be seen in a 97 page internal manual of the.

The Australian Commonwealth Shipping Line was formed in 1916 and collapsed under the weight of continued losses and lack of support by the Bruce Government in 1927, see R. McDowell, Build a Fleet Lose a Fleet, (Hawthorn, Melbourne, 1976), Frank Brennan, The Australian Commonwealth Shipping Line (Roebuck, Canterbury, 1978) esp. ch.2. The Line was sold to the private sector for only a fraction of its actual value.


Royal Commission on the Navigation Act, First Report, (1924) p.1048, APPs, Vol 2, 1923-24. The Commissioners reported that AUSNCo was owned by the Inchcape company [since its take-over via the Queensland SSCo in 1886], majority of the shareholders of McKellar Collection were English, Burns, Philip & Co was an Inchcape company and the Union SSCo of NZ was controlled by the Inchcape group.


There were at least 14 categories of charges on ships and least 5 charges on goods (a miscellaneous category in both included several charges levied by State or Federal governments, Port Authorities, or licensees of the latter, Buchanan Report (1926) Vol 1, para.510, p.225. The impact and complexity of various fixed port, ship and tonnage charges may be seen in a 97 page internal manual of the AUSNCo, see Fixed Charges at Australian and Fijian Ports, 1922, AUSNCo, McKellar Collection, ML MSS 4548/Box 2.

The Australian Government was monitoring the world shipping fleet, see. For example annual reports listed such legislation. In 1928 it included, the Financial Agreement Act, Crimes Act, Conciliation and Arbitration Act, Transport Workers Act, Referendum (Constitutional Alteration) Act and the Quarantine Act, Navigation Act regulations and others, Report for the Year 1928, pp.14,32, ANU/NBA E217/96.

The attitude of the various Harbour Authorities may be seen in their response to calls for cost reduction. A conference in Oct 1923 they rejected the calls as both construction and maintenance costs were continually rising, reported in ASOF, Report for Year 1924, p.9, ANU/NBA E217/92.

Bermuda was 150% higher, Quarantine 200%, Light dues 225% in addition to Board of Health, 300% and Income Tax 700%, Buchanan Report, (1926) Vol 1, para. 507, p.223.


ASOF, Minutes, 18 Feb 1915, p.11, ANU/NBA E217/5.

As is the case in many spheres the division of powers between the commonwealth and the states created difficulties in policy coordination in the maritime area. The federal government had control over customs, immigration and navigation insofar as it affects the commonwealth as a whole, but the states have control of harbours and ports. Even at the state level authority was divided in some instances, eg. in Queensland, both the Treasury and the Department of Harbours and Marine had authority over ports.

ASOF Report for Year 1924, p.9, ANU/NBA E217/92

ASOF, Report for Year 1923, Appendix "G", p.26 ANU/NBA E217/91, other cost rises were bunkering coal average of 30%, maritime wages up to 27% with an average of over 15%, maintenance labour (mostly skilled) up to 45% with an average of 35% and other factors.

ASOF, Report for Year 1924, pp.89, ANU/NBA E217/92


Queensland and Tasmania were exceptions to this, see Report of the Overseas Shipping Conference, APPs, Vol 2, 1929, p.2192 (hereafter ROSC (1929)).

In submissions to Overseas Shipping Conference, ROSC (1929) pp.2192,2199.


Burley, British Shipping and Australia, 1920-1939, p.11; Back, A Maritime History of Australia, p.288, using figures from the Rochdale Report (1970), writes, "...here the [U.K.] share of the world total tonnage dropped spectacularly from 44 percent in 1914 to 20 percent in 1939 when the world total amounted to 60 million tons!"

Owen Cox (OSRA) to D. Denham (Old Premier) 16 Feb 1915, Correspondence from the General System, Queensland State Archives PRE/75. The overseas companies were particularly interested in frozen meat exports and expressed support for the Queensland and Tasmanian Governments. Tel A. Fischer (PM) to Denham, 5 Mar 1915 authorises Queensland Government to fill military contracts.

Tel British Colonial Office to Governor (Qld) 11 Mar 1915, the Shipowner Committee was to determine the best method of dealing with difficulties for the Board of Trade. 1. OSRA (Syd) to Denham, 22 Mar 1915, 1. But & Co (agents) to Denham, 6 April 1915, detailing decisions of the Export Shipping Committee regarding the allocation of shipping space, Correspondence from the General System, Queensland State Archives PRE/75.

Between 1924 and 1928, B. M. Deakin, Shipping Conferences, p.40

Estimates by Deakin, Shipping Conferences, p.40, figures taken from Table 2.8. These figures were confirmed by information provided to the conference on Overseas Shipping convened by Prime Minister Bruce in 1929.
Buchanan noted that “Every township of importance on the coast has its own scheme for turning itself into a port; indeed, some townships of little importance also have their schemes ... however, the State is bound to guard carefully against lavish expenditure and unprofitable projects” (para.37, p.105). Moreover, “... that a policy of increasing facilities and railway communications at certain selected ports is to be preferred to one for establishing a number of second and third class ports” (para.43, p.107). The Report recommended centralisation of port facilities (para.545, p.234). The two aspects were difficult to reconcile. The politics of development favoured more smaller ports rather than consolidation of larger ports.

This was between 1925 and 1928, Deakin, Shipping Conferences, p.40
Deakin, Shipping Conferences, p.41
Buchanan Report, (1926) Vol 1, para.528, p.230
ROSC (1929), pp.2192,2196
Chapter 8
Collective Organisation of Labour in Stevedoring 1890–1928

I. Introduction

This chapter examines labour organisation in light of the industrial context outlined in last chapter. The consolidation of companies and the market control of the ASOF marked a transition in the form in which the labour process operated. The ASOF companies employed the bulk of waterside workers, either directly or through stevedoring companies and agencies they controlled. The ASOF was central in the industrial dynamic of stevedoring. But the overseas companies and their stevedores remained outside the ASOF and in the larger ports, some master stevedores operated independently and employed waterside workers. Moreover, in the regional and small ports, local agents also employed waterfront labour. In short, waterfront employment was concentrated but a variety of employers still remained.

Stevedoring was viewed as a secondary function and shipowners sought short term solutions for its performance. They relied heavily upon the existing forms of methods, work organisation and labour organisation. It will be argued in this chapter that labour organisation continued to be heavily influenced by the pattern of informalism. First, it was initially sustained by the type of community locale which developed through the 1800s. However the deepening of capitalist relations at the societal level generated social processes that began to weaken local urban communities. Suburbanisation in the 1920s began a process of breaking down networks of worker solidarity outside the workplace that quickened only after WWII.

Second, the small scale and contingent nature of the labour process continued to generate demands for worker autonomy. But industrialisation of the labour process brought additional labour demands. In stevedoring the demands were placed on informal methods of labour organisation in an expanded labour process. I will show that the continuing lack of technological change, discussed in chapter seven, created additional labour demand and problems.

Finally, as the control of stevedoring operations by shore based personnel was increasingly inserted into an integrated organisational structure it created tensions with the continued reliance on informal authority. Operational control over the day to day labour process by foremen and superintendents in the larger companies and stevedoring companies was relatively loose. Since the stevedoring workplace was short-lived, dispersed, highly contingent, labour intensive and isolated, standardisation and systematisation remained limited as local arrangements were entrenched.

This resulted in pressure on the new industrial relations system over the period after 1900 to 1928. Chapters nine and ten explore these issues. Chapter eleven points to the beginning of a new period on the waterfront.
In this chapter, section II examines the social organisation of waterside workers and the pattern of employment in the industry from the 1890s to the end of the 1920s. Section III examines the process of expansion of the labour process in the same period. Section IV turns to the effects of industrialisation of shipping and the expansion of the labour process on industrial authority in stevedoring.

II. The Employment and Social Conditions of Waterside Workers

I showed in chapter six that wharf labourers residential pattern stabilised around the waterfront after 1860. These maritime communities grew through the period covered in this chapter as the numbers of wharf workers rose. In this section I will be concerned to outline the general characteristics of the waterfront labour force and employment after 1890. I begin with the outline of the characteristics of the labour force and their employers. Second, an examination of the residential pattern of waterside workers. Third, I focus on the labour process. And finally, an examination of changes in the pattern of industrial authority in shipping as a whole and its effects on stevedoring.

1. Waterside Workers and Employers

With the recognition and stabilisation of wharf labouring came changes in the character of the labour force and employers. This section provides a brief discussion of these issues in order to establish the nature of social and structural conditions in stevedoring.

Table 8.1 provides a comparison of the age profile of the Brisbane stevedoring workers in 1891 and 1901 based on census data not union membership figures. We have seen that labour mobility was high before 1890 reflected by the predominance of men under 40 years old (71.3%) in the labour force. By 1901 this figure had fallen to 58.3 percent – or more than four out of ten (41.7%) waterside workers were over 40 years of age. While the combined percentage of boys and young men (under 25 years) remained stable, at about 10 percent, the proportion of 25 to 34 years olds fell (44.9% down to 28.8%). In contrast, the older age groups increased; one in seven (15.1%) were over 50 years, with a four-fold increase in those over 60 years of age – about 40 men. An average age of about 30 years in 1891 rose to just under 40 a decade later. Finally, while we have no statistics on job tenure, it may be inferred that the proportion of workers with long market attachment increased over this period. Certainly their number increased as it was unlikely that the 80 or so men over 55 were newly recruited into the industry at the age of 50 years or over. The profile seen in Brisbane is supported by the national industry statistics outlined in Table 8.2. The general trend after 1900 has been towards a larger proportion of older workers, thus a higher average age and greater length of market attachment. In the period before 1929 the data indicates several points. First, by the 1920s, the proportion boys and young men (under 25 years) had halved and disappeared from the industry during the depression. Boys carried and fetched ropes, lunches, ran messages, and thereby gained general work knowledge. Union age rules (minimum ages from 18 to 21 years) eventually excluded boys. The recruitment practices of seconding and gaining approval of union general meetings favoured the sons of waterside workers (usually in their twenties). As intergenerational recruitment was strengthened so was the solidarism of workers.

Second, the proportion of workers in their twenties fell while those in all other age groups rose. War casualties played a part in the fall of the 21–29 age cohort. Other workers no doubt remained in the industry longer. The increase in those over 60 (more than doubled 1911 to 1921
and trebled the 1901 Qld figure) indicates a more pervasive trend. The proportion in their twenties and thirties continued to fall after 1930. This was despite the 1928 strike loss and depression which could be expected to see employers favouring younger workers (to improve work rates). In 1933 a third of waterfront workers were over 50 and two-thirds were over 40 – a reversal of the 1900 profile (two-thirds under 40). In 1911 the average age was 39.6 years with a modal age of 33 years, but by the 1920s the average had risen to well over 40. In sum, waterside workers were older, with longer market attachment and more experienced in the job.

### Table: 8.1 Age Distribution of Stevedores, Lumpers and Wharf Labourers,* Brisbane 1891, Queensland, 1901

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age (years)</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>1891# Percent</th>
<th>(Age cohort)</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>1901 Percent</th>
<th>(Age cohort)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>10 – 14</td>
<td>n.a.</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15 – 19</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>(3.5)</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>1.8</td>
<td>(1.8)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20 – 24</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>7.1</td>
<td></td>
<td>83</td>
<td>8.3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25 – 29</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>20.2</td>
<td>(27.3)</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>12.1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30 – 34</td>
<td>91</td>
<td>24.8</td>
<td></td>
<td>166</td>
<td>16.7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35 – 39</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>15.8</td>
<td>(40.6)</td>
<td>177</td>
<td>19.8</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40 – 44</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>12.0</td>
<td></td>
<td>161</td>
<td>16.2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>45 – 49</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>7.9</td>
<td>(19.9)</td>
<td>99</td>
<td>9.9</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50 – 54</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>5.2</td>
<td></td>
<td>72</td>
<td>7.2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>55 – 59</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>2.7</td>
<td>(7.9)</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>4.1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60 – 64</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td></td>
<td>21</td>
<td>2.1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>65 – 69</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.3</td>
<td>(0.8)</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>1.3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>70 – 74</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0.4</td>
<td>(3.8)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Total 367 100.0 995 99.9

* in this and subsequent tables, stevedores refers to men who worked on ships and lumpers refers to coal lumpers (although Fremantle wharf labourers were known as lumpers. # I have allocated ages to 1901 categories as overlap appears in the 1891 figures

Source: Govt of Qld, Census of Queensland, 5 April 1891, (Brisbane, 1892) Table CVI, Occupation Class III, Order XIII, sub-order 3, pp.282-307; Ninth Census of Queensland, 31 Mar 1901, (Brisbane, 1902)

A minor exception to this trend was lighterman and bargemen. As Australian ports expanded lighters fell into disuse, yet of two hundred or so working in 1921, almost a half (46.9%) were less than 40, and those over 50 accounted for nearly a third (32.1%). There were 33 men 60 or over, 25 were either employers or self-employed. The data do not indicate age, but it appears that most of this group of 25 were older men, leaving the younger men the heavier work to perform.

However for waterside workers, some older workers were employers. Table 8.3, and Table 8.4 indicate that, in 1911, 52 waterside workers were employers of labour and one was self-employed. Of these 38 (73%) were 40 or over. This was however only a small number of the total labour force. By 1921 it had fallen to 38 while the labour force had increased by 9 percent. The rise in self-employed workers probably reflected the rise in unemployment from 4 percent to 16 percent in the respective years and proved to be short-lived.

Not surprisingly the data indicate that waterside workers were overwhelmingly employees. Small masters (such as the 'petty stevedores' at Port Adelaide) were now only a very marginal section of the labour force, less than one percent. In contrast, lightermen still maintained a much larger proportion of employers, ten to twelve percent. But small employers still played a role in the
industry. I will return to this point below. Finally, it may be noted that the unemployment rate in 1921 for lightermen was negligible. It probably indicates that lighterman spread the available work (often only one operator was in small ports) and laid off casual watersiders rather than lightermen.

Table 8.2  Age Distribution of Stevedores, Lumpers and Wharf Labourers (Waterside Workers) 1911, 1921, 1958, 1975 (percent & cohorts in parentheses)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age</th>
<th>1911</th>
<th>1921</th>
<th>1933</th>
<th>1958</th>
<th>1975</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>10-14</td>
<td>0.2</td>
<td>0.1</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15-19</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20-24</td>
<td>11.5</td>
<td>6.3</td>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>2.2</td>
<td>3.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25-29</td>
<td>14.5</td>
<td>10.9</td>
<td>9.0</td>
<td>8.3</td>
<td>6.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30-34</td>
<td>13.6</td>
<td>15.8</td>
<td>11.3</td>
<td>12.8</td>
<td>9.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35-39</td>
<td>12.6</td>
<td>15.4</td>
<td>11.5</td>
<td>15.0</td>
<td>9.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40-44</td>
<td>12.2</td>
<td>13.2</td>
<td>15.0</td>
<td>17.5</td>
<td>11.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>45-49</td>
<td>11.6</td>
<td>10.7</td>
<td>16.2</td>
<td>14.0</td>
<td>15.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50-54</td>
<td>9.7</td>
<td>9.3</td>
<td>13.0</td>
<td>11.0</td>
<td>15.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>55-59</td>
<td>5.7</td>
<td>7.5</td>
<td>9.7</td>
<td>7.7</td>
<td>16.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60-64</td>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>5.5</td>
<td>7.0</td>
<td>5.1</td>
<td>12.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>65-69</td>
<td>1.4</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>3.9</td>
<td>0.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>70-74</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>0.8</td>
<td>#0.7</td>
<td>1.9</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>75-79</td>
<td>0.2</td>
<td>0.2</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&gt;80</td>
<td>0.1</td>
<td>0.1</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>99.8</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>99.9</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No.</td>
<td>13,487</td>
<td>14,772</td>
<td>13,106</td>
<td>24,188</td>
<td>13,265</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* < 0.1  + rounding error  # includes all workers over 70

Source: Govt of Qld, Ninth Census of Queensland, 31 Mar 1901 (Brisbane, 1902); Cth of Australia, Census April 1911, Table 18 Order 14 sub-order 3 group 11 pp.1388-89; idem Census 1921 Part xvii Apr 1921 Table 25 Occupation code no. 329; ASIA, Annual Reports, 1958, 1974-75

Table 8.3  Stevedore, Lumper, Wharf Labourer Age by Employment Status, Australia 1911

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Stevedore, Lumper, Wharf Labourer</th>
<th>Employer</th>
<th>Self-Employed</th>
<th>Ass't</th>
<th>Worker</th>
<th>Un-Emp'l'd</th>
<th>Not Applic</th>
<th>Not Stated</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>10-14</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15-19</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>376</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20-24</td>
<td>1,551</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1,463</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25-29</td>
<td>1,958</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1,873</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30-34</td>
<td>1,839</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1,739</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35-39</td>
<td>1,706</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1,615</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40-44</td>
<td>1,644</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1,556</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>45-49</td>
<td>1,574</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1,486</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50-54</td>
<td>1,298</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1,216</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>55-59</td>
<td>774</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>711</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60-64</td>
<td>431</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>388</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>65-69</td>
<td>193</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>158</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>70-74</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>75-79</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&gt;80</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Total | 13,117                           | 52       | 1             | -    | 12,718 | 557       | 235        | 1          |

* 2 men 85-89 & 3 men in 90-94

Source: Commonwealth of Australia, Census April 1911, Table 18 Order 14 sub-order 3 group 11 pp.1388-89
Table 8.4 Occupational groups by Employment Status, Australia 1911, 1921

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Employment Status</th>
<th>Stevedore &amp; Wharf 1911</th>
<th>Wharf 1921</th>
<th>Lumper/Labourer 1911</th>
<th>Lighteman &amp; Bargemaster 1911</th>
<th>Lighteman &amp; Bargemaster 1921</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Employer</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>17</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-Employed</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>8</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assistant without wages</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wages or salary</td>
<td>12,718</td>
<td>12,049</td>
<td>190</td>
<td>176</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unemployed</td>
<td>557</td>
<td>2,383</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>8</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not Applicable</td>
<td>235</td>
<td>226</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not Stated</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>53</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>13,564</td>
<td>14,772</td>
<td>226</td>
<td>215</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unemployment rate</td>
<td>4.1%</td>
<td>16.2%</td>
<td>2.5%</td>
<td>4.2%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* this category was not used for these occupations in 1911

Source: Commonwealth of Australia, Census, April 1911, Table 18 Order 14, sub-order 3 group 11, pp.1388-89; idem, Census, April 1921, Table 25 occupation code no.329, pp.1268-69

In looking at employers, it is more difficult to determine from official information their characteristics at the wharf level. Table 8.5 provides data on the employment status of administrative staff in shipping and is not disaggregated below this level. Nevertheless there are several points to be made. First, the administrative overhead in shipping increased from 1911 to 1921. Whereas the number of waterside workers increased 8.7 percent in this period (Table 8.4), the number of administrative workers rose 52.8 percent. In aggregate terms the ratio of waterside workers to administrative employees increased from 1:0.25 to 1:0.33. This arose from the rise in clerical workers, shipping clerks and tally clerks, who made up the majority of the census category.

Table 8.5 Shipowner, Agent, Manager, and Clerks by Employment Status* 1911, 1921

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Employment Status</th>
<th>Year 1911</th>
<th>1921</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Employer</td>
<td>167</td>
<td>112</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-Employed</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assistant without wages</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wages or salary</td>
<td>3,029</td>
<td>4,507</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unemployed</td>
<td>40 (1.3%)</td>
<td>183  (3.9%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not Applicable</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not Stated</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>3,326</td>
<td>4,902</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ratio Workers***(wages + u/e) to Employers</td>
<td>18.3:1</td>
<td>41.3:1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* occupational groups in the sea and water transport industry
** workers from Table 8.4

Source: Commonwealth of Australia, Census, April 1911 Table 18 Order 14, sub-order 3, group 6 pp.1386-1387; Census, 1921, Table 25 occupation code no.323, pp.1268-1269

Second, the rise in administrative staff occurred as the number of employers (including self-employed) fell 23.6 percent over the decade. Recall that 24 interstate companies were officially recorded in 1911 and 39 in 1921. Thus, excluding these companies (the self-employed) there were approximately 140 small shipowners or agents in 1911 and 70 in 1921. Since most were agents, this represented an increase in industrial concentration. Third, managerial staff was approximately fifteen percent of the number of workers given in Table 8.5. That is, in 1911 there were 450 management staff and in 1921, approximately 750. This is consistent with the spread of branch offices in the major companies argued in chapter seven. Although this increase in numbers appears not to have had a significant impact on the management and supervision of stevedoring operations, I will consider this below, when examining authority and supervision of the labour process.
I can summarise the argument as follows. There was a significant fall in the number of small employers in shipping and stevedoring in the pre- and post-WWI periods. Increased industrial concentration was marked by an increase in managerial and administrative staff. On the one hand this raised costs for the industry, but on the other, it provided the capacity for better centralised coordination resulting in cost savings arising from more efficient management of the industry. This view was one consistently put forward by shipowners in the post-WWI period, as I pointed out in the last chapter.

For stevedoring, the changes in the scale of employment undercut many organisational conditions which had sustained informalism and its pattern of industrial relations. Industrial concentration and market control of tonnage by the ASOF companies facilitated the emergence of an integrated organisational structure. With more waterside workers employed in these companies the conditions for standardisation for sea-going and waterfront functions matured through the 1920s. But waterside workers were older and more experienced in the work. It would be expected that the pressure to extend direct managerial authority into the labour process would be resisted by practices and action associated with workers more experienced in the practices of informalism.

Yet if traditional tactics were to be used there had to be conditions to continue to underpin them. The next section explores one of these conditions, the social and community organisation of workers.

2. Social Conditions, Community and Waterside Workers

Change in the social conditions of waterside workers was slower than many of the changes discussed in chapter six. Indeed in the period through the 1890s through to the 1920s saw a consolidation of waterfront communities. To the extent that this was the case informalism at work was reinforced. Working class communities in general and waterside workers in particular displayed similar conditions. In this section I will argue that through most of the period up to the 1930s the geographical social and living conditions of waterside workers was much like the working class communities of the nineteenth century. Social proximity sustained informalism. The post-WWI saw this extended. Two points are relevant. First, there was a larger growth of the labour force in smaller regional ports. This extended the social organisation that sustained informalism, but spread it into smaller and more isolated towns. Second, a tendency towards suburbanisation in the larger ports dispersed urban communities and thereby loosened informal ties. Although such ties were sustained in different ways. Particularly, since waterside workers were unlikely to be home owners.

Mitchell investigated social and living conditions in working class districts around the Sydney waterfront in the decade before the First World War. Her research based on electoral rolls found that wharf labourers were concentrated in these urban areas. In particular the rectangle from the Milson’s Point and the Rocks in the north to the head of Cockle Bay to the south, and from the wharves on Darling Harbour to George Street in the East was the central area of the maritime industry in Sydney. Sussex Street running from the Rocks to Liverpool Street became known as the 'Hungry Mile', particularly from the experience of waterside workers in the depression. The urban areas immediately to the east and west of this locality could be added. Expansion of overseas wharves into Woolloomooloo Bay to the East saw the urban areas expand in this direction. To the west, Pyrmont and the adjacent coast around to Mort's Engineering in Balmain contained wharves
adjacent residential areas. As in the decades before 1890, workers needed to be close to the wharves to enable them to be available for work at any time.

1 Residency and Community

The residential pattern of waterside workers in other ports was similar. In the pre-WWI period expansion of the number of waterside workers was associated with an increase in the number of waterside workers in adjacent urban areas. In 1901 there were approximately 8,000 men in the industry rising to over 13,500 in 1911 and over 14,000 on the eve of the war. In contrast, growth in the post-WWI period it is more difficult to directly identify increases in local residency. The labour force rose from approximately 18,000 in 1918 to over 21,000 before 1928. But the beginning of suburbanisation of Australian cities and the growth of significant regional ports tended to disperse waterside workers. I shall examine these changes in more detail as they were underlying conditions for the organisation of workers.

Turning first to regional ports. The growth of agricultural exports, population and the increase in port visits of overseas vessels identified in chapter seven saw the stevedoring labour force expand in regional ports. Townsville, Cairns, Mackay, and Rockhampton all employed hundreds of waterside workers in the high season. Sugar, wool and meat were the main cargoes. In chapter six we saw that in 1864, about two-thirds of Queensland maritime workers (recall this was an aggregated category of wharf labourers, seamen etc) resided in Brisbane. Of the 367 wharf labourers in 1891, only 46 percent resided in Brisbane and 24 percent in Townsville. Whereas in 1901, Brisbane accounted for 55 percent (545), Townsville 13 percent (129), Rockhampton 10 percent and Cairns 8 percent out of a state total of 995. From 1917 through the 1920s the Brisbane branch of the WWF had about 45 percent of the Queensland membership. This regional pattern in Queensland, survived for the next 60 years.

What were seen as small ports such as Strahan, Port Augusta, Wallaroo, Geraldton, Maryborough, Bowen, Innisfail, Gladstone, Launceston and Devonport all employed more than one hundred waterside workers by the mid-1920s. Added to this were men who worked seasonal cargoes such as fruit, vegetables, wheat and sugar in these ports. Finally, regional ports such as Port Pirie, and Port Kembla for steel, Newcastle and Albany for coal often employed several hundred waterside workers. In terms of the proportion of WWF membership of the capital city port by state, Sydney fall from 89.4% percent in 1917 to 79% in 1924, Melbourne (both branches) was by far the major port, Hobart remained at about a third, Port Adelaide fell from two-thirds to less than half and Fremantle fell from over two thirds to 56 percent. The Federation covered more than 40 ports by the mid-1920s. The residential pattern of waterside workers in all of these ports was not as important for working class community as in larger cities. As Australian rural towns maintain a well recognised class hierarchy.

These changes in the location of the stevedoring labour force naturally followed the pattern of shipping and transport demand. They had two apparently opposite effects. On the one hand the labour force was more dispersed and thus weakened the organisational capacities of workers across the industry. On the other hand, more ports with a 'critical mass' of stevedoring workers raised their organisational capacities in these ports. However, the nature of this organisation was closer to that of informalism than for formalised trade unionism. I shall return to this argument in the following chapter.
Turning secondly to the residency in larger ports. Through most of this period home ownership was not widespread amongst labourers. This was particularly so amongst casual wharf labourers. Thus rents continued to be a community concern, as it was in the nineteenth century. Mitchell notes that often two families shared a house and sub-letting a room to a lodger was common.\textsuperscript{19} Evidence given by wharf labourers in 1905 showed that all the witnesses were renting accommodation.\textsuperscript{20}

As I noted in chapter six the property qualifications for voter registration (and the listing of occupations) in Queensland before WWI provides indicative information on waterside workers. I showed that few wharf labourer owned property in waterfront electorates in 1893–94. An analysis of electoral roles a decade later shows little change. Table 8.6 indicates the number of selected occupational groups in the three electorates which included the waterfront districts, namely Brisbane North, Brisbane South and Fortitude Valley. Nundah and Oxley were surveyed as random control electorates, on the north and south rural fringes of Brisbane respectively. Brisbane South listed only 1 wharf labourer, (in addition to other maritime occupations and one gatekeeper, at AUSNCo, not given). Fortitude Valley listed only 4 wharf labourers. This electorate included Spring Hill, a well-know locality for waterside workers. The one waterside worker registered in Nundah owned freehold land (Parish of Nundah, subdiv 2, per 164) but lived at Adelaide Street, Brisbane.

### Table 8.6 Wharf Labourers, Labourers and Maritime Occupations, Selected Brisbane Electorates, 1901-02

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Electorate</th>
<th>Wharf Labourer</th>
<th>Labourer</th>
<th>Seamen</th>
<th>Mariner</th>
<th>Shipowner/manager</th>
<th>Clerk</th>
<th>Stevedore/wharfinger</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bris Nth</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>143</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bris Sth</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>228</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Valley</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>242</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nundah</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>107</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oxley</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>95</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: State Electoral Office, \textit{Electoral Rolls} 1901, Brisbane North 1902, Brisbane South, 23 Dec 1901, both Queensland State Archives, microfilm Z1255; Fortitude Valley, 16 Feb 1901, Nundah, Jan 1901 and Oxley, 29 Jan 1901, all Queensland State Archives, microfilm Z1254

In sum, very few waterside workers owned property in the main localities adjacent to the Brisbane wharves even though the age distribution would indicate the contrary (recall a third of the national labour force was in their thirties, more than half over 40 years old and a third, over fifty). Furthermore, the birth rate in working class localities was higher than the Australian average of three\textsuperscript{21} per family. That is, the majority of workers were settled, with established family ties and often with young children. The pressures of rent, food, clothing and travel all were constantly felt on casual waterfront workers and their families, probably more than for other occupational groups, except other casual workers.

I noted previously that rents close to the waterfront were higher than in other areas in Sydney. This continued to be the case in the years before WWI. Indeed rises in rents from 1910 saw the NSW government establish a Select Committee of Inquiry in late 1911. Witnesses at the inquiry reported rises of twenty and thirty percent over the year. Rents were now often 25s. to 30s. per week for a house, thus two families sharing a house was not uncommon.\textsuperscript{22} Responding to these pressures in Sydney, the Sydney Harbour Trust provided housing for waterside workers over the next few years.\textsuperscript{23}
As was commented at the time, pressure on residential land by industrial and commercial needs, population growth and so on, were most keenly felt by "the poorer classes." Specifically, the "real hardship falls on those whose income and occupation compel them to live within easy distance of their work." People were unwilling to move to "distant suburbs" when there was a lack of "reasonable transit...and [therefore] it should be a strong point of policy to encourage that tendency to decentralisation." For example as one waterside worker reported, "[t]here was no transport from the Loo to Pyrmont and men often had to walk the distance in the rain". Thus, the process of suburbanisation emerged, although it only quickened when public transport and later the car spurred its development in later decades.

In the 1920s the process had effects on different sections of the workforce. A contemporary foreman noted these. The better paid overseas (or 'deep-sea') men appeared to fare better in the 1920s, he wrote that,

"...they had been born by the wharves, worked on the wharves as their fathers and grandfathers before them, drank near the wharves, fought by the wharves, ... were a bit clannish in covering up infamies and in acidly testing any new outside foreman coming in to boss them."

In contrast, the interstate men centred around the 'grocery store' boats of the interstate and coastal trades along Sussex Street, "had no hard-by residential area except a small locality on the west side of Miller's Point. It drew most of its labour from the outer suburbs."

In Brisbane there were about 1500 waterside workers on the Brisbane wharves in the mid-1920s. The property qualification for the vote was by the 1920s, thus the electoral rolls included all electors. In the Brisbane electorate, taking in the old North Brisbane area, only 62 waterside workers were registered, along with 62 seamen and mariners, 4 clerks and one shipping manager. No doubt some of the 765 labourers registered had worked on the wharves. One watersider resided at Kennedy Wharf, another at Petrie Wharf, and many in Wharf, Herbert, Boundary, Hartley, and several other streets, as did scores of labourers. An examination of the Bulimba electorate, across the river from wharves at Newstead and Hamilton, saw 23 waterside workers 44 seamen (several ferrymen and boatmen, and officers) and 567 labourers. These men were spread from Bulimba to Coorparoo and Stones Corner, that is many kilometres apart. In other words, it appears that waterside workers were not overly concentrated in one area. They were likely to live relatively near wharves but also spread into several suburbs some distance from the wharves.

In Melbourne the geographical spread of the port was greater than in Sydney. Overseas vessels were worked at Williamstown and Port Melbourne while coal and interstate shipping was worked mainly on the Yarra and some at Williamstown. As I have shown in chapter six this had already created two local unions for these trades. Fremantle and Port Adelaide represented examples of the isolated community thesis for waterside workers. By the 1920s Fremantle had assumed an ascendancy in bunkerage (from Albany) for overseas vessels and taken all interstate trade (the lighterage work to Perth wharves had dried up). It was some distance from Perth and all waterside workers lived in this small community. In a similar manner, Port Adelaide is about fifteen kilometres from Adelaide. The majority of waterside workers lived in or near Port Adelaide. The only other wharves were at Outer Harbour, a few kilometres from Port Adelaide. Other ports had less than 500 waterside workers and were in smaller towns. This includes Hobart, a capital city port, but having 430 WWF members in 1924.
2 The Practices of Community

I argued in chapter six that an important enabling condition of informalism was the
development of community. The normative and moral pressures of community and the workplace
where mutual reinforcing. Union picnics of waterside workers were universal in ports around
Australia. Wharf labourers in Newcastle organised 'novelty shows' to raise funds for the NWLU.31
Unions maintained a number of their benefits (particularly burial payments) for their members
around the country. Shopkeepers and vendors were sympathetic to the irregularity of watersider's
income and alternative payment arrangements existed. For example in Sydney a loaf of bread cost
3d. if "booked" [entered into a credit book] and 2 1/2d. if not.32 The work of wives and families in
merely surviving was substantial in itself.33 Thus, in lean periods, workers or more likely their
wives, could purchase goods on credit to be repaid on pay day or better times.

There are additional indicators of community networks of support. The incidence of pillaging
appears to have increased around the time of the first world war. Indeed, a Federal Government
Royal Commission on pillaging in 1920, found that £70,000 in goods was lost in Australian ports in
one year.34 The Report found that no evidence of any conspiracy between customs officers and
pillagers, and little evidence of the use of professional 'fences' to dispose of the goods. As one
police Inspector remarked in evidence, "most of the stuff stolen is for home use."35 In support of
this view, evidence was found in all the ports visited (except Launceston) that there was 'concerted
action' by residents to raise money to pay the fines of those convicted of pillaging.36 That covered
all the capital city ports. There were a total of 778 people convicted of stealing from ships or
wharves nationally between 1916 and 1920. Of these 306 were fined; mostly in NSW (136) and
Victoria (82).37 In Melbourne, it was reported that fines were paid by fellow workers, collections
from local tradespeople, tarpaulin musters and collections by filling a lemonade bottle. In
Fremantle, unionists took up collections for fellow members, with one witness in Sydney declaring
that "money is forthcoming, and no difficulty is found in payment of a fine when a man is
convicted." As one Adelaide witness noted, the general feeling was "Come on, George, your turn
may be next."38 In its general summary the Report castigated unions for not taking a stand against
pillaging.39 While this evidence is illustrative it nevertheless indicates solidaristic organisation40 in
the workplace and in the community – touched by a certain degree of larrikinism as well.41 "It
wasn't classified as thieving, it was seen as building up your wages" commented a waterside
worker.42 Pillage however retained a moral edge which served to link workers.43

But one mechanism of social linkage that was strengthened in the period up to the 1920s was
kinship. Intergenerational recruitment strengthened not only solidaristic workplace organisation but
community networks, even across wider locations. The Sydney Union's Rules not only included
nomination and ballot requirements but that five existing members support the application for
admittance. Of the Brisbane membership list in 1920 almost half the 1287 surnames were listed
twice – Anderson 13 times, Adams 4, Austin 2, Baily 3, Banks 2, Batterby 2, Beaumont 3, Bell 7;
some, such as Cousins, 4, listed senior and junior.44 While for common names this to be expected
the prevalence of the pattern is striking.

There are three summary points to be made. First, waterside workers continued to be located
in inner city urban localities. These were generally close to waterfront areas, although not
exclusively so. Second, capital city port areas were not as central to union organisation as a
numbers of waterside workers were located in regional ports. Moreover, suburbanisation began to
disperse workers in urban areas in the 1920s, but nevertheless the community of workers remained
strong. Finally, for waterside workers home ownership appears to have been relatively rare. Which
meant that workers were constantly under financial pressure, even though they were older on
average.

III. The Labour Process

This section briefly examines key aspects the labour process, in terms of both work methods
and physical organisation, to identify relevant changes from the nineteenth century to the
depression. These aspects underpinned industrial relations and will be considered in more detail
were relevant in later chapters. Turning first to work organisation and methods in the labour
process, I shall concentrate on the period between approximately 1900 and the 1920s, focusing on
the latter.

The gang was the central work unit before 1900 as the diffusion of steamships had lifted the
limitations of natural materials on the size and number of holds of vessels. Five holds, rather than
three or four, became the average for cargo or passenger vessels of three to five thousand tons. The
cargo capacity of 150,000 to 175,000 cubic feet capacity was worked through the 5 hatches ranging
between 90 and 290 square feet. Cargo was worked through the average hatch size of
approximately 250 square feet (23 sq metres), about the size of the average lounge room, or through
side hatches in the central hold (Nos 2,3 or 4). Each hold often had several levels or 'tween decks,
which could be worked through side or top hatch. Larger ships' holds generally meant greater
labour demand for the job. On shore, the design of wharves and sheds remained remarkably similar
to that of half a century earlier, albeit slightly larger. In the largest port of Sydney, wharfage was
longer, but most sheds were between 100 and 500 feet in length, many double-decked, but most
were only about 40 feet wide but did range to 80 feet.

Work methods were essentially similar in all trades, and remained largely unchanged through
this period. There were only two significant alterations of working equipment. Steam winches,
introduced in the 1870s, were gradually replaced by electric and hydraulic winches from pre-WWI
and through the 1920s. Their greater cost (over steam winches) slowed their introduction, but
electric winches, such as those of Lawrence Scott or Clark Chapman, operated at speeds of 180 feet
per minute carrying a 30 cwt (1500 kg) load. The second significant change was the use of steel
wire rather than rope for the lines. It greatly improved strength and durability. These changes
increased the potential working speed of the hook. The average hold of 50 to 60 foot depth saw a
lift, slew and return completed in less than a minute. The availability of twin electric winches meant
that one man controlled both the amidship and yardarm movements (or the vertical fall into the hold
and horizontal swing over the side) rather than two men operating separate steam winches for the
different movements. A second consequence was that with stronger lines and simplified rigging
(one line was generally used for all lifts) the size of slings could be significantly increased.

The result of these changes was a greater demand for labour. Much of it was for unskilled
labour rather than for certain competencies, such as rigging, which declined. As noted earlier in
chapter seven)investment in technological change in stevedoring was low and was almost entirely
for ship-based equipment to handle larger tonnages. Hence the national waterfront labour force
rose from approximately 8,000 workers in 1901 to over 13,000 in 1911, and over 21,000 in 1928 as noted earlier.

Work organisation remained based on labour organisation, as production was tied to the flow of cargo through the stages in the labour process but still dependent upon the speed of manual labour. Whether loading or discharging, work flow was internal to the gang. In direct manual cargo handling, 'trucking' became far more prevalent than carrying, although the latter was far from eliminated from the waterfront – carrying wheat sacks created significant concern for example.49 Gangs were subjected to greater demands for handling tonnage and speed of the labour process through this period. The pressure to shorten port time, through faster turnaround for steamships continued apace. A dramatic example was seen in turnaround time at Perth in 1898. At the South Quay Swan River, sailing ships berth from between 7 and 75 days (average 36), whereas English steamers averaged 13 days and intercolonial steamers 3.25 days.50 Intercolonial steamers were the most important trade in the port, the pressure on workers in these trades was greater.

The combination of size and speed also generally resulted in larger gangs. By the 1920s, and often before, the average size of the gang was close to twenty men. Some cargoes, companies or ports had gang sizes of more than twenty, even 30 or 40 men. Although manning was subject to bargaining, in both Arbitration and at the workplace, the discussion here focuses on the structural pressures in the labour process. In a number of internal company reports in the 1920s the AUSNCo marine superintendents documented stevedoring conditions in several ports in which the company operated. Table 8.7 shows that the standard shipboard manning was 9 men, made up of 6 in the hold, 2 winchmen and a hatchman. Manning differences centred on shore – number of men under hook (from 1 to 4), the number of truckers (from none to 8 or more) and the number of stackers in the shed (from 2 to 5 or 6). These were all manual tasks. The work process in all these ports used ship board gear, trucked cargo across the wharf, and handled cargo manually in the shed. The manning differences varied by local conditions based on; the state of shore facilities and the nature of the cargo.

Table: 8.7 Manning for Stevedoring Operations, Selected Ports AUSNCo 1923

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Port</th>
<th>Control of Operations</th>
<th>Holders</th>
<th>Deck*</th>
<th>Wharf**</th>
<th>Truckers</th>
<th>Stackers</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Melbourne</td>
<td>Internal</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brisbane</td>
<td>Internal</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6/8</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>21/23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sydney</td>
<td>Internal</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2/4</td>
<td>3/7</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>16/22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pt Adelaide</td>
<td>Stevedore</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rockhampton</td>
<td>Internal</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>5/6</td>
<td>22/23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Edithburg</td>
<td>Agent</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wallaroo</td>
<td>Stevedore</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Port Pirie</td>
<td>Stevedore</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* 2 winchmen and 1 hatchman  ** includes landers  # includes horsemen (with or without truckers)

Source: Capt. H. Tyrer and W. S. Gower, Report in regard to Stevedoring Charges and Loading Arrangements, May–June 1923, AUSNCo, McKellar Collection, ML MSS 4548/Box 2

The condition of shore facilities was generally poor and congested. Melbourne and Sydney generally averaged 18 men a gang. The working conditions changed little over the previous thirty years. Wharf decking at all Melbourne interstate berths was described by the AUSNCo Marine Superintendent as "in a deplorable condition, and wharf trucking therefore is arduous and slow", the berths were "poorly positioned ...[with] inadequate facilities" for efficient stevedoring. Wharves
and sheds were congested, which was "reflected in both the dispatch and in stevedoring costs."\textsuperscript{51} Moreover, Harbour Trust sorting and stacking By-laws hampered cargo movements.\textsuperscript{52} In Sydney the berth often determined the number of truckers used, some more than others. In many instances cargo had to be trucked up the hill to Sussex Street warehouses, since the one piece of mechanical equipment useful for this work, a gas elevator, was "slow and out-of-date." Limited space in sheds required more top-stacking, which was very labour intensive and slow.\textsuperscript{53} The crowded conditions made the use of early 'tow motor' trucks in the 1930s difficult.\textsuperscript{54}

One contemporary observer wrote of these trades, "[s]peed of discharge was sought, the only way to give it – put men on and keep them all going." Thus while overseas overseas trades used gangs of 19 or 20 men, the Sussex Street companies had 40 and even 50 man gangs. in and before the 1920s,\textsuperscript{55} in contrast to 25 to 30 men around 1900.\textsuperscript{56} Overseas men worked mostly during the day, interstate men were pushed through the night to speed up the turnaround.

Brisbane gangs were larger. Firstly, working hand trucks and Klondykes (trolleys) was slow across the wharves (which were overhauled at the time) and secondly, more labour was required for trucking and stacking for transhipment cargoes handled by the company. A few years later 8 truckers per gang on general cargo was common for all companies in Brisbane.\textsuperscript{57}

In the South Australian ports manning was lower due to specific circumstances. In Port Adelaide horse-drawn, 4-wheel trolleys were used by the largest contractor, the South Australian Stevedoring Co. Slings, made up in the hold, were landed unbroken onto a trolley and unhooked by a single hookman. The trolley (tended by a horsemen) then proceeded across the wharf to the shed. Four stackers then broke open the sling and stacked the cargo as required. Horses were used as both "the wharf and the shed decking [was] ... very rough and uneven, and in addition railway lines had to be trucked over.... [and so] one man could not even truck two bags without undue strain ...". The "very rough state"\textsuperscript{58} of the decking was the responsibility of the Harbour Trust. Nevertheless operations in the Port were considered "ideal" particularly since there was "little or no trouble with the laborers [sic]."\textsuperscript{59} In Edithburg AUSNCo shipped only salt. Bagged salt was carried on trucks, then rolled downhill on small rail lines to the ships' side required no truckers. The empty trucks were then hauled back up a hill by horses and reloaded by salt company employees. Thus only ship work was paid as stevedoring work in handling this cargo.

A similar story was found in stevedoring work around the country. The methods of work were static, little or no mechanical equipment was used, berths and port facilities were in poor condition, or worse and gangs were relatively large and getting larger. For example, a summary of Brisbane five years later by the ASSCo. showed that the average gang was 24 to 25 men, an increase of one or two men, because 8 truckers a gang had become standard.\textsuperscript{60} Although sizes varied by cargo, from a low of 13 for logs to 27 for discharging wool, the average was generally about 24 men. Similar variations were seen in other Queensland ports, but again the average was the same.\textsuperscript{61} In short, the labour process was standardised to an extent, but because it remained largely unmechanised local differences in facilities and cargo resulted in a range of variations. Nevertheless, the gang was standard unit in the organisation of labour.

**IV. Authority and Supervision**

In this section I turn to the issue of industrial authority in the labour process, in particular the management of stevedoring and supervision of operations. I will show that in the wake of the 1890s
strike, shipowners largely abandoned attempts to maintain the social status and authority position of ships' officers. The latter's position as an employee hardened. So apart from the oversight of stowage, the management of stevedoring and waterside labour was shore-based. This created problems not adequately addressed by the companies. Turning first to the position of ships' officers.

All independent status of ships' officers, including the master, disappeared after 1890. Their employee status was entrenched and their work became subject to bargaining. Although they retained considerable discretion and superior social status to other maritime workers, they were nevertheless subject to similar types of informal control such as being blacklisted. After the early 1890s strikes the SOAA identified officers who remained at work. Yet the officers remained unorganised through the 1890s. The pressures of work intensification led to renewed attempts at unionisation. The attempt to revive the Mercantile Marine Officers Association in early 1902 folded under resistance from the shipowners. Macdonald of the AUSNCo instructed his Marine Superintendent "to give our Officers a hint that we object to any of them having any connection with the Association." But arbitration legislation gave the newly formed Merchant Services Guild (MSG) recognition and industrial coverage. It was registered in May 1905 and the ACAC handed down the union's first Award eighteen months later to operate from January, 1907.

Officers remained dissatisfied with their employment conditions and entered negotiations later in 1907. They claimed higher wages and longer holidays, overtime payments, job tenure, improvement in accommodation and the abolition of tallying duties. The latter was withdrawn, but the employers offered only a small wage increase and some working time adjustment but no other 'concessions'. The officers' fate reflected their loss of independent status.

One aspect of this process of formalisation of employment was that their work was confined to sea-going duties, tallying being taken over by casual clerks. By the 1920s their authority over stowage was confined to security of the vessel and excluded control over the stevedoring labour process or wharf workers per se. In small ports, such as the AUSNCo vessels in Edithburg, stowage was "absolutely under the ships' officers." In larger one it was not. In Pt Adelaide, Capt. Langford of the SA Stevedoring Co. "arranged the work in accordance with ships' officers wishes"; in Melbourne stowage was nominally under officers' "sole control" but effectively the wharfinger controlled the work; similarly in Rockhampton, Brisbane and Sydney. In Sydney disputes over authority were decided by the Marine Superintendent.

The production arrangements of the post-1890 strike reflected the transformation of authority relations in shipping as the process of industrialisation deepened. Where masters had enjoyed a relative autonomy that came with a 'separate' employee status prior to the late 1880s, and triggered the 1890 strike, real subsumption drove officers to the status of an industrial employee.

Change in organisation and authority required more organised management of stevedoring and waterside labour. As I have shown in the last chapter a framework for this function was built up from the 1890s to the 1920s. However direct labour organisation and supervision still depended greatly on the personalised relationships characteristic of informalism. But in the new system, such relations were open to coercive use by employers. I shall now turn to the management and supervision of waterside labour.

I showed above that in aggregate terms, the ratio of administrative to stevedoring workers rose from 1911 to 1921. But this was not reflected in operational stevedoring. After 1890, contract
stevedoring of the type objected to by workers was replaced by stevedoring companies, stevedoring departments of shipping companies and agents. Key management personnel in stevedoring were marine superintendents, under whom wharf managers or superintendents were employed in internal departments or worked for and wharfinger contractors or agents. Below these positions were the first line supervisors, viz., foreman and assistant foremen, although a large social and status divide existed. The arrangements used in some ports by AUSNCo demonstrate the organisation.

The AUSNCo used the following arrangements as listed in Table 8.7 (first column). In Sydney, Melbourne, Brisbane and Rockhampton, stevedoring was performed directly by the company. These operations were under the management authority of its marine superintendent (common for large companies in major ports). In Sydney, a wharfinger headed the operations and he had an assistant and 2 permanent foremen, below whom were 2 casual foremen. Similarly, in Melbourne, a wharfinger headed operations, with 2 permanent foremen and 3 casual foremen were hired where necessary. In Brisbane, a wharfinger and 5 permanent foremen stevedores were employed with no casual foremen. In Rockhampton, the staff wharfinger was assisted by another from a local agency when he was available. No foremen were employed.

Arrangements in other ports were similar. In the SA ports of Pt Adelaide, Wallaroo and Pt Pirie AUSNCo stevedoring operations were contracted to the SA Stevedoring Co. Although in the two Spencer Gulf ports agents handled AUSNCo business in other respects, and in Pt Pirie there were a least three other stevedores. The SA Stevedoring Co operations were "under the direct supervision of Capt. Langford" in Adelaide. Edithburg stevedoring operations were managed and supervised by a local agent (the salt company manager). In contrast, McIlwraith and McEacharn employed its own stevedore who travelled to the port aboard ship (which was more expensive). AUSNCo stevedoring was done by contract in Newcastle. The shipping manager at Dalgety's in Newcastle had general managerial authority, but the Newcastle Stevedoring Company handled the operations. Recall that the AUSNCo held shares in both the South Australian and Newcastle Stevedoring Companies.

For other companies had similar arrangements in the 1920s. In the Queensland coastal ports, the ASSCo and Howard Smith (with AUSNCo) each had shipping managers, under whom were wharfingers who had operational responsibility and Burns Philp employed a wharfinger. The internal AUSNCo reports referred to earlier compared stevedoring rates and costs with Howard Smith in several ports. This company, and others, had the same general management and supervisory structure for stevedoring operations. Interestingly, Howard Smith had lower costs attributed to differences in wharf facilities. Henry Howell, Howard Smith's Sydney manager, described the duties of a superintendent as follows,

to take whole charge of the wharf - to attend to the loading and discharging..., and the sorting and delivery of cargo, and the doing of all work in connection with the cargo. With regard to the engagement and discharge of wharf labourers, he would supervise that where he had stevedores [ie foremen stevedores] under his control... [if not] he would attend to it himself.

In short, the management and supervisory structure in Australian stevedoring stabilised as a shore-based function. Little practical operational authority resided with sea-going personnel. In large ports, even authority over stowage was mediated by the wharfinger or marine superintendent. The four-level management structure - marine superintendent, wharf manager or wharfinger or supervisor, foremen, and assistant foreman) remained stable over the period covered here.
Moreover, for AUSNCo. the number of supervisory staff remained constant despite the increase in wharf labour. The supervision of wharf labour therefore became an operational management function. It was however largely ignored by managers and left to the often brusque methods of foremen.

Critically, while the hierarchy of managerial and supervisory labour was internalised in shipping companies, normative barriers to organisational integration remained. Generally, only foremen had contact with waterside workers and the functional cooperation between foremen and management was poor. I showed in chapter seven the employer's labour policy at the port level was coordinated through the local association. It was then conveyed to company management and superintendents via meetings and correspondence. But this dual labour policy was often not matched by adequate company control-systems to consistently relay policy to the foremen. As one foreman expressed the social "gap between employer and employee was as wide as from here to the moon, and between the master and his foreman it was almost as wide", reflecting the deep divisions of status from earlier centuries. Management considered foremen as little more than "glorified wharf labourer[s]." This provided the 'social space' for local procedures to remain widespread and central.

Moreover, stevedoring held a marginal status in the shipping industry, which placed additional pressure on wharf level supervisors. It created 'tougher', more authoritarian personal relations on the waterfront. With gang sizes of over 20 men, located in three different sites (hold/deck, wharf, and shed), a hundred metres or more apart, supervision was demanding. Such demands were softened by a reliance on informalist relations in supervision and for production efficiency via informal intra-gang cooperation. I will examine this in more detail.

As indicated, the gang was the standard unit of labour organisation. By WWI the standard vessel had five holds and if all were worked, employed over 100 men (often 150 or more). With three vessels in port, a company may have 400–500 men employed a day. The wharfinger's duties were fully occupied in coordination and sequencing of the work with deliveries or receivals and overall supervision. Routine operational supervision was left to permanent and casual foremen. In Melbourne and Sydney, AUSNCo had 2 permanent foremen, assisted by 2 or 3 casuals as necessary. Even with 4 casual foremen, only six men would supervise 400 men — a supervisory ratio (henceforth SR) of 1:67 (or 3 gangs). Gaby states that a large gang — of 40 or 50 men (on Tasmania ships discharging, say, forty thousand cases) — would generally have only one foreman, two at most. In Brisbane, AUSNCo employed 5 permanent foremen (and no casuals) giving a SR of 1:80 on such a vessel.

The casual foremen in Melbourne and Sydney (called 'panninkin' bosses or 'pannos') remained members of the WWF. The Sydney 'pannos' merely hung up their WWF medals while employed as foremen. A smaller number of permanent foremen were absorbed in the formal line of authority of shipping companies. But they lacked both social and managerial status. In Sydney, they hired labour, appointed 'pannos', organised and supervised the work. As one foreman noted of the 1920s, four permanents in a company controlled an annual wage bill of £150,000. Permanent foremen were described as "a set of individuals cracking the shipowner's whip." In Newcastle, a local stevedore H. Ford employed 'leaders' for wool gangs. They were experienced men and were paid...
...an hour over ordinary rate. Like the 'pannos' they were union members. A similar supervisory system operated in Melbourne. In Fremantle, all foremen were members of the WWF.

By the 1920s casual foremen came under increasing pressure to speed up work from employers, and antagonism grew from Federation members. Permanent foremen had already formed the Sydney Foreman Stevedores Association in 1914, that gained State registration in July 1915. This union floundered through, and after, the war, but was revived in 1926. The 1928 strike and the depression continued to limit its operations. The separation of the formal supervisory functions was clear by the mid-1920s. The WWF moved to exclude all foremen and carried a 1926 resolution from two Sydney delegates Taylor and Seale to ban foreman holding Federation membership. Although carried, Port Adelaide and Port Philip Stevedores delegates attempted to have it regulated locally, and there was continuing doubt over its validity. The employment of 'pannos' continued in Sydney. Whereas, in Brisbane and other Queensland ports, casual foremen were not used, and foremen were barred from WWF membership. I shall return to these arrangements later.

The effect of these supervisory arrangements was that the SR was probably closer to about 1:50, although industry-wide figures are imprecise. Table 8.8 gives the first Census (1933) occupational disaggregation of waterside workers, stevedores and foremen. Although affected by the depression they indicate that some 325 foremen were employed in loading and discharging vessels, giving an SR of approximately 1:40 (ie. 2 gangs). I have excluded an estimated number of remaining Port Phillip Stevedores.

Table: 8.8 Waterfront Workers by State, 1933

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>State</th>
<th>Wharf Labourer</th>
<th>Stevedore</th>
<th>Coal Lumper</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>New South Wales</td>
<td>3,034</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>532</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Victoria</td>
<td>2,299</td>
<td>345</td>
<td>103</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Queensland</td>
<td>2,440</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Australia</td>
<td>1,982</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Western Australia</td>
<td>1,407</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tasmania</td>
<td>701</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northern Territory</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>11,898</strong></td>
<td><strong>533</strong></td>
<td><strong>674</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Vic figures undoubtedly includes 200 or more Pt Phillip Stevedores, ie waterside workers

Queensland situation confirms this view. Here union watersiders refused to work as foremen, thus the two groups were more sharply differentiated. The AUSNCo marine superintendents reported that no casual foremen were employed in Rockhampton as "the waterside workers will not accept such employment" and in Brisbane the company employed a retired man for supervision in busy periods. Queensland foremen formed the Queensland Foremen Stevedores Association, Union of Employees (QFSA), in 1916. On application for registration in June 1924, QFSA membership was given as 39, confined to Brisbane, although it grew to over 100 in later years. QFSA Rule 5 barred membership of any other Association, Union, or Federation. Although WWF Rules before 1926 permitted the stevedore membership Queensland Branches where circumspect. The 1922 Brisbane branch Rule Book did not mention stevedores, and by 1924 the Queensland branch...
specifically banned membership of 'any employer of labour'. The 1926 rule change to exclude foremen mentioned earlier was readily adopted in Queensland.

With approximately 1500 waterside workers in Brisbane in 1924, the SR was about 1:40 (ie 2 gangs). The SR dropped to 1:30 in 1933 (approx. 1000 watersiders and 33 foreman), because more watersiders suffered unemployment than foremen. With one foreman for two gangs, including casual foremen in the larger ports, the average vessel (4 gangs working 4 holds) had one permanent foreman and one casual assistant. Or if five gangs are used 2 assistant foremen may be employed. This may be contrasted to practices overseas.

In New York in 1915 the most common system was one foreman on deck, one on the wharf, with 3 or 4 assistant foremen on the wharf. The average gang of about 20–22 men, had a foreman supervisor. Thus on a 5 hold vessel, there were 100 to 120 men, giving an SR of approximately 1:20 or less, given the management structure. Moreover, an experienced worker often acted as a go-between, from the foreman to the gang, a system which changed little from the 1800s to the 1930s.

Looking at a company level greater differences may be seen. For example, in Brisbane, the AUSNCO could have five vessels in port, with each of the company's five foreman allocated to a vessel. Although not all may be worked by 5 gangs, but one foreman for over 100 men was common enough to be commented on by the marine superintendent.

In New York, as early as 1900, some companies (eg. the White Star Line) introduced a formal tri-level operational structure; head foreman, foreman for each wharf gang and 4 foremen (2 fore and 2 aft) who moved between the deck and the hold. After 1908, this was further modified, with foremen covering each hold in addition to 2 deck foremen. So for a vessel working all 5 holds, up to 13 supervising foremen may be employed for 100 to 120 men – a SR of less than 1:10. The hold and most wharf foremen were usually "hourly" or casual men, whereas the head and deck foremen were weekly paid or permanent. Added to this was the standard allocation of "checkers" (ie tally clerks) at each hatch to tally the cargo discharged.

Nationally in Australia the SR was approximately 1:40 with just over 300 foremen stevedores in 1933. Since the number of foremen fell less than workers during the depression it is likely number in the mid-1920s was marginally greater. However, with more than 18,000 waterside workers then on the waterfront, the SR was closer to 1:50 or more.

In short, supervision of stevedoring operations in Australian ports was poor in comparison to the nineteenth century and some ports overseas. The 1920 Federal Government Royal Commission on Pillaging drew attention to the need for "considerable improvement" in the supervision of Australian stevedoring. It noted that where ships' officers supervised work, pillaging was lower. The Commission therefore recommended firstly, that officers (or "men of that stamp") should supervise work in the hold. Seamen, tally clerks or casual workers, "who are very much of the same class as the workers" were unlikely to "give their mates away" and should not do this work. Secondly, it advocated the doubling of supervision, one man on each of the port and starboard sides, since one supervisor per hold was insufficient. Thirdly, it recommended that employers improve the selection of foremen. Finally, it pointed out the lack of general tallying procedures for cargo in and out of the vessel and any methods for correct stacking of cargo in sheds in many ports.
Chapter Eight

Haphazard local methods made pillaging easier. Indeed, pillaging is an indirect index of problems in supervision, a function of what Mars terms access and support. A high SR permits both. While some level of pilferage may be expected in an industry such as stevedoring it was limited in the pre-WWI period. The Federal Royal Commission was a response to pressure from overseas companies, although the ASOF declared that "this evil" had concerned owners for "a considerable time." Special police patrols were introduced, but they were expensive, costing about £5,000 per year and police support was withdrawn. In its place a funding scheme was negotiated where, the Melbourne Harbour Trust and the Government continued to fund the scheme. Similar schemes were introduced in all principal ports, over the succeeding years. In Melbourne pillage claims fell by over 90 percent in its first two years and they remained low through the 1920s. But the problem remained acute in Queensland. For the overseas trade, Brisbane had a claim rate of 15.9 pence per ton, against the Australian average (four main ports) of 6.15 pence per ton and 1.76 pence for five large Asian ports. However, claim rates for ASOF companies showed a "considerable decrease" in 1929.

This picture of supervision was confirmed in at least two Queensland ports by the AUSNCo. The Marine Superintendent reported inadequate supervision of company operations in Rockhampton, resulting from two related factors; a SR of 1:150 and weak leadership of the company foreman there. The Howard Smith wharfinger was more successful in both Melbourne and Rockhampton for he overcame "great opposition ... [with] constant supervision and prosecuting his assailants through the Courts." As I noted above the Brisbane wharfinger Capt. Williams could not be expected to provide general supervision when 5 vessels were in port. The appointment of an assistant was recommended because one foreman for 150 men was considered insufficient. More supervision on ships was necessary for stowage. The "close scrutiny of the labor", including shortening gangs where necessary, was thought to yield "a material reduction in the cost of stevedoring."

Weak supervision was also seen as a problem Melbourne. The company Wharf Superintendent, Capt. Watson, was seen as lacking "leadership, organisation and personality." Recommendations for both ports called for the removal of the supervisor, which meant that in Rockhampton, Mr Symons of Howard Smiths would cut gang manning and in Melbourne stevedoring could revert to the old system of combined operations with McLlwraith's. It would thereby be under the "supreme control" of McLlwraith's, Mr Casey. Apart from lower overhead costs, "more efficient work should result," largely because Mr. Casey has the "best men" following that company, men who would be available to AUSNCo.

It was precisely through the relations generated at the local level that the industry could sustain the high SR figures. Fostering informal cooperation at work through the "bull" system and a 'tough' labour market, increased efficiency for the employer. Where this was absent, employers incurred additional costs. Ironically, the direct allocation of tasks and supervision of all men on board vessels was time-consuming, although employers had the authority to do so. The objections of a Townsville Shipping Manager illustrates the point. In his view where companies were required to hire labour in rotation, the "men would not always be the same men working together; they would not always work in the same position, and consequently if you are employing as we often do, upwards of 200 men on a steamer, each man has to be told where to go...[resulting in] as much as
two and a half hours... lost in starting work.“113 Or again, in Melbourne (where rotation was not in force) the AUSNCo avoided engaging night gangs because of lack of informal relations – "generally to the poor class of labour available, and frequently no labour is available ... The consensus of opinion amongst stevedores is that working after 11 p.m. is ruinous.”114

While such operational problems were identified by stevedoring management, few changes in methods and organisation were actually introduced. Shipowners were blind to any proposal if they thought it raised costs or recognised wages' employees input. The ASOF refused to consider claims by assistant foremen in Melbourne for wage increases, overtime rates, reorganisation of hours and holiday pay prior to the 1917 strike. Moreover, they recommended that work be conducted without assistant foremen where possible,115 because of these demands. As a result of the strike, a joint meeting of OSRA, ASOF and coastal companies recommended that foremen be barred from membership of the WWF. However the Sydney shipowner committee viewed this as impractical116 because as one foreman observed about Sydney in the 1920's that "ninety-eight percent of the foremen were watersiders who had forced their way through by toughness and often ruthlessness.... [and m]ost of the ninety-eight percent retained their waterside worker medals."117

Finally, the integrated organisational structure permitted centralised control-systems, yet these rested on local production organisation and work methods – particularly for labour organisation and supervision. In turn these were based on pre-existing normative structures. The decision of the ASOF on assistant foremen is a good example. In the period covered in this chapter, industrialisation of shipping was not followed by a similar reconstruction of the technological or work methods base of stevedoring. Old methods, norms and actions were inserted in a new context with new pressures.

Internal AUSNCo reports recorded different local practices by managers and supervisors in each port investigated. For example, a clerk explained to AUSNCo Traffic Superintendent Scott, that the method of receiving and delivery used in Sydney could be used in Brisbane.118 In short, there was no centralised and detailed managerial organisation of the labour process. Local management and supervisors determined work methods which rested on existing technology and practice. As most wharf managers or wharfingers were ex-officers and foremen ex-waterside workers respectively, reliance on traditional methods and attitudes was strong. In these circumstances the marginal position of stevedoring operations served to maintain the traditional reliance on informal methods of work and labour organisation.

V. Summary and Conclusions

What are the implications of the discussion in this chapter for waterside workers and the stevedoring industry? First, workers were on average ten years older in the 1920s than the a generation earlier. While data on occupational attachment is indirect, it appears that the higher average age reflected longer market attachment that came from the continuity of work and social recognition. There was a greater number of ports with workers continuously attached to the labour market. Workers were therefore more experienced, in terms of the work and industrial relations. Second, the pattern of waterside workers residence indicated a continuation of dock communities and only a slow movement to the suburbs. There was little evidence of rising home ownership. Thus economic insecurity remained for waterside workers, as is expected for such casual work.
Any move to the suburbs was difficult for watersiders given irregular work demands and lack of adequate transport. The conditions for community and collective organisation were widened.

Third, the industry concentration identified in chapter seven was reflected in the white-collar occupational data. There were fewer employers, but more administrative staff in shipping and its associated functions. And there were more waterside workers. The administrative changes laid the foundation for the expansion of control-systems, and co-ordinated action of employers in labour management and industrial relations. However, this was not reflected in labour process organisation or work methods. As I have shown earlier the industrialisation of shipping diminished merchant influence over shore labour. It also sharpened the differentiation of sea-going and shore/port-based functions of shipping. The resultant loss of autonomy of ships' officers saw them withdraw from control over stevedoring, particularly labour management. The latter became a shore-based responsibility.

Fourth, this responsibility was neglected by management. Little or no technological innovation, insufficient port investment and few managerial resources devoted to shore labour, reflected the marginal status of waterfront management over this period. Little of the rise in administrative staff in shipping was directed to stevedoring. Consequently, for workers, labour conditions did not improve over the period covered in this chapter. Merely increasing the number of men per gang had diminishing returns as some employers recognised. Larger gangs meant engaging more men of indifferent quality, increased wharf congestion and problems in supervision. With a SR of 1:40 or more it is not surprising that one manager reported that, the stevedore had "great difficulty in watching every man to see if he is doing his duty, or his best."\(^{119}\)

Given the conditions outlined in this chapter, two effects for industrial relations were seen. On the one hand, operational control was ceded to a relatively small number ex-officers and waterside workers. The chief qualifications were toughness, even harshness with the men, and the ability to keep costs as low as possible. Paradoxically, with such few resources supervisors were forced to rely on the older informal methods to maintain any efficiency in production. So, on the other hand, the very reliance on informal methods, combined with a high supervisory ratio, allowed workers to exert autonomous industrial authority. It furnished workers with the organisational 'space' to for work control. The latter was now recast as "job control" in a formalised system of industrial relations. This equivocal role of foremen played an important part in the attitude of employers to workplace authority at the time of the 1928 strike.

In terms of the general argument it meant that the integrated organisational structure was only loosely coupled. Organisational control-systems had not yet extended into the detailed reconstruction of operations. However, results were closely monitored. Moreover the procedures of the formalised pattern of industrial relations based on arbitration were not matched by labour management procedures 'on the wharf'. As I will show later shipowners utilised the formalised pattern of industrial relations to more effectively their interests while maintaining local practices than workers or the union did. Indeed a major problem for waterfront unionism was to deal with the organisational implications of the tension between formal and local demands.
Note that the Port of Brisbane had 429 wharf labourers in 1901, (\textit{Sixth Census of Queensland}, 31 Mar 1901, Brisbane, 1902, p.214). This 17% increase may be compared to the 28% increase in cargo handled in the port in the same period. and the 76% rise in the net tonnage of the vessels (1891, 913 overseas and coastal vessel arrivals, net tonnage of 662,461, in 1901 these were 1,166 and 1,163,955 respectively, see Goyt of Qld. \textit{Report from the Engineers for Harbours and Rivers}, Year ended 30 June 1900, p.16). As noted in chapter six, investment saw the average size of vessels rise markedly in the 1890s, increasing labour requirements. With a union membership of approximately 500 in 1902 (\textit{Membership Book}, Queensland Branches WWF Federal Office, ANU/NBA T62/3/10) it points to a significant rise in the workload of waterside workers through the 1890s.

The labour force age profile has been criticised many times more recently. Policy proposals for restructuring generally seek to decrease the average age, however, it appears that employers preferred older (and more experienced) workers under deregulation.

Age groups, Commonwealth of Australia Census 1921 Part xvii April 1921 Table 25 Occupation code no. 328, p.1268-69.


By early 1920 the SA Stevedoring Co. activities were \textit{so extensive that they control the bulk of the labor at the port}, Capt H. Tyrer & W. S. Gower, Report in regard to Stevedoring Charges and Loading Arrangements, 2 June 1923, p.2, AUSNCO, McKellar Collection, ML, MSS 4/54/Box 2.

Indeed, the basis of classification of the occupations listed is not given. But it was probably the case that the listed stevedores were casual, assistant, or even permanent foremen (stevedores) that were members of the WWF and had responsibilities for hiring waterside workers and thus were classified as employers.

Both calculation based on only employees and the unemployed in 1911 and 1921.

Based on the proportions of staff occupational groups outlined in chapter seven.

Pilcher identifies several enabling conditions such a \textit{a dispersed community}, viz., certain association patterns (kinship, work, union and occupational ideology) (Pilcher, \textit{The Portland Longshoremen}, esp. ch 2, p.12-30).

In 1907 and 1913 electoral rolls, Mitchell, \textit{"Home Life at the Hungry Mile"} p.88. Analysis of the location of shipowners, steam navigation companies, shipping agents and merchants, coal contractors and shipping agents, ferry companies, maritime occupations and services (such as boat builders, mast and blockmakers, shipwrights and so on), bonded and free stores and warehouses, and similar measures, in 1890 and 1925 confirm the centrality of this area for the maritime industry in those years, see Proudfoot, \textit{"Maritime Land-Uses in Central Sydney, 1890-1970"}, esp. maps 1 & 2, p.112-114.

New jetty of 140 feet in the centre of Woolloomooloo Bay cost £200,000, as were extensions in Pyrmont, Jones Bay and Johnston Bay, see \textit{Sydney Morning Herald }30 Dec 1913.

The 1901 figure is a conservative estimate based on WWF membership of 6500 in 1902. Since the Federation did not include all ports and several ports had a union density of less than 100% this figure is not significantly inaccurate; for 1911 see Tables 8.3 and 8.4 above; for 1914 the Federation claimed over 13,000 members at the handing down of the first Federal Award , and again assuming a small percentage of non-unionists, see a figure of over 14,000.

This estimate is based on the following WWF membership census and census data and projected percentage increases over this period, with the addition of a small proportion for non-unionists; in 1917 WWF membership was 14,568, WWF Federal Office, \textit{Membership Australia ANU/NBA T62/37/5/3}; in 1921 census data indicates 14,772 (see Tables 10.3 and 10.4) although this figure does not appear to reflect the WWF membership data fro 1917 and 1924; in 1924 WWF membership was 18,209, \textit{Australia Membership}, ANU/NBA T62/37/5/5, the 1933 census figure of 13,102 reflects the effects of the depression on the industry.


The sources of statistics vary as follows; Townsville (1924, WWF members 587, \textit{Ferry Report}, 1925, 610), Cairns, (\textit{Ferry Report}, 1925, 367), Mackay, \textit{Ferry Report}, 1925, 220) and Rockhampton (1924 WWF members, 250, \textit{Ferry Report}, 1925, 210) all employed hundreds of waterside workers in the high season and high. Sugar, wool and meat were the main cargoes. Ports such as Strahan, Port Augusta, Wallaroo, Geraldton, Bowen (\textit{Ferry Report}, 1925, 97) Innisfail \(\textit{Ferry Report}, 1925, 119), Launceston (1924 WWF members, 146) and Devonport (1924 WWF members, 96) all employed more than one hundred waterside workers by the mid-1920s and they also subject to significant seasonal variation. Again primary products, such as fruit, vegetables, sugar were transported interstate or exported. Finally, ports such as Port Pirie (1924 WWF membership, 245) and Port Kembla for steel, Newcastle (1924 WWF members, 286) and Albany (1924 WWF members, 123) for coal often employed several hundred waterside workers.


Sydney 90.4% in 1917 to 79% in 1924, Melbourne (both branches) at 99% in both years, Hobart 34.8% in 1917 to 37.4% in 1924, Port Adelaide 62.5% to 45%; Fremantle, 67.8% to 56.6%. WWF Federal Office, \textit{Membership Australia}, 31 Dec 1917 and 31 Dec 1924, ANU/NBA T62/37/5/3 and ANU/NBA T62/37/5/5 respectively.


e.g. No 76 of 1902, NSW Court of Arbitration, \textit{Transcripts}, Vol 2, 1905, pp.525-770, NSW Archives, Industrial Commission File 2/59.


Areas immediately adjacent to Darling Harbour, in Sussex, Kent, Erskine, Munn and High Steels were acquired by the Trust, “and the construction of modern dwellings for waterside workers” was undertaken, \textit{Sydney Morning Herald}, 30 Dec 1913; 75 houses and shops were built by 1914, Sydney Harbour Trust Commissioners \textit{Annual Reports}, 1910-1914 cited in Proudfoot, \textit{"Maritime Land-Uses in Central Sydney, 1890-1970"} pp.111,117. Mitchell concentrates on the Trust's wharf development and inexplicably does not mention the provision of workers’ housing, Mitchell, \textit{"Home Life at the Hungry Mile"}, pp.91-92.


State Electoral Office, \textit{Electoral Rolls} 1926, Bulimba, 1926, Queensland State Archives, microfilm 2456. A cursory inspection of the electorates of Fortitude Valley and South Brisbane, (microfilms Z461 and Z467 & Z468 respectively) found a similar pattern of several dozen waterside workers and hundreds of labourers. In other words, waterfront workers lived along the river but not concentrated in one locality.

\textit{Australia Membership}, WWF Federal Office, ANU/NBA T62/37/5/5.
Prizes were donated by "leading city businessmen" for the beauty show, mouth organ competition, song and dance, singing, comic song and so on, *Newcastle Morning Herald and Miners' Advocate* 17 Apr 1900.


Evidence of Police Inspector Duncan Fraser, cited in *RRC on Pillaging (1921)*, p.807

*RRC on Pillaging (1921)*, p.818. The ports mentioned in the report are, Melbourne, Hobart, Launceston, Port Adelaide, Perth and Fremantle, Sydney, and Brisbane.

*RRC on Pillaging (1921)*, p.820

*RRC on Pillaging (1921)*, pp.800,810,813,807. Quotations on pp.813,807 respectively.

*RRC on Pillaging (1921)*, pp.818-819

Mars makes the distinction between a (worker-based) system of pillage and pilferage as an aspect of a wider network of organised crime. His research found no evidence of the latter. Indeed, his conclusions confirm the evidence of the Royal Commission, that pillage was spontaneous, distribution was for use not profit and that it was a supplementary form of income. Informal worker rules reinforced this, (such "working the value of a boat" - not pilfering more than the value of the wages for the job) Gerald Mars, "Dock pilferage: A case study of occupational theft" in P. Rock and M. Mcintosh (eds), *Deviance and Social Control*, (Tavistock, London, 1974), pp.220, 224-225. Green, "spelling, Go-slow, Gliding away and Theft", p.112 reports the common occurrence of small-scale pilferage for 'local' consumption amongst New Zealand waterside workers, from the 1920s to the 1940s.

see Andrew Metcalfe, *For Freedom and Dignity*, (Allen and Unwin, Sydney, 1988)

Tom Hills quoted in Lowenstein and Hills, *see*  Andrew Metcalfe, (1921), p.820

Mars, "Dock Pilferage", pp.225-227

Names listed in WWF members, Queensland Registry of Industrial Unions, *Registration Application* No 82, 20 Oct 1920


see eg Table No 52, Table 50, *NSW Statistical Register*, 1908, 1917-18 pp. 357-358


Barnes notes that in New York in 1914 manila rope (3 strand, 3.5 to 3.75 inches thick) was used for ordinary work, but even weights of 2,500 pounds (1.11 tons) placed a serious strain on rope. Wire or chain falls were used for heavy lifts, Barnes, *The Longshoremen*, (1915) pp.34-35


Statistics from the Fremantle Branch of SSAO, when the Fremantle Harbour had not been completed. Figures for other wharves were similar, see *Second Annual Report* 31 Jan 1898, *McKellar Collection*, ML MSS 4548/Box 249

M. J. Scott, [emphasis added] AUSNCo, *McKellar Collection*, ML MSS 4548/Box 2


Jude Beby noted after the 1928 strike that "some of the improvement in Sydney productivity was due to the new use of "oil-driven" trucks on a few wharves", *CA*, Vol 31, 1932, p.26

Gaby, *The Restless Waterfront*, p.18. The large gangs were employed on the fruit and potato vessels from Tasmania, where speed of discharge was vital for each berthing and for the number of round trips the vessel could do in the season. Standard gang for AUSNCo and North Coast Co. In Sydney in the first decade of the century given as 8-10 men trucking, 4 in the hold, 3 on deck, and maybe 16 stackers a total of 35 men, evidence of John Leary, NSW Court of Arbitration, *Transcripts*, Vol 2, 1905, p.760, NSW Archives, Industrial Commission File 2/59

Moreover the average number of truckers per gang was 5, evidence of H. Howell, Howard Smith Sydney manager, NSW Court of Arbitration, *Transcripts*, Vol 2, 1905, p.790, NSW Archives, Industrial Commission File 2/59


Quotations from, Tyrer and Gowes, *Report in regard to Stevedoring Charges and Loading Arrangements*, *May-June* 1923, p.1, 2, [emphasis added], AUSNCo, *McKellar Collection*, ML MSS 4548/Box 2


This was seen more than 10 years earlier in large ports overseas. In the New York piers surveyed by Barnes at the beginning of the war, gangs sizes ranged between 18 and 27 men, with 9 or 10 truckers or 10 to 12 men in the hold (for loading) in the larger gangs, depending on the pier and the trade, Barnes, *The Longshoremen* (1915) pp.33-31

Adelaide SSCO, *Minimum Strength of Ganges of Waterside Labour – Queensland Ports*, c.1928, AUSNCo, *McKellar Collection*, ML MSS 4548/Box 119 Envelope 236; see also *Ferry Report* (1926), eg. in Claims (p.1082), about 40% were in gangs; both ASSCo and Howard Smith had gangs of 11 men (2 hatches and 2 winchmen, 6 holders and 2 landers) but truckers and stackers were then added to this number as required (usually 6 to 8 truckers and 2 or more stackers). There were also 11 men conveyor gangs. In Townsville (p.1086) the majority, 80%, of the labour force was distributed into 19 basic men gangs (AUSNCo, 9 gangs, Howard Smith, 7, ASSCo, 5) but additional men ("jumpers") not in gangs were invariably added to the gangs. (Brisbane (p.950) 95% of the approx. number of 1500 in the port were in gangs, average of 24.

in particular the strikes of 1890 and 1892 (by steamer), SOOA, *Minutes* 27 Sept 1893, in VSOA, *Minutes Book*, p.5, ANU/NBA E217/1

Meeting held 21 Jan 1902 at St Phillips's School in the Rocks was well attended and voted unanimously to re-form the Association, 1. Daniel Dakim to AUSNCo, c.25 Jan 1902, Macdonald *Private Letter Book*, No.1, p.335, AUSNCo, *McKellar Collection* ML MSS 4548/Box 127
Macdonald reported that the wage increases were based on the New South Wales Agreement and that the increase in "Collins" group costs would be in the order of £17,000 to £20,000 if the officers wage demands were granted. 1. Macdonald to Mackay, 2 Aug 1907, p.180G, AUSNC, McKellar Collection, Vol 2, 1905, p.771, NSW Archives, Industrial Commission Files 2/59.

A contemporary foreman describes various trades and wharves in Sydney in the 1920s, noting in reference to the overseas trade, that supervisors ("captains" who supervised loading) "had no dealings with the wharf labour; that was left to the foremen who hired and fired them", Gaby, _The Restless Waterfront_, pp.16–17.


The Union SSCs had 2 permanent men in Sydney in 1905 and a vessel working 4 holds employed about 150 men, "even up to 199", evidence of Albert Owens, Court of Arbitration, _Transcripts_, Vol 2, 1905, p.617, NSW Archives, Industrial Commission Files 2/59. If both men supervised one vessel, or more likely one foreman with an assistant foreman, the SR was between 1:75 and 1:100.

R.R.C. on Pillaging

Chapter Eight


65 Merchant Services Guild Award 12 Dec 1906, effective 1 Jan 1907, _CAR_ Vol 2, pp.1–43; see also _ASOF Report_ 1904, 1905, 1906, p.21, ANUNBA E217/89.


67 Macdonald stated that the wage increases were based on the New South Wales Agreement and that the increase in "Collins" group costs would be in the order of £17,000 to £20,000 if the officers wage demands were granted. 1. Macdonald to Mackay, 2 Aug 1907, p.180G, AUSNC, McKellar Collection, Vol 2, 1905, p.771, NSW Archives, Industrial Commission Files 2/59.


72 Capt Tyer and Mr Gower note in the case of the South Australian Stevedoring Co. that it was largely uncontrolled for AUSNC to undertake its own stevedoring at Port Adelaide due to the "initial expenditure in providing gear, horses, etc." and the fact that the company "derived profits in dividends from the operation the [SA Stevedoring] Company", _Report in regard to Stevedoring Charges and Loading Arrangements_, May–June 1923, p.3, AUSNC, McKellar Collection, Vol 2, 1905, p.771, NSW Archives, Industrial Commission Files 2/59.


75 A contemporary foreman describes various trades and wharves in Sydney in the 1920s, noting in reference to the overseas trade, that supervisors ("captains" who supervised loading) "had no dealings with the wharf labour; that was left to the foremen who hired and fired them", Gaby, _The Restless Waterfront_, pp.16–17.


79 Gaby, _The Restless Waterfront_, p.12.

80 Ford recruited 8 men from Sydney (he already had 5 in Newcastle) who were all members of the SWLU, _Newcastle Morning Herald and Miners' Advocate_ 30 Sept 1897.

81 The Association was registered under the NSW Industrial Arbitration Act of 1912 on 9 July 1915, Australian Foremen Stevedores Association (AFSA), Records, ANUNBA NA45; Gaby, _The Restless Waterfront_, pp.24–26.

82 Motion by E. Taylor seconded by W. Scales (both Seyd), _WWF_, Triennial Conference, _Minutes_, 21 May 1926, p.3, _WWF_, Sydney Branch.

83 The COM wanted to amend rule 4 so that "no constant or casual foreman be allowed to retain his membership of the Federation." Legal advice indicated that this could be done for future situations but not retrospectively to apply to then existing members, see e.g. L. Farlow and Barker (solicitors) to Morris, 20 Jan 1927, _Solicitors' File_, _WWF_, Federal Office, ANUNBA T62/17.

84 As I will show later in the thesis, the employment statistics were affected by the depression. The losses of employment for waterfront workers during the depression with fewer foremen losing their jobs accounted for some decrease in the SR. Moreover the demise of the Port Phillip Stevedores (after the 1928 strike) and the depression saw fewer men report their occupation as wharf labourer.

85 see Commonwealth of Australia, _Census_, Vol 2, 30 June 1933, p.1629; Vic still included wharf labourers.


87 Under the Queensland Industrial Arbitration Act 1916–1923, Queensland Industrial Registrar, Registration File, No 200, 1924. The _Rules_ of the union were dated 1917, but the date of joining had 8 members joining in 1916, the earliest on 19 Sept, also 24 Sept, 1 Oct and 8, 22 Sept.

88 In 1925 the number of foremen selecting labour in Brisbane was estimated at 37 _Ferry Report_ (1926), p.1094, evidence taken in 1925.

89 QFSQA Secretary informed the Qld Industrial Registrar of membership of up to 115 members, 94 in 1946, l. Sec QFSQA to Industrial Registrar 22 Oct 1946, Registration File No.100.

90 QFSQA, _Rule Book_ 1917, Queensland Industrial Registrar, Registration File No.100.

91 Rule 4, "Any male...competent to perform the duties of Wharf Labourer, Stevedore, or Coal Lumper, etc., may become a member...", _WWF_, _Rule Book_, Queensland Industrial Registrar, Registration File No.100.

92 Brisbane _WWF_, _Rule Book_, 1922, Rule 3, Queensland Industrial Registrar, Registration File No.82.

93 I. B. Purnell to Industrial Registrar, 7 April 1924, Queensland Industrial Registrar Records. Note: confusion existed over the status of the "Queensland branch" as a state body, relative to port branches. Federation rules did not recognise state "branches".

94 The relevant section of Rule 4 read, "Employers of labour shall not be eligible for membership, and any member...becoming an employer of labour, his membership shall forthwith cease...", _WWF_, _Rule Book_, Queensland Industrial Registrar, Registration File No.82. A notation indicated that the alteration was adopted on 18 November 1925.

95 Stem, _Cargo Handling and Longshore Labor Conditions_ (1932), p.18. The average gang consisted of 6–10 holders, 1 hatchman, 2 washcman and 6–8 truckers.

96 The information in this paragraph taken from Barnes, _The Longshoremen_ (1915), p.38–40. Note that in New York vessels had 5 and 11 holds, with the most common being 5 or 6, (p.31) in which case the number of men and foremen on the ship increased proportionately. After state regulation of longshore in 1935, the go-between was formalised as the "gang–boss" who was "responsible to the employer for the conduct of the men comprising the gang" the Waterfront Commission, cited in Jenson, _Hiring of Dock Workers_, p.47.


98 The information in this paragraph taken from Barnes, _The Longshoremen_ (1915), p.38–40. Note that in New York vessels had between 5 and 11 holds, with the most common being 5 or 6, (p.31) in which case the number of men and foremen on the ship increased proportionately.

see ASOF Minutes, 18 April 1901, p.34, 10 July 1902, p.133 (regarding feasing wharves in Melbourne), 30 April 1903, p.183 ANU/NBA E217/2, 17 June 1912 p.195 (proposal for employment of special detective over cargo claims) ANU/NBA E217/4

ASOF, Report for Year 1922, p.10, ANU/NBA E217/90

OSRA were requested to pay the full cost in 1921. As a result it sought assistance from other employers, ASOF, Minutes, 26 May 1921, p.199, ANU/NBA E217/6. The scheme arrived at saw the Harbour Trust contribute 46%, Government 23%, OSRA, 23% and ASOF 8% (capped at 500 pounds) of an expanded patrol (24 constables and 2 detectives) costing 8,000 pounds per year, ASOF, Report for Year 1922, p.11, ANU/NBA E217/90. Fremantle had implemented a similar scheme where costs were shared equally by the Police Dept and shipping companies from 1922. The Police Department withdrew support in 1924. From 1 Jan 1925, OSRA and ASOF shared the whole cost, ASOF, Annual Report for 1924, p.11, ANU/NBA E217/92. Similar schemes were introduced over the next 4 years, ASOF, Report for Year 1927, p.12, ANU/NBA E217/95

Claims had decreased from 24.06d. to 1.31d. per ton from 1920 to 1923, ASOF, Annual Report for 1924, p.11, ANU/NBA E217/92. This fall was confirmed in the succeeding years. The 1926 claims were 1.58d. per ton, ASOF, Report for Year 1927, p.12, ANU/NBA E217/95; and in 1927 it was 1.33d. per ton, ASOF, Report for the Year 1928, p.10, ANU/NBA E217/96

Prompting shipowners and various commercial interests to lobby the Queensland Premier or assistance and certain legislative changes, ASOF, Report for Year 1927, p.12, ANU/NBA E217/95

These were statistics compiled by OSRA. The Australian ports were Adelaide, Melbourne, Sydney and Brisbane and the Asian ports were Singapore, Hong Kong, Shanghái, Kobe and Yokohama, ASOF, Report for the Year 1928, p.10, ANU/NBA E217/96

ASOF, Report in regard to Stevedoring Charges and Loading Arrangements, p.9, ANU/NBA E217/97

"Weakness in accepting Union manning" contributed to the larger than necessary size of gangs and that more supervision was needed as "one man for 150-170 men is not enough", Tyrer and Gower, Report in regard to Stevedoring Charges and Loading Arrangements, May–June 1923, pp.26–27, AUSNCo, McKellar Collection, ML MSS 4548/Box 2

Tyrer and Gower, Report in regard to Stevedoring Charges and Loading Arrangements, May–June 1923, p.32 [emphasis added], AUSNCo, McKellar Collection, ML MSS 4548/Box 2

Comments from Tyrer and Gower, Report in regard to Stevedoring Charges and Loading Arrangements, May–June 1923, p.17, and Scott, Report on a Trip of Inspection to Melbourne, Adelaide, Spencer Gulf Ports, Sydney and Newcastle, Sept–Oct 1923, p.3 both in AUSNCo, McKellar Collection, ML MSS 4548/Box 2

"These were the days of the bul-system when every foreman had his own particular bul gangs. They followed him from job to job, and many of them stayed with the same foreman for years"; also, "Fred [a Huddart Parker foreman] was uncouth, and ... foul-mouthed ....It was only the pattern of the times that allowed a foreman to get away with it. He had his own followers [ie buUs], and many of them, were of his own ilk. Like seems to cling to like" Gaby, The Restless Waterfront, esp. pp.220–224. Access refers to those gang members who handle cargo directly and support is provided by the gang members who support the direct handlers of cargo. Access is limited by packaging, supervision, documentation and level of support (p.221). See also Jason Ditton’s discussion of wage–pillage systems. Although he argues that pillage is defined by its ambiguous status (midway between a perk and theft), the use here for employers is to define it clearly as theft, yet waterside workers would have a differing view, Ditton, "Perks, Pillage and the Fiddle: The Historical Structure of Invisible Wages", Theory and Society, Vol 4 No 1, 1977, esp. pp.47-55

The Hungry Mile, W.W.F. Nelson, The Years of Big Jim, p.31. [emphasis added]

Evidence of Mr Gregson, quoted in the Ferry Report (1926), p.1087 [emphasis added]

Tyrer and Gower, Report in regard to Stevedoring Charges and Loading Arrangements, May–June 1923, p.13, AUSNCo, McKellar Collection, ML MSS 4548/Box 2

ASOF Minute Book No 5, 6 July 1917, p.148, ANU/NBA E217/5

Para.5 of the employers agreement, Minutes of meeting, ASOF Minute Book No 5, 28 Sept 1917, p.202, 206, ANU/NBA E217/5

Gaby, The Restless Waterfront, p.13. Gaby came from the other direction – he was an officer unable to go to sea.

Tyrer and Gower, Report in regard to Stevedoring Charges and Loading Arrangements, May–June 1923, pp.4,13–14; Scott, Report on a Trip of Inspection to Melbourne, Adelaide, Spencer Gulf Ports, Sydney and Newcastle, Sept–Oct 1923, pp.4,5,8,12,13,14, both in AUSNCo, McKellar Collection, ML MSS 4548/Box 2

Evidence of H. Howell, Sydney manager of Howard Smith, NSW Court of Arbitration, Transcripts, Vol 2, 1905, p.503, NSW Archives, Industrial Registrar File 2/59
Chapter 9
Formalisation and Industrial Authority: Industrial Relations in Stevedoring 1891–1910

I. Introduction

This chapter examines the pattern of industrial relations in the aftermath of the 1890 strike until immediately before the move into the Federal Arbitration system.

I have shown that the subsumption of the labour process under the integrated organisational structure could not leave undisturbed the elements of traditional labour organisation. Thus industrial authority was reconstructed to the benefit of capital. Informalism, labour market organisation and hiring all became mechanisms and potential resources for both employers and waterside workers. To the extent that informalism lost its capacity as an exclusionary mechanism for the maintenance or defence of worker autonomy, industrial action became a more important instrument to that end. Though simultaneously the capitalist shipping industry became more vulnerable to such action, in terms of time and cost.

This chapter focuses on the formal organisation of workers and employers and the newly constructed 'arena' of industrial relations. Unionisation, became an essential aspect of the new system as did employer organisation. In practice, individual employers were unable to resist concerted union action, but the coordination of shipowners that arose from industrial matters and commercial regulation strengthened their position.

The re-formation of industrial authority was as much a political process as industrial. The apparatus of arbitration, established by the state in Australia in the period before World War I, was an expression of this. It required collective organisation and was a vehicle that anchored socio-political rights in the sphere of production which legitimised the new industrial relations. Some elements of the norms of workplace relations were incorporated in the operation of arbitral institutions, but generally the underlying 'moral economy' of informalism became less salient as capitalist economic calculation bit deeper. Workers turned to political ideology to understand and legitimate industrial struggles. To the extent that this occurred work control became a political process.

However the demand for work control was still linked to the rationality of small, local union organisation where local claims for autonomy were coupled to moral authority. The latter progressively gave way to the politics of social and industrial organisation. Yet in this period, 1890–1910 sustained centrifugal pressures for local autonomy proved greater than the centripetal organisational forces of formalised industrial relations. The national character of the Waterside Workers Federation was a veneer – that was to become clearer on the eve of the 1930s depression.
Localism was encouraged and used by employers, particularly first line supervisors. ASOF industrial relations policy complemented this decentralised pattern of labour management, through the use of local, albeit coordinated local agreements. In so doing, they sought to either avoid or minimise the affects of arbitration. It was a strategy of holding the line.\textsuperscript{2} However the experience of arbitration induced a reassessment of this policy in the years before WWI.

This chapter is concerned with the period immediately prior to the reassessment. It focuses on a period in which the halting moves to formalism in the years after 1883 and in 1890 where initially abandoned, then re-emerged in a new collective bargaining. It first reviews worker action in the transitional period based on the typology set out in Chapter Two. Section three turns to the effects of the strike on the position of workers. Section four examines unionisation of wharf labourers, particularly the role of action in the labour process. Section five analyses the pattern of industrial relations on the basis of unionisation and the role of arbitration. Section six concludes the argument of the chapter.

II. Industrial Relations 1890 to 1910

A cursory view of the whole period covered in this chapter could lead to the conclusion that waterside workers adopted old industrial tactics, which at best would lead to limited success. The assessment would be confirmed if the 1928 strike were also considered. Yet, the collective organisation of employers and workers developed and strengthened over time. I argued in chapter seven that employers benefited substantially from the dual support of commercial and industrial interests. By contrast, national collective organisation of waterside workers was hindered by tensions which ranged along two dimensions set out in Figure 2.1 – the focus of organisation and methods of change.

Each dimension displays conflicting interests and demands. In regard to the focus of organisation there were demands between local autonomy of each port union and national organisation of the Waterside Workers Federation. In terms of methods of change, conflicting demands between a reliance on the processes and institutions of negotiation and arbitration versus direct action. I have argued that the informalist pattern of industrial relations was characterised by local organisation, heavily reliant on work control. Moreover, in as much as collective action was industrial it may be seen as direct action. Thus I have termed type C. or solidaristic. For in organisation and tactics it relied on traditional methods of local autonomy and action characteristic of the solidarity of informalism, combined with a moral solidarity with other unions. The closer connection between community and labour organisation displays distinct elements of \textit{gemeinschaft} relations.\textsuperscript{3} But recall that the imperative of social respectability resulted in industrial action that was essentially reactive and non-militant. In contrast in a formal industrial relations system, solidarism is often associated with militancy. In general, Type D. action, termed syndicalist, is similarly based on direct action. However this type had a wider consciousness of the class basis of industrial organisation and action requiring broader solidarity. Despite its national scope, the policy prescription of syndicalism is local, that is industry based.

In contrast Type A. and Type B. are based on the use of broad institutional mechanisms to achieve outcomes. Such institutional mechanisms differ over time and place, with arbitration being the most important in Australia. The labourist type is distinguished here by its dependence on local organisation. This is generally the state branch of the union, or on the port branch on the waterfront,
but with an evolutionary model of societal change. On the other hand Type D., the communist, is based on direct action and shares the revolutionary focus of syndicalism, but through the transformation of broad structures and institutions. Here the model of organisation is dependent on formal methods more characteristic of gesellschaft relations.4

The collective industrial organisation of waterside workers in the period up to the World War I was marked by two threads of strategy. On the one hand there was a tension between the solidarity characteristic of informalism and the pattern of negotiation of a labourist strategy. On the other hand, a further tension between labourism and syndicalist pressures affected wharf labourers.

A direct effect on the organisation of wharf labourers and industrial relations was the level of unemployment through this period. The availability of a large pool of labour generally assisted employers. The deepening depression after the 1890 strike saw unemployment rapidly increase. Table 9.1 reports the official rate of unemployment of union members over the period covered in this chapter. The trade union figures underestimate the actual rate of unemployment. Macarthy calculated that the average rate of unemployment in Victoria for the 1890s was more than double the official figure; that is 13 percent for the decade, reaching a high of 28.3 percent in 1893.5 The rate in other colonies was similar. Unemployment again increased in the years around the beginning of the first World War. Finally they remained relatively high in the 1920s, rising sharply on the eve of the depression.

Table 9.1 Unemployment in Australia Selected years, 1891–1930 (percentage of trade unionists)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Quarter</th>
<th>Rate (%)</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Quarter</th>
<th>Rate (%)</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1891</td>
<td></td>
<td>9.29</td>
<td>1915</td>
<td>1st</td>
<td>12.0</td>
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<tr>
<td>1893</td>
<td></td>
<td>28.30</td>
<td></td>
<td>2nd</td>
<td>9.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1896</td>
<td></td>
<td>10.81</td>
<td>1916</td>
<td>3rd</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>1901</td>
<td></td>
<td>6.59</td>
<td>1916</td>
<td>4th</td>
<td>6.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1906</td>
<td></td>
<td>6.67</td>
<td></td>
<td>1st</td>
<td>5.8</td>
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<tr>
<td>1907</td>
<td></td>
<td>5.74</td>
<td>1923</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>1908</td>
<td></td>
<td>5.98</td>
<td>1924</td>
<td></td>
<td>8.9</td>
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<tr>
<td>1909</td>
<td></td>
<td>5.79</td>
<td>1925</td>
<td></td>
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<td>5.63</td>
<td>1926</td>
<td></td>
<td>7.1</td>
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<td>1911</td>
<td></td>
<td>4.67</td>
<td>1927</td>
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<tr>
<td>1912</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1930</td>
<td></td>
<td>27.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: compiled from CBCS, Labour and Industrial Branch, Report No.2, Trade Unionism, Unemployment, Wages, Prices and Cost of Living in Australia, 1891–1912, (Melbourne, 1913) p.18; Labour Report No.7 1916, p.349; Commonwealth Yearbooks (various years)

On the basis of the above classification I will examine the progress of industrial relations in stevedoring in three distinct stages in this and the next chapter. These are the 1890s and the period from the formation of the Waterside Workers Federation to the first Federal collective agreement examined in this chapter. Part 3, then turn to the third period, from 1910 to the 1928 strike.

III. The Aftermath of the Strike 1890–1899

This section is concerned with the effects on wharf labourer unions in the colonies of defeat in the 1890 strike. The economic downturn of the late–1880s deteriorated into a depression in the early 1890s. I will argue that wharf labourer unions were able to maintain a presence on the waterfront through the 1890s, based to a large extent on the informalist networks built up over the previous decades. Indeed it was these networks which enabled politicians, particularly Hughes, to spark the formation of the federal union, the Waterside Workers Federation. However, it was
precisely these local networks that sustained demands for local branch autonomy that was to dog the Federation over the next thirty years or more. I shall begin first with an examination of the experience of unionism in the few years immediately after the end of the strike. A number of larger ports are considered, although the main focus is on Sydney. Second, I discuss the operation and significance of the Labour Bureau in Sydney. The third and final part of this section examines the pattern of organisation, disputation and industrial relations in stevedoring for the second half on the decade.

1. Effects of the Strike Defeat and the 1890s Depression

Widespread industrial disputes in the early 1890s involving shearsers and miners not only weakened trade unionism further, but also disrupted work on the waterfront. The experience of wharf labourers after the loss of the 1890 strike was as fundamentally shaped by the depression as by the effects of the strike loss.

High unemployment had an acute effect on the unskilled wharf labourers. Generally inaction or only sporadic action was possible in defence of wage levels and conditions. But the defeat of 1890 did not have the same effects in all ports. Some, like Port Adelaide and Fremantle, were able to maintain many aspects of the pre-1890 labour organisation and industrial conditions. The importance and character of port level organisation remained at the centre of the dynamic of collective organisation and workplace relations. However, as industry concentration consolidated around the large intercolonial companies the pressure for centralisation of industrial relations increased.

Employer cooperation centred in Melbourne and Sydney, deepened in the 1890s leading to the formation of the ASOF in 1899, three years before the formation of the WWF. These employer links were more instrumental in laying the foundation for a national industrial relations stevedoring than union organisation. I will address this issue later. Here, I am concerned with worker organisation and industrial relations leading to the formation of the WWF in 1902. Not surprisingly the largest ports of Sydney and Melbourne were central in developments in the 1890s. I will consider these, along with relevant developments in other ports.

For wharf labourers the planned intercolonial federation was abandoned in defeat. Survival became a primary goal and unions did survive. Membership was weak and finance drained. It was doubtful if more than 20 percent of the pre-strike membership was intact – about 350 men, despite the figures stated by McKillop at the Royal Commission hearings. More than half of unionists were excluded from membership under the existing union rules – because they were unfinancial or had worked with free labourers. Probably a further quarter or more were blacklisted or left the industry. As one member stated, the strict application of the rules meant debarring the majority of members.

On 12 November the finances showed that some 800 members were unfinancial making the union's position difficult, though it could still settle its accounts. To maintain revenue the meeting resolved to admit men after 3 months suspension. The decision was criticised since it meant admitting blacklegs, so the 40 men admitted two days later were labelled as "not half as good [as those who stayed out]." Initial proposals to lower the initiation fee and weekly contributions to encourage membership were lost, but a compromise emerged six weeks later. The entrance fee was waived for new members and unfinancial ones were deemed to be financial up to 1 February
to encourage men to stay in the union and boycott the employers' Labour Bureau. McKillop optimistically though that if the 'West End' union (the interstate men) could keep going to the end of January, they "would have the strongest Labour organisation amongst Wharf Labourers in the Australian Colonies." Union consolidation was seen as vital, irrespective of the issue of the volunteers, because "if we [union] were to have solidarity in the future we must attend to unfinancial members. Otherwise the whole structure would break down." The sentiment was echoed some months later when old members were charged only 1s. to restore their membership.

Taking another tack, McKillop wanted to re-establish some autonomy for wharf labourers by supporting the formation of a co-operative stevedoring company. He, and others, had discharged a vessel on this basis during the strike. He strongly extolled the benefits of co-operation, at length, to the Royal Commission on Strikes in December and January. He saw it as a method of countering anticipated wages cuts. Although a seven man committee was elected to evaluate this scheme in mid-January 1891, the idea faded over the next year. McKillop recognised that the lack of employer support was likely to be an obstacle. Fear of discrimination against unionists, if they tendered for work, resulted in lukewarm union support for cooperative work later in the year. Only isolated evidence exists that the union pursued McKillop's interest in cooperative schemes and it appears only a few appeared in other ports. A Newcastle cooperative that tendered for work in 1897 provoked strong protests from wharfingers who quickly formed an association to "checkmate the co-operationists."

Union meetings in Sydney were regularly recorded for eighteen months after November 1890 a week after the strike's conclusion. But the depression and the effects of employer control over the labour market bit deeper and gaps appeared. Minutes exist from 1893 to 1899. The gaps of several months in periods in early 1892, 1893–94, and 1897–99, the latter two in the same book. For two years from August 1894 there appears to be a period of inactivity, and a Balance Sheet for 15 weeks to 22 January 1895 was submitted to the Registrar of Friendly Societies by the SWLU Secretary Alfred Rock. At a minimum some 110 new members were recruited in that period alone, with subscriptions from a further 140. This indicates continuing organisation, with some administrative lapses. The Registrar's SWLU file shows no dissolution of the union and the Australian Workman, continued to record the Union in its published directory. In many ports records were often lost.

As the SWLU attempted to survive, centrifugal forces put in train by the strike loss undermined the efforts. Disenchantment with the SWLU was reinforced when it could do little about the Labour Bureau and the blacklisting of unionists. The large drift away by members saw moves to form another organisation. Yet, these actions to form new branches of the union or a new union in late 1890, in early 1891, and again in mid–1893, indicates a reliance on a spirited localism. In early January, 1891, the union unanimously carried a McKillop motion stating that the meeting "strongly depreciates the action." The next meeting reported a speaker that urged the formation of another union, as it was "useless" attending meetings of the "old Society that had gone defunct." Also the disbursement of financial assistance from the TLC created dissension in the union. Indeed, one payment of £30 was sent to the Illawarra miners in order to avoid the "jealousy" that would develop.
Disenchantment with the SWLU eventually engulfed the leadership. Several officers resigned in July 1891. McKillop was censured and suspended in November 1891 over irregularities in admitting members and allegedly working against the interests of the society. Nominations were called for the position of Secretary in December. George Whittaker appears as Secretary in September 1892 although McKillop continues to represent the union in an official capacity over the next few years.

Despite these setbacks in formal organisation, informal solidaristic action fought off cuts in overtime in the summer of 1892–93 – it was reported that the "men having united, the reduction was successfully resisted." A meeting of overseas men was proposed by the COM in July 1893 to form a union to resist an anticipated attack on wages after cuts in seamen's wages. It was hoped all the men employed from the Labour Bureau would be organised to resist cuts. A secretary and officers were to be appointed but no organisation resulted. Finally, the permanent workers employed through the Labour Bureau formed the Free Wharf Labourer's Benefit Society for sick and accident benefits. Employers were urged to encourage this society. The Newcastle employers were willing to support an accident fund formed by the free labourers to the amount of £200–250.

Membership continued to decline through to the mid-1890s, probably to less than 200 and possibly down to a handful of men. Intermittent attempts to build membership were limited by low union finances. A temporary organiser, Riley was alleged to have recruited three hundred members in October, 1892.

The experience in other ports was similar. Wharf labourers in Melbourne remained organised in two unions, MWLU and the Pt Philip Stevedores. Employers had operated a Labour Bureau, but closed it before the end of 1890. The MWLU and the PPSA survived the strike and the depression, albeit greatly weakened. The fall off in shipping saw the Melbourne Harbour Trust lay off 250 workers. The Newcastle WLU survived the strike but suspended operations after the loss of a five week strike through December 1892 and January 1893. Special payments for freezer work were denied and the employers refused arbitration. After complications from internal disputes and legal action it reformed in 1897 based on the solidarity of the men which survived during the intervening period. There is no evidence that the employers proposed accident fund in 1891 was established. The Newcastle workers organised themselves. In 1896 unemployed Newcastle wharf labourers made a series of public appeals to raise money for relief purposes. Canvassing house to house they raised over £20 in the first appeal and shopkeepers donated goods. The occupational and community organisation was close typical of informalism.

In contrast to the larger Eastern colonial ports, the PAWA remained a viable organisation through the 1890s. The closer relationship between the employers and men – despite problems over contractors – combined with the dominant position of the SA Stevedoring Co. to mute the anti-union reaction of employers in comparison to Sydney and Melbourne. PAWA membership grew as the result of the strike, increasing from 725 in 1890 to 1,165 in 1892. While the lingering depression halved this number over the next five years, the recovery raised membership to almost 1,000 in 1902. Other SA port unions formed in the 1880s, experienced more serious effects of the depression. Pt Augusta, Pt Pirie and Pt Wakefield all ceased to function through the mid–1890s, as their benefit payments outstripped revenue in the depression and after, although Wallaroo
survived. The largest and most important one, Pt Pirie, reformed in 1901 as the Pt Pirie Amalgamated Workers' Association, with 400 members. Burdened by benefit payments this Association's finances and membership also declined to below 100 by 1906, but rose to 500 in 1911.

The experience of the Brisbane and Fremantle wharf labourers was closer to that of Pt Adelaide. They continued to exist through the depression, due in large part to small conservative local organisation and less aggressive employers. Brisbane Waterside Workers Union joined the Brisbane Eight Hour Anniversary Union in 1896 and held its membership thereafter. Fremantle employers were not organised until 1896. The effects of the depression was countered by the harbour construction and shipping growth in Fremantle that saw it displace Albany for coaling overseas vessels and became the primary interstate port. The 136 founding members of the FWLU in 1889 grew to 841 by 1901. The isolation of Fremantle allowed the Lumpers to quickly establish informal networks of social relations which generated significant work control and thus better conditions. This alarmed the representatives of the interstate companies in the west and precipitated the first major industrial action by wharf labourers after 1890. Other Western Australian port unions existed in Bunbury (102 members), Geraldton (112) and Albany (60).

In sum, from the collapse on the strike to the mid-1890s wharf labourer port unions survived – some better than others. Their organisation however reverted to the solidarism of societies and the accompanying sectionalism. This weakened formal union organisation, but at the same time strengthened what did exist. The Sydney and Melbourne unions were in the weakest position. The employers Labour Bureau and sectionalism (interstate and overseas, as well as separate coalworker union) weakened the union in Sydney but there is evidence of continuing solidarism and industrial demands in the workplace. Melbourne supported two separate unions. It may be concluded that the larger size of the waterfront labour force could not sustain larger formal unionism, or traditional, society-type solidarism across all workers. But smaller ports or sections that were based on traditional solidarism was more successful in weathering the 1890s depression.

2. The Sydney Labour Bureau

The scale of volunteer labour employed in 1890 was the largest in the history of the industry. A central ideological goal of the general employers offensive through the early 1890s was freedom of contract. Unlike most other industries, the employment contract had to be continually renewed due to the irregular but continuous nature of the labour market. To counter this, Labour Bureaus were established during the strike in Sydney, Melbourne and Newcastle. This section outlines the nature and role of the Sydney Bureau, since the latter two were closed soon after the strike ended.

The establishment of Labour Bureau extended the dynamic of employer regulation of the business environment. While clearly an industrial relations policy, labour market regulation not only checked wage competition, but provided certainty in operations vital for trade in this industry. Moreover the employers pursued improved handling efficiency but this was difficult to achieve in the short-term with inexperienced labour. Yet at least one company was able to report to its shareholders, that "profit improved since 29 October when the labour difficulties terminated." The Sydney Labour Bureau enabled employers to seize control of the operation of the labour market. Centralised hiring formally delimited the labour market, where entry was limited by the use of a 'ticket' system, rather than union membership, the preferences of foremen, or random
engagement. Tickets were issued to suitable (usually non-union) workers by company wharf managers to present for engagement at the labour Bureau. While senior foremen provided names and advice to managers, the latter assumed the final authority. McKillop stated that tickets were offered by the Bureau manager, who without experience in the industry relied on "pilots" or spies to inconspicuously point out the union men not to be engaged. The number of men like John Andrews, who was forced off the Sydney waterfront for more than ten years, cannot be determined. It was undoubtedly in the hundreds.

The Bureau was supervised by a Labour Committee funded by a levy on employers. This stabilised its finances after the initial months. Although the Bureau did not process the employment of all wharf labourers, it did gain the cooperation of non-Association employers. Moreover the centralisation of hiring permitted the identification of cost patterns. The Committee recommended changes in employment of wharf labourers which resulted in decrease in overtime payments. The Union SSCO and Tasmanian SSCO cut overtime payments from 2s. to 1s. 6d. for Boxing Day for non-unionists. It soon precipitated protests and an SWLU meeting, included free labourers, was on 29 December to protest against this and the ticket system.

During the strike and the months after the Bureau "proved a most useful institution" to employers despite its considerable operating cost - £530 for the 1890-91 year. It allowed the introduction of "fresh labour, free from the control of the union influence" and also avoid the recognition of union officials. Shipowners refused to recognise all unions except the Marine Engineers. Moreover they used the Bureau to break the seamen's strike over wage cuts of £2 a month, and perceived its worth in the maritime industry as a whole as significant. As in the past the key effect was the substitutability of labour. During the seamen's wage-cutting dispute non-union labour manned the entire coastal fleet and "[f]or the comparatively easy substitution of non-unionists for unionists the Association's Free Labor Bureau was in a great measure responsible."

The cost of the Labour Bureau was difficult to calculate. The wages of administrators were lowered but problems persisted. First, the employer levy was insufficient to cover running costs. Furthermore as the volume of trade declined with the depression, and it was difficult to transfer costs to the freight consumer. Second, employers were forced to supplement the levy directly, and, on the evidence of the first three years, the administrative cost of the Bureau added more than 10 percent to the wages bill of SOAA companies. The Bureau survived until 1899, but then was seen as impractical after the formation of the Melbourne-based ASOF. Some Sydney employers wanted it re-established, but the idea was not supported at the national level.

In regulating the operation of the labour market and supply employer reluctantly recognised additional implications, such as training. Companies had undertaken the training of officers. This depended upon employment and gaining qualifications through a career path. Also three years after using the Bureau to cut seamen's wages companies found it difficult to recruit Able Seamen. William Howard Smith suggested that each company train ordinary seamen to overcome the difficulty, but the VSOA had only two months earlier rejected a training ship scheme. But companies did become aware of workplace practices in training and the associated costs. The training of wharf labourers continued to be based on practical experience and embedded in the ordinary operation of the labour process.
In sum, the Sydney Labour Bureau was the first sustained offensive by employers to direct the organisation of labour in the stevedoring industry in Australia. Initially driven by the goal of excluding unions, the shipowners tolerated the cost, which was "so heavy as to prove irksome." The Association had "no official knowledge of, or dealings with them [union leaders], and all the efforts of the labour leaders to obtain free access to the wharves and ships ... or secure recognition" were rejected by the SOAA and it concluded two years after the strike that unions ceased "to exercise any control over the business operations of the S.S. Owners [sic]." The Bureau permitted employers to control labour supply, as a "means of introducing fresh labour onto the wharves." Five years after it closed one manager reflected that the 1890s saw "least interference and dictation from the wharf labourers, and [employers had] no difficulty in getting a fair sample of men ... [because] we selected our own men" which greatly assisted in wharf management. By structuring the labour market shipowners secured industrial authority in the labour process.

In short, the institutional foundation and organisational dynamic of informalist authority and industrial relations had passed. The organisational imperative drove industrial relations. The transition was uneven across the country – several ports were able to maintain local informalist arrangements, and the Melbourne Bureau was closed as it was effectively by-passed by the men and foremen. Sydney was the largest port and it was here that the organisation of labour and the change in the pattern of industrial authority and relations was first seen.

3. Labour Strategy and Industrial Relations in the 1890 – 1898

The transition was neither clear nor consistent over the following decade and beyond. The response of unions and workers were different in trades and ports. In general action was effectively limited to local matters. Plans of a federation fell by the wayside. And as shown for Sydney the depression saw formal union activity cease. This section again focuses on the reaction of the SWLU in light of the depression, organisational fissures and the operation of the Labour Bureau discussed in the sections above. Then I will turn to the industrial relations in other ports.

1 Sydney Wharf Labourers' Union Strategy

Disenchantment with the SWLU created a indifference over the following years. Those who continued union organisation attempted to build support through a three part strategy; building union capacities for organisation, especially at the local wharf level, use of the public influence of labour politicians and finally, to develop better communication with other wharf labourers' unions.

A public meeting was called in the Temperance Hall in late January 1891 "to address the Free Labourers on the benefits of Trade Unionism." As I argued earlier, the association with prominent public figures – invariably politicians – signified social respectability of a 'society.' Thus an offer by local Labor delegate in West Sydney, Fitzgerald, to speak, was accepted April 1891. There is no evidence of similar meetings over the next few years, although it is likely that some were held. Such public union meetings were held from July 1896.

That is, after the worst of the depression had passed union activity revived. Although union meetings are recorded for July 1896, a resolution of 12 August required that all intending members be informed that the it was the old union reorganised. The meeting adopted measures proposed at an executive meeting of the day before. After "some heated argument" the key changes accepted were, that the union entrance fee was set at one shilling and contributions at five shillings per year. Secondly, delegates were appointed at each wharf to collect fees and contributions. The delegate
system replaced the roving Vigilance Officer, that first appeared in the late 1880s. At a later meeting, officials keen to raise the profile of wharf delegates and stimulate membership required them to provide a report of activities at each meeting. In other words the union set a low fee to attract membership and began to develop **organising capabilities in the workplace.**

In addition, McKillop foreshadowed a revision of the "internal rules" of the union that provoked "warm argument" when considered a month later. These included the abolition of the Vigilant Officer position, reword the Objects with the goal of binding wharf labourers "together as a body of men." Moreover a series of administrative changes were designed to remove the trappings of Societies': specific payments to officers were deleted, mention of intoxicated persons, abolition of burial benefits, removal of ability of members to charge others for violation of rules, and the meeting procedures for Committee of Management business specified. Moreover members urged the Committee of Management to "fix up laws and rules of this society," for further consideration of the membership in early 1897. Labor politician Bavister urged the membership to reassess the role of union leadership. Not only should the most able men be elected but also "not [to] always treat them with suspicion" and thereby impede their ability to lead. Consistent with this was a decision by the general meeting to allow the secretary discretion on the payment of wharf delegates in early 1897. These were initial steps in ensuring an organisational flexibility and continuity characteristic of modern unions. This contrasts with the nature of societies reliant on informalism. Furthermore the formal representative role of trade union leadership was extended.

The reliance on meetings attended by prominent citizens continued. Meetings were held on 15 July and 27 July 1896, with politicians Billy Hughes, Watson, Ferguson and Bavister in attendance, along with other union officials, such as Moroney of the Tobacco Twisters. They addressed the meeting on the 27th "at considerable length" on the subject of unions and reorganisation. Those present carried a resolution pledging to join the union. Hughes donated a guinea at the reconvened meeting the next week. In late August, the union approached the Labor Party district council to assist in calling a mass meeting, again with the presence of prominent Labor politicians. In September a 1000 handbills were printed for a meeting on 3 October, to be attended by Black, Hughes, Davis, McGowan, and Watson. A similar number was planned for mass meetings on the first Saturday in November and December and 23 December. The politicians mentioned and Sleath, Smith, Eaden, Nicholson and others, attended general meetings, as did prominent visitors, such as the British docker leader Ben Tilet, in late 1896 and throughout 1897. These meetings were part of a union inspired policy to build membership in the port. In October 1896 membership stood at 250, rising to 326 on 25 November of that year. It is difficult to determine what this represented in union density – certainly less than 25 percent – but was nevertheless not significant in the face of the Labour Bureau. While no records have survived for the two years from December 1897, unionism continued on the waterfront, in spirit if not as an organisation. Secretary M. Williams reported in mid–1897 that after visiting many wharves that "a large number of men were in favor of unionism", but the "greatest drawback" for the old hands was to be "called unionist [sic]."

Finally, the SWLU and other wharf labourers unions re-established communication. In 1896 the union resolved to contact other unions to exchange "fraternal greetings" and the Townsville, Fremantle and the West Australian Lumpers Union replied soon after. Correspondence with
Chapter Nine

Tucker (MWLU) and Rasmussan (West Australian union), Devine (Queensland WLU), Newcastle, and Brisbane continued through the next year. This contact was limited, although its significance grew at the end of the decade, as I will show in examining industrial relations. However the Sydney union showed little desire or ability to support other port unions.

2 Industrial Relations

Sydney and Melbourne were the largest and most important ports for shipowners. Clearly the ability of wharf labourers in these ports to resist the effects of the employers seizure of industrial authority was severely limited. Work control swung in the favour of employers more in these ports than others. The Labour Bureaus and the depression were key factors. I shall now turn to the conduct of industrial relations in the 1890s to assess the effects of these conditions. This will demonstrate that even in severely adverse circumstances the workers' pursuit of work control is evident.

Recall that wharf foremen still depended on team and gang-based working methods and that larger gangs made direct supervision more difficult for foremen. In order to maintain high labour effort, foremen required to balance cooperation and control. In the context of the Labour Bureau this was easier for foremen as they controlled the discipline that flowed from the Labour Bureau, in contrast to the balance required under informalism. Workers thus experienced the pressure for preference in the Bureau to gain better earnings. Under these conditions informal preference became the bull system. On manager commented that employers were able to employ a 'satisfactory class of men' while the Bureau operated.

Consequently the key issue of labour intensity, exemplified by the 'bagged stuff' dispute, before the strike was successfully quashed. So was the issue of working time. The nature of the issue also changed. Whereas the length of the day, whether 8 or 10 hours, had been the primary issue before 1890, the length of working time became progressively more important in the 1890s. Technological changes made it "easier to work at night since electricity," as one manager reported. Workers were required to work round the clock or longer. In turn this revived the issue of the working day since it determined the hours paid at ordinary time or overtime rates. Long hours of work at overtime rates potentially increased the earnings differential between the bulls and the rest. The incentive for 'bulls' to work harder increased as they often were rewarded with a lot of overtime, and the employer achieved greater throughput for the higher wage payments.

But through the 1890s employers attempted to minimise overtime payments. In Sydney the Labour Bureau dispensed casual and weekly tickets. With casual tickets men were paid by the hour (1s.) to work a vessel at a particular wharf. Overtime rates were paid on the hours between 5pm and 7 or 8am, depending on the trade. But weekly ticket men had to work 48 hour week at 42s.6d. (or 10.6d. an hour) The labourer is required to work 48 hours day or night at any vessel or wharf. That is, not counting overtime payments the normal pay for the same hours in a 48 hour period, represented a wage reduction for weekly men of 11 percent. In addition a levy of 6d. per engagement was paid for bureau costs. In Newcastle, the Newcastle & Hunter River SSCO employed wharf labourers in Newcastle and Morpeth at weekly wage of 40 shillings for unrestricted hours. The men claimed earnings as low as 4 1/2d. per hour.

Casual wages rates remained at 1s. an hour ordinary time and 1s.6d. for overtime throughout the decade for most ports. In the case of Sydney if the effects of the Bureau in payment and
minimising overtime are taken into account, it is not surprising that employers did not see wage costs as unacceptable over the decade. Indeed employers were only concerned with the "fictitious[ly] high scale of wages for maritime [ie sea-going] labour." This represented direct operating costs of shipping companies and ran at twice shore labour costs. Thus when McIlwraith and McEacharn unilaterally cut seamen's wages in June 1893 by £2 a month, all companies were quick to follow. In the case of the engineers, employers were more measured. In September 1893 both the VSOA and the ASOA pressed for a 15 percent cut. They prepared for a strike by seeking replacement engineers from the British Shipping Federation as a precaution. Over the following four weeks of negotiation and arbitration, the engineers agreed to a 10 percent wage reduction. Although the employers were not pleased with this result — more for the additional issues determined through arbitration — they nevertheless accepted the agreement. But McKillop's fear of wage cuts for wharf labourers for the wool season of 1893 were groundless as there were no plans for this. Brisbane wharf labourers were concerned about wage cuts in 1897 but little appears to have occurred. Indeed the SWLU was congratulated the Seamen on their wage increase in 1896 after the depths of the depression passed. The NSW employers in general were concerned about wage pressures due to effects of the West Australian gold attracting workers.

In short, the shipowners control of the labour market in the main ports and the effect of the depression allowed employers to gain authority over all stages of the employment relation. They vetted men in the labour market and controlled the allocation of tasks in the workplace. Wages declined through the use of weekly hire and effort raised under these conditions. The loss of work control meant that open confrontation and strikes could not be sustained. Wharf labourer unions had to conduct industrial relations strategy under these conditions.

In Sydney, after the collapse of the strike Ramsay McKillop and his successor attempted to open a dialogue with employers. In approaching Storey, of the Chamber of Commerce, and the Employers Union they tried to circumvent the acrimony of the shipowners. The union was unsuccessful in its attempts to initiate a conference with the Steamship Owners Association, over the operation of the Labour Bureau months earlier. As I have noted the Sydney owners wanted to avoid unions and feared the 'socialistic' views of the leaders. The SWLU also turned to urging the TLC to write to the Employers Union over the Labour Bureau and the position of union labour. Most of this activity in mid-1891 was buoyed by the success the Shearers had in entering a conference with the Pastoralists, reported to the union on 9 August. Not only was the public status of Labor politicians used to build membership but in the middle of the decade, the union turned to them for direct help. Union secretary Williams was authorised to see Parliamentarians, Eadman, Fellows and Hughes on the societies behalf. The link between politicians and unions was more robust after the formation of a district council network. The framework for this was initially set up after the SWLU was invited to a TLC organised meeting for the formation of branches for the Labor Electoral League in April 1891. McKillop represented the union at Labour Federation meetings and continued to do so when affiliation with the League was brought up five years later. Sentiment again these organisations was evident. On the one hand, the union's relationship with the district council was questioned in 1896, but on the other, it had sought its help only ten days earlier. In other words the union maintained links with labour political organs. They appeared to be equivocal, but it is impossible to ascertain how strong the links were.
In Melbourne, J. Tucker adopted similar industrial methods. The union forwarded a petition to the VSOA in support of a wage increase, changes in meal hours and overtime in March 1896. These were simply "not entertained". A month later a request was sent to shipowners to grant "certain concessions" in working conditions. Although the Shipowners Association believed most of them were already in place, they resolved not to reply for "Mr Tucker could not be recognised." The VSOA refused to deal with the union at all.

Yet other ports adopted different strategy as I will now show. The Port Adelaide union remained intact for the decade. The men struck for higher wages in August 1895. It was unsuccessful as the VSOA advised the Adelaide shipowners association not to pay more than the going rate in Melbourne – 1s. ordinary time and 1s.6d. overtime. The Fremantle lumpers adopted a more militant stance. They were well organised and pressured shipowners in the port for wage increases in 1896. The dominant interstate companies formed the Fremantle Branch of the SOAA in that year to counter union demands. Buoyant shipping and the WA gold discoveries pushed the shipowners to pay wage rates higher than those in the east – 1s.3d. ordinary and 2s. overtime. Moreover as in Adelaide, union rules determined manning and working conditions. The employers complained of poor organisation of production and shortage of rail trucks so that "lumpers while waiting for trucks receive full wages for idleness."!!2

However, though such gains were rare in the 1890s there was a constant stream of disputes often over the issue of labour effort. The Newcastle men demanded 1s.3d. per hour for bagged work in May 1891, 1s.6d. for freezer work in December 1892. In both instances they walked out only to be replaced by crew and other labourers. As a result of the five–week strike the union went into voluntary suspension and did not reform for four years. Nevertheless informal action continued. The constant men employed by the Newcastle & Hunter R. SSCo. went on strike over long hours in November 1896. The company wharfinger Tarrant praised the men, but they were still replaced. In late 1897 the Newcastle men refused to work with wharf labourers recruited from Sydney by a local stevedore. This was despite the fact they were unionists, members of the SWLU. Resentment of outsiders boiled over into violence and a Sydney man was attacked in Hunter Street. At the end of the decade industrial action increased, ranging from complaints about lack of facilities to a strike at the Newcastle and Hunter R. SSCo.

Despite the weak position of the SWLU, Sydney did not escape industrial action. Disputes were reported in September and December 1896. Later in December the accusation that a wharf labourer broached cargo almost sparked a strike, but SWLU Secretary Williams calmed the men after lunch and a satisfactory settlement emerged. At the same meeting the union passed a resolution not to work with non–unionists. While these dispute were reported at union meetings there is little doubt that others occurred over the decade. In Melbourne the labourist orientation of the leadership was contrasted by the appearance of socialist sympathies on the waterfront. The red flag was hoisted on Station Pier as the differences between the MWLU and the Port Phillip Stevedores widened.

The Sydney and Melbourne wharf labourers' unions adopted a labourist strategy through the 1890s in attempting to build links with labour organisations, whether political or the TLC, and establish mechanisms of negotiation with employers. However shipowners rejected union approaches to establish a bargaining system, since they considered such attempts in the mid to late
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1880s to be a failure. In contrast, other ports, such as Fremantle, Port Adelaide and Newcastle discussed here, adopted a solidaristic strategy relying more on direct action in the pursuit of wages and industrial conditions. Although this strategy met with varying degrees of success.

4. Summary

However, in all the ports discussed there remained an active foundation of informal relations on which industrial action and union organisation was based. In contrast to the pattern of informalist industrial relations though, workers were directly challenged in the workplace. With the loss of direct work control and industrial authority that flowed from it, informal relations became marginalised. Thus the moral boundaries in workplace relations were also marginalised which meant that the norms of informalism ceased to regulate the employment relation in the same manner. Custom became a resource in the battle over industrial authority. Given the labour market control that the Bureau entailed, first-line supervisors were able to use this resource to raise labour effort. Foremen, wharfingers and wharf managers were the architects of the 'bull system'. This converted the production gains of social relations at work into a greater economic advantage profit for capital, no matter how favourable was their opinion of the men.

Through the 1890s nominal wages remained at a standard 1s. per hour for ordinary time and time and a half for overtime. There were rare exceptions, such as Fremantle. But in practice the shipowners control over the whole of the employment relation, effectively cut the wages of many wharf labourers, through the manipulation of the terms of employment, working hours and labour allocation. Labour intensification resulted.

The marginalisation of informalist relations meant that industrial relations now demanded formal union organisation. The small, collective and participative model of Society governance became ill-equipped to deal with the new capitalist industrial organisation - national capitalist company. The moves to recast union structure and governance in Sydney could only be tentative because this was one of the weakest ports in the colonies. Changes to internal organisation and establishing stable workplace delegates were two areas of innovation. Ironically the stronger ports remained dependent on the solidaristic ties of informalism - a situation that was to slow national union organisation considerably over the succeeding decades. Moreover, in general the conceptualisation of the need for a new form of organisation was weak. It was to be reflected in the pattern of WWF growth over the next decade and beyond.

IV. Federal Unionisation – The Waterside Workers Federation

This section examines the formation of the Waterside Workers Federation in 1902 and the conduct of industrial relations up to 1910. I will argue that the formation of the WWF did not restrain demands for local autonomy by port unions. This undermined the Federation's ability to effectively deal with national industrial relations issues. The employers retained the initiative in shaping the pattern of industrial relations over this period, within the context of the federation institutional mode adopted by shipowners. Product market collusion combined with the subordinate position of stevedoring and lack of investment, saw shipowners continue their dependence on the bull system in the workplace and attempted to contain industrial conditions.

Improved trade conditions at the end of the 1890s and the formation of the ASOF in Melbourne precipitated the closure of the Sydney Labour Bureau. The issues of the 1880s resurfaced, as industrial action grew from the beginning of 1899. Although Billy Hughes was able
to enhance his political career in re-establishing the SWLU and later forming the Waterside Workers Federation, his 'achievement' was built on existing patterns of workplace organisation. I shall turn to this first.

1. **Industrial Re-organisation – Sydney and Hughes**

In the three years prior to the formation of the WWF industrial action increased which required some organisation. Although Billy Hughes is credited with a major role in its formation, it is argued here that mounting worker dissatisfaction and action in several ports bolstered union organisation and the influence of state arbitration legislation complemented this.

The relaunching of the SWLU in December 1899 was reported in the *Sydney Morning Herald* as the culmination of three months of almost heroic work when "not even the ghost of a union existed prior to three months ago." Yet the union appeared to have been rebuilt remarkably quickly, with 1500 members enrolled and £200 collected. Trade and industrial conditions improved. Nevertheless the question is how was this achieved so quickly? The key is the role of wharf delegates, initially appointed in August 1896. Recall that union Secretary Williams reported a year later, in June 1897 that there was majority support for unionism on the wharves, and only some older workers baulked at the unionist label. After August delegates were appointed at a number of other wharves, and they also visited those with no delegate. All references in the union records to the role of delegates in these years were positive. While this is to be expected when the goal was membership growth, it also demonstrates a solid workplace presence. It was union leadership that appears to have been lacking. The rise in informal demands for work control in 1899 lead to more action about a year later, made easier by the closure of the Labour Bureau. One employer reported that "about twelve months before 1900" that the men became dissatisfied. Complaints were made by stevedores (foremen) of "men knocking off and refusing to do certain work, [and] whenever there was an opportunity of a man making an excuse for demanding an increase, he would do it." Men would "stick-up" a vessel for extra pay, whenever the opportunity arose, creating a "great deal of trouble." Clearly work group unionism was active on the wharves.

It was these conditions that allowed Hughes to step in and launch the SWLU in the closing days of 1899. The symbolic importance of politicians remained in union organisation. At the public launch on 29 December only one wharf labourer, the President, Mason, was on the platform. Hughes, Government Ministers, the NSW Premier, W. Lyne and church leaders where the focus of the event. At the second weekly meeting on 3 January 1900 Hughes stressed the "political side" of unionism. This argument repeated that of the politicians present at the public launch. On that occasion church leaders, Archdeacon Langley and Rev. Father Aubrey, pointed to the social and moral role of unions. In other words, unionisation was still clearly identified with the wider sphere of social and public life in contrast to its industrial role. In short it was the politics of labourism and social betterment. But the pressures in the labour process put this new moral foundation immediately under pressure.

Hughes was elected unopposed as Secretary of the SWLU. The day to day responsibility of running the union however fell to Edward Kelly. He, with Brock, Macauley and others had been associated with the union for several years. Union rules, organisation and administrative matters occupied the first months of the union. A rules committee was appointed on 4 January 1900 and
a call was made for volunteers for wharf delegates. Curiously the draft minutes of the union meeting on 11 January record that "after some difficulty" F. Austen volunteered, and was followed by others. The final minutes merely record that several men volunteered. Thus the mechanisms of governing rules and workplace organisation were quickly put into place.

The nature of this organising effort displayed some incongruity between the old society-model and the emergent formal model. The union looked to the 1890 and 1896 Rules but its confusion between the two models was a stumbling block. Confusion in the transition to union status is seen in Rule 1 (the Objects) which re-included the phrase "for their [members] mutual benefit and protection," which had been deleted in the 1896 revisions. No benefits were automatically paid. In one case the distressed sister of a deceased member was advised that wharf labourers would assist her, but "outside of the channels [sic] of the Union." Financial arrangements were tightened as McKillop outlined some of the problems with the 'old' union. Hughes echoed these sentiments. A list of the property of the old union was discussed, debts paid and arrangements made by the Trustees of the old union for banking. This business was dealt with in the first month. But it also indicates that it was likely that the old union survived in some form into 1899.

However it was not until April 1901 that the union was able to finalise its rules. Working rules and internal union authority proved to be difficult issues to resolve. These will be discussed later in the chapter. The finalised rules were submitted to the Registrar in May 1901. There were seven sets of rule changes to come over the next eight years.

Hughes ensured that the "political side" of the union was organised. He spoke of his support of the Lyne Government and the need for political support for the union. A delegate was immediately appointed to attend the Political Labour League conference in January 1900. The union reaffirmed its support for the PLL on several later occasions.

Hughes initially shared the unions circumspect view of inter-port organisation and affiliation. The SWLU had made tentative moves to establish links with Newcastle in 1897. It was on the premise that it gained a role commensurate with its size and standing as the largest wharf labourer union. Affiliation with the NWLU, itself re-established in February 1900, was raised again in late 1900, with discussions held in November. A copy of the existing union rules were forwarded to Newcastle in February 1901 followed by correspondence and a personal address by a Newcastle representative, Vice-President James Struck. A dispute with the Newcastle & Hunter River SSCO in Newcastle was taken over by the Sydney Committee of Management in May 1901. But the Sydney union rejected affiliation and placed delaying conditions on further negotiations. First agreement over representation based on membership numbers had to be secured, and then the Sydney rules had to be registered. But finally, in October, the union rescinded previous motions and instructed Hughes to inform the NWLU that it could only be a branch of the Sydney union! The terms of this entitlement were outlined to a Newcastle delegate the following week. Hughes supported affiliation only if it was restricted to general issues. Local issues had to be handled independently. This view was reflected in the wording of the formal incorporation of Newcastle into the 1901 SWLU Rules – as a branch. This was despite a committee report which did not support affiliation unless the NHRSSCo employees gained the same employment conditions both ports. Under the Sydney Rules, Newcastle was required to pay 3d. sustenance a year per
member and representation in Sydney was based on membership. Only local issues could be handled in Newcastle without reference to Sydney. In fact, Hughes was instructed to inform the Newcastle that if they don’t abide by the SWLU rules they could secede. The net result of the Newcastle experience was no amalgamation at all. The NWLU registered its own rules in July 1901.

Not surprisingly contact was made with other waterfront unions in the period before the formation of the WWF. Correspondence to or from Port Phillip Stevedores, Port Adelaide, Townsville, Port Pirie and Sydney Coal Lumpers on a number of issues was considered by the Sydney union.

From the Newcastle experience and the other contacts, there is little indication that Hughes was keen to build a national body. Indeed, he had argued against affiliation with the TLC in February 1900 and only in early May 1901 did Hughes broach the issue of a national union. His election to the Federal parliament required him to go to Melbourne. Before his departure he requested and received authority “to effect a Federation of Waterside workers all over Australia” and was also given authority to "make all arrangements for procuring a new banner for the Union and thus be authorised to solicit [the] best design.” Considering the organisational experience of the SWLU with other ports unions, political expediency appears to be a major impetus for the formation of the Waterside Workers Federation nine months later. Yet again the context and the pattern of industrial relations needs to be considered in assessing the appearance of the Federation.

For the experience of industrial relations in Sydney and other ports from 1899 shaped employers and Hughes’ views and actions.

2. Industrial Relations and the Formation of the Waterside Workers Federation

I have argued above that organisationally it appears that Hughes and the Sydney union saw little advantage in closer inter-port union ties. Yet in May 1901 more than eighteen months after the new SWLU was launched, Hughes announced he was going to Melbourne to set up a federal union. While influenced by Federation on 1 January, his experience of dealing with the employers in Sydney through 1900 and early 1901 showed that the national organisation of employers needed to be matched by wharf labourers. Also the revival of waterfront industrial action added a new dimension to the consciousness of wharf labourers. I shall now turn to these issues.

I have noted that by 1899 Sydney wharf labourers’ informal work control action increased. Other ports also saw a rise in industrial disputation. Ironically the largest was sparked by an attempt by the Fremantle Shipowners Association to regain the industrial initiative on the waterfront. The Association targeted the higher wage rates paid in the port in February 1899, along with working hours and freedom of contract. The shipowners unilaterally announced wage cuts for lumpers and coalworkers and longer working hours to come into effect 1 March. To achieve this, the shipowners discarded union preference and declared on open pickup for which registration was required. When no unionist registered, they responded by announcing the formation of a Labour Bureau based on the eastern model of weekly employment at 48s. plus overtime. Railway Department men, who worked rail trucks on the waterfront, were suspiciously offered permanent employment in late February, provided they worked the goods sheds and the wharves if necessary. The Labour Bureau and the Railway permanent jobs were effectively boycotted by wharf labourers
and rail workers respectively. The handful of free labourer who did start work on 1 March, reportedly "threw in the sponge" the next day.\footnote{151}

Free labourers brought over from Adelaide could not work because railway truckers refused to work with blacklegs, and other WA rail workers refused to take their place despite suspensions and dismissals. Union men working on vessels for small stevedores not linked to the Shipowners also refused to work with blackleg truckers, if they were introduced.\footnote{152} Considerable public support for lumpers and truckers pressured the Government for a change of Railway Department policy. The Commissioner rescinded the permanent employment proposal and all disciplinary action on 5 March 1899. The Shipowners Association was forced to a conference two days later. Although they were willing to compromise, freedom of contract remained a sticking point. Over the next four weeks more free labourers were brought in from the east, the government closed off the wharves and used police against the lumpers. But TLC and public support, including money raised, stiffened the lumpers' resistance. A resolution remained elusive. By early April both sides sought a way out. A conference on 4 April saw the FWLU accept managerial prerogative and manning levels, and for their part, shipowners recognised the union, agreed to the use of a Board of Reference and continued to pay travelling time. Wages and hours issue still remained unresolved. An \textit{ad hoc} arbitration system was established with Bishop Riley as arbitrator. He determined working hours as 8am to 6pm with ordinary rate for 8 hours at £1 1/2d and overtime at £1.8d an hour\footnote{153} – which was reduced the cuts.

The strike demonstrated the strength of the informalist networks in WA where the solidarity of lumpers, support of rail workers, the TLC and Labor politicians, precipitated sufficient support from the public and clergy to resist the shipowners offensive. The employers were forced to bargain with the union, and also the Government soon recognised advantages in arbitration. TLC pressure for compulsory arbitration, which continued through the strike, was vindicated by a practical example of its use. The WA government introduced arbitration legislation less than a year later.

Pent up industrial grievances over the 1890s lead to agitation and action in several ports. The Newcastle & Hunter R SSCo issue of wage rates and hours flared up again in 1900. The NWLU was re-established in February 1900 largely to challenge the terms of constant employment in place since 1892, and also to stop Sydney men taking jobs in Newcastle.\footnote{154} A strike in June 1900 resulted in some gains – it limited weekly employment to 60 hours for 42s. and overtime at 1s. an hour during union hours (before 6 pm), 1s.6d. after 6pm and Saturday afternoons, Sundays and holidays 2s. an hour.\footnote{155} Casuals received 1s. per hour for overtime. Such wages and conditions were below other ports and discontent continued. Hughes, and other politicians had taken an interest in the demands and approached the company.\footnote{156} But it took a further strike in October 1900 for the company to concede union demands of 1s. an hour ordinary time and 1s.6d. for overtime for all work. That is, constant work was abolished and all the men were employed on a casual basis from 7am to 5pm, based on a 8 hour day. Hughes again had been instrumental in dealing with the NHRSSCo.\footnote{157} This system operated for the next eighteen months. But it was to flare up again and provide further \textit{industrial} impetus to increase port union links. For the rest of the port employers paid the going rate of 1s. an hour. Indeed, shipwork was paid 1s.3d. an hour so was work on certain bagged cargoes, as it was in Sydney.\footnote{158}
In Sydney, Melbourne, and Brisbane industrial action was evident centred on wages and work effort. The draft SWLU rules of early 1900 were ratified by the end of January except Working Rule 5 relating to hours and wage rates. Wage rates, particularly for 'bagged stuff', freezer work and other invidious cargoes and conditions were central issues in Sydney. Informal workplace relations underpinned direct action taken over these types of issues. But such work control was no longer the central vehicle of industrial authority of workers in the labour process. Its role in the 'new' industrial relations was recast as an industrial tactic in the bargaining process, yet the subjective understanding of action was undoubtedly still strongly underpinned by moral conviction as well as economic advantage. Rank and file demands were reflected in the union's working rules, but the latter were increasingly subject to bargaining.

Working rules on wages and hours were passed in early February 1900. A proposal from the floor for £2.6d. an hour for frozen meat, was rejected in favour of the Rule committee recommendation of £2., day or night. Not surprisingly perhaps was that the issue most debated was the use of 'the blast' (refrigerated air pumped into the hold) while men were working. The men wanted it turned off. Ordinary wage rates were to be £1.6d. per hour and £2.3d. for overtime. The Rules committee had also fixed basic hours as 8am to 5pm with one break and 7am to 5pm with two breaks.

Hughes did not support direct action taken by workers. He thought men were open to legal action. Indeed he advised members that "it would be folly" for the union to take further action in the Morgan versus Adelaide SSCo case in early 1900. Hughes favoured union led bargaining, where such direct action would be rendered unnecessary. Indeed, he saw it as counterproductive because undermined the flow of negotiations that were needed for successful bargaining.

The rules adopted by the Sydney union attracted correspondence from shipowners the following month, in March. In their view the rules "appeared to be unworkable" and suggested a conference which was agreed in April. Meanwhile copies of the working rules were distributed to other Sydney stevedoring employers. The union notified them that the union rules would come into effect on 1 September 1900. Negotiations with the interstate and intrastate shipowners in Sydney were conducted by Hughes and Henry Howell of Howard Smith. Howell knew that the wharf labourers had been taking action consistently, particularly over bagged cargo, for "about 12 months before 1900." He acted as a representative of the "old association" (ie SOAA) and had negotiated with Hughes, concluding an agreement. The agreement confirmed the 8-hour principle, ordinary and overtime wages and the employers' accepted higher rate of £1.3d. an hour for certain 'special' cargoes and bagged work. The 1900 agreement was essentially centred on what Howell referred to as "bagged stuff" and it was cheered in Sussex Street on its conclusion. Indeed it represented the first negotiated agreement with the union for a decade. Different interpretation of core provisions of the agreement soon emerged. Howell believed that Hughes had conceded 'freedom of contract' to the employers. But whatever Hughes' actual intent, the rank and file continued to 'stick-up' employers over the employment of non-unionists or non-waterfront workers.

Immediately Newcastle, Brisbane and other Queensland ports began industrial agitation on the basis of the Sydney agreement. On the eve of political federation in Australia, waterside workers advanced industrial demands that took on a national flavour.
Then Hughes turned to negotiations with the stevedores in the weeks before the new union rules were due to come into effect in September. Critically, in these negotiations several union rules were amended and then accepted by the employers. Hughes reported that overtime, freezer work, paid at 1s.6d. per hour ordinary time and 2s. or 3s. per hour dependent on the time. Moreover, Hughes was able to report to the union that discussion on certain rules (eg on minimum engagement) remained open to "confer for better terms." The union commended Secretary Hughes and President Mason for "their energy in discussing our rules with the stevedores." The rules agreed a week before the deadline of 1 September. In addition to wages and hours, the rules for the overseas trade also included 1s.3d. for bagged stuff if they weighed over 150 lb per bag or were carried; blast turned off during ordinary hours; minimum engagement on one hour; and smoke to be paid at the rate of 2s.6s. per hour, or 7 1/2d. for 15 minutes.

Three key points need to be emphasised here. First, several stages in the employment relation were now subject to bargaining. Issues of constant or casual labour (Newcastle) wages (most ports) and the working day (many ports) were intimately connected to the spread of hours, meals, breaks, labour effort, work methods and so on – issues internal to the labour process. Second, the independent status of the employment contract was not yet disentangled from informalist autonomous regulation – conditions were still incorporated in union rules. Third, several important industrial conditions generated by the changing structure of effort were incorporated into the union rules. Effort had been traditionally linked to manning, but new materials handling technology (larger packaging and refrigeration) introduced new issues. No matter what the manning, it remained cold in freezers and thus new rules were required. Moreover the issue of the structure of the labour market remained submerged in this agreement. Although the status of the union was clearly elevated through the conclusion of the agreement, the position of non-unionists was not addressed. This central issue of the late 1880s and 1890 could not be ignored for long.

Immediately after securing agreement with the overseas stevedores Hughes was instructed to "open negotiations with the steamship owners re Smoke Oh and to have power to agree with them as regards payment or not." Hughes reported two weeks later that the rules were "very well received." Although the interstate association was not pleased with the lack of communication on the main issues. The hours of work proved to be a sticking point – not only for interstate trade but also overseas work. Hughes and Howell agreed that standard starting time be introduced for interstate and intra-state companies. This was accepted by the union. But at the same time some overseas stevedores were not working in accordance with the August 1900 agreement. Although the union protested to the employers, it was unclear of its own policy. It resolved to work the standard hours from 10 November, then again from 8 December. The union then opened the issue for consideration later in December where it changed its preferred hours. It then instructed Hughes to gain acceptance of the new hours from the stevedores.

Constant pressure was applied to employers and Hughes in the form of direct action by workers on the wharves. The Newcastle & Hunter River SSCo dispute blew up into a strike in Newcastle. The SWLU passed a resolution banning stoppages "without the permission of the union" in October 1900. In regard to the problem of hours, the men would not now work on Sundays for the 2s. an hour specified in the October 1900 agreement. The employers were eventually forced to pay 3s. an hour. Other issues also attracted unofficial stoppages. In the
overseas trade, the following month the union reaffirmed its position that it would work only under the August agreement. But the hours of work remained unresolved. Some years later the employers representative at the negotiations, Henry Howell, commented that the Oct 1900 agreement "worked fairly satisfactorily." Ordinary hours for interstate men were set at 7am to 5pm with two breaks 8–9am and 1–2pm. The overseas dinner (lunch) hour was 12 noon to 1pm which created problems with the standard lunch of the cities merchants. This was later changed to the 1–2pm. But wharf level direct action continued. The union resolution on action was being ignored by the men. The union adopted a further resolution in 1901 stating it "not endorse the action of the men in refusing to go to work at Union rates," meaning men who would 'stick-up' employers for higher rates on various jobs.

As I noted in chapter seven the SOAA was replaced by a branch of the ASOF in early 1901 less than a year before the formation of the WWF. While Hughes was undoubtedly centrally involved in negotiations with employers he was not the only SWLU representative. Moreover continued worker agitation on the wharves was an important factor in the employers' reassessment of their labour policy. Hughes' leadership should be placed in the context of the workers' immediate actions in the labour process.

As the practice of negotiation developed in Sydney so it did in Melbourne. The Sydney industrial action and negotiations had been noted by the shipowners around the country. Macdonald of AUSNCo had notified London that industrial troubles were threatening in the mid–1900. Mackay replied that he hoped that the company could "get through without having to concede too much in wages." There were differences between employers. Huddart and McIlwraith's opposed any concessions because they thought it would only lead to further demands. Whereas Macdonald and others favoured a compromise. Mackay endorsed the latter to gain "absolutely united action" that was essential for employers, because a "split amongst employers would be much worse than the loss occasioned by a strike."

Where the Sydney employers had been willing to negotiate with Hughes and the SWLU, the ASOF in Melbourne continued the VSOA policy of non–recognition of unions. A MEWL wage claim on 11 January 1901 was ignored. Then the employers delayed a decision on the pretext they needed to consider a similar demand from the stewards and firemen. The ASOF agreed to a conference in May, although the union requests were rejected in early April. But differences between employers over their attitude to industrial demands remained. Finally a special meeting of stevedoring employers was held on 27 May to consider the MWLU claim of four months earlier. Five ASOF members met with 'outsiders', Patersons, MSSCo, Capt Ogilvie of the Victorian Stevedoring and Contracting Co and smaller employers. Long–serving MWLU secretary John Tucker sought a conference with employers to consider the union request and establish a fixed term binding agreement.

In this context their can be little doubt that contact between Hughes and Tucker was a trigger in the genesis of the Waterside Workers Federation. For recall Hughes announced on 1 May that he was to form national federation of waterside workers and left for Melbourne. In other words, his direct experience with industrial relations in Sydney and the links to Newcastle indicated to Hughes the interdependence of ports and workers. Therefore, in the context of political Federation of the Australian colonies, union federation was vital for the industry.
The meeting of stevedoring employers of 27 May resulted in six employers rejecting any increase and three reluctantly accepting the need for some change. They therefore arrived at two policy decisions; first, no increase in wages. However a doorway to negotiation was opened in that they decided to listen to the MWLU case. The second policy decision was that the ASOF should adopt the goal of uniform national rates and conditions. Indeed this policy was adopted formally within three weeks, in June 1901. This meant that wages could not be in excess of the 1900 Sydney agreement but rates in Fremantle and Adelaide should be decreased. These employers agreed to meet with the MWLU.

The MWLU submitted additional claims on 3 June. Negotiations now moved more smoothly over the next five weeks and the first Melbourne Agreement was concluded on 11 July 1901. The MWLU claims centred on three areas, wage increase from 1s. to 1s.3d. per hour for ordinary time and time and a half for overtime, formalisation of the hours and adequate compensation for waiting, and broken time. The employers did not budge on wages – 1s. and 1s.6d. per hour for ordinary time was not altered. On meal hours employers agreed to delete the practice of halving meal hours "according to the exigencies of the trade", and accepted overtime rates for meal hours worked. Finally, broken time had been paid at the rate of 1d. (and 1 1/2d. for overtime) per five minutes after one hour. Where the union had sought a minimum two hour engagement and half hour payment periods after that (at the relevant hourly rate), the July agreement gave them a one hour minimum and quarter-hour payments. Waiting time payments remained at half rates, but where paid after one not two hours.

Unlike Sydney, the MWLU covered interstate and intrastate men in Melbourne and Geelong and coalworkers. The original claim did not cover 'coalies', but Schedule 2 of the July agreement did set out coalies wages and conditions. Ordinary and overtime hourly rates were the same as the wharf labourers. But the coalies worked on a tonnage rate of between 7 3/4d. to 1s.0 1/2d. per ton, depending on the type of coal and size of the basket. These rates were lower than those secured by the Fremantle men two years earlier. Meal hours varied for wharf labourers and the agreement gave employers greater discretion in scheduling the actual time meals were taken. Fares and waiting time provisions were the same. Certain conditions in regard to rigging gear were agreed and Pit Certificates (statement of tonnage discharged under each type, men employed and wages) were to be clearly displayed and originals to be available to union delegates.

Finally the Melbourne agreement reflected the shipowners concern with the continuity of work. In the same manner as the SWLU 1900 agreement, the Melbourne Memorandum of Agreement contained a continuity of work clause and a rudimentary disputes procedure. The latter required either party to give written notification of the nature of any dispute and work was to continue during ensuing negotiations. Failure to do so constituted a breach of the agreement and it was open to cancellation by the owners. The agreement was for six months, to 31 January 1902, unless extended before the 15 January 1902. Although after the end of January it would continue with six weeks notice by either party for its cancellation.

In a similar pattern to Sydney, employers had negotiated with the MWLU for the first time in more than a decade and concluded the first formal agreement for the same period of time. This was the result of the new ASOF policy. But unlike the Sydney agreement this was not incorporated into trade union rules and was somewhat narrower than its Sydney counterpart. It was a stand alone
agreement between the ASOF, Patersons, the MSSCo, Victorian SGCCo., several small companies, and the union. It was issued as instructions to stevedores.

Hughes had been in Melbourne for most of May and early June negotiating with Tucker over the affiliation of wharf labourer unions. Talks with Joe Morris of the Port Phillip Stevedores (and future WWF secretary), undoubtedly took place as well. Hughes returned to Sydney in early June and reported to the SWLU on 12 June of the progress of talks. This undoubtedly included discussion of the Melbourne industrial negotiations. Hughes' labourist strategy was similar to the approach taken by Tucker. However the traditional suspicion, even antagonism between the MWLU and the Port Phillip Stevedores, and the lack experience of the Sydney and Newcastle unions were not positive indicators for the success of this strategy for the formation of a federal union. Hughes turned to Labor politicians to facilitate the formation of the union over the next six months.

But again over this period industrial conditions continued to highlight the common position of wharf labourers around the country. This smoothed the path for politicians to build a common view of the role of a federal union. Although it was to take several decades for this to be realised in practice.

The Sydney agreements were due for renewal in July of 1901. The mechanisms of negotiation were in place and as I mentioned earlier the 1900 interstate agreement continued to apply through 1901. In Melbourne, within a month of signing an agreement the MWLU broached the issue of non-unionists on the Melbourne waterfront. The MWLU sought an assurance from the employers that non-unionists would not be employed, effectively giving the unionists preference. The ASOF rejected this claim as it went beyond the July agreement. However the Victorian Stevedoring GCCo signed an agreement within a fortnight, no doubt to formalise existing practice.193 The following month Tucker submitted a 'suggestion' to the employers for an increase for Saturday and Sunday night work from 1s.6d. (the standard overtime rate) to 2s.6d. per hour. It was a special rate paid by the Union SSCo. This provoked 'considerable discussion' at the ASOF meeting. Although they rejected the claim the Chairman and secretary were authorised to negotiate with Tucker, for the Union SSCo arrangement "should be dealt with in a special way." Negotiations proceeded.194 In another claim for waiting time in the event of an accident, the agreement was similarly not varied. Again this claim was based on a local Howard Smith agreement granting waiting time, beginning one hour after being ordered down (of 6d. and 9d. per hour for ordinary and overtime respectively), although workers may be outside the Melbourne wharves. The ASOF approved payments but the agreement was not varied.

Thus local variations in the labour process generated a stream of claims. The restricted scope of the Melbourne agreement and lack of experience in dealing with the bargaining process proved to be problems. Consequently before the end of 1901 the ASOF discussed interpretations of the agreement, although they maintained the general policy of rejecting MWLU claims.195 The key point is that, like Sydney industrial relations issues were constantly generated in the workplace. The nature of labour process was an important dynamic element that accentuated the contextual instability of national unionisation.

In other ports industrial issues continued to draw attention to the waterfront. And as in the case of Melbourne, this enabled Hughes to spark interest of politicians in waterfront unionism, who
in turn could secure support from local union leaders. Hughes was involved in several industrial disputes.

The rise of Fremantle as the main West Australian port placed pressure on the port of Albany. In their attempt to attack the union and cut the wages of coalworkers and wharf labourers (by 3d. an hour down to 1s.3d. and 1s. ordinary time respectively), McIlwraith's and the ASSCo imported free labourers to replace coalworkers on strike in September 1901. The companies locked out the lumpers. The Albany men attempted to gain the protection of the W.A. Conciliation and Arbitration Act as a branch of the Fremantle Union. The two companies blocked this by registering the free labourers as the Union of Albany Lumpers. The dispute dragged on for months, as the employers used free labour. Intervention by West Australian Senator Hugh DeLargie involved Hughes. Thus the ASOF contacted Hughes in order to inform him of the full details. Like the Fremantle dispute two years earlier, sympathetic workers (in this case seamen) were able to dissuade many blacklegs from working. This created shortages for the employers, but they were able to continue operations as there were sufficient men in the company dominated union. Indeed the major employers of McIlwraith McEacharn and the ASSCo, registered an agreement with the employer-sponsored Albany Stevedoring and Coaling Union, in November 1902. In a similar pattern to the labour bureau, workers were required to register with the employers and be available for work at any time. Moreover the employers were able to suspend or cancel the registration of any worker if his work or conduct was considered to be unsatisfactory. However the companies allowed the workers to determine the composition of coal gangs and vacancies in gangs were filled by registered workers. Although both these provisions were subject to employer veto, it is a clear illustration of employers attempts to structure the labour market and labour organisation to maximise the benefits of informal work relations.

On 12 August 1901, the Brisbane Wharf Labourers Union notified AUSNCo that the men would not work past 6pm, which quickly held up three vessels. Also the employers would not concede union preference and maintained a freedom of contract policy. Two days later vessels were held up at Howard Smith and the company assigned permanent men and staff labour to work the vessels. But on the 15 August the employers established a Labour Bureau to engage men. The following day the wharf labourers returned to work. However, one of the AUSNCo staff reported that "instructions had been received from Sydney [union] to harass any and every time which they [BWLU] might think suitable." In order to negate the rising authority of the union and the leaders "who are beginning to dictate to us when we should work etc." the AUSNCo engaged 26 constant men on 19 August. The men "seceded from the union" and accepted employment at 45s. per week. Hughes did not appear to be involved in this dispute, but he notified the Brisbane shipowners association, in February 1902, of the involvement of the Brisbane wharf labourers in the negotiations on the formation of the WWF. Again in these disputes direct action by wharf labourers was clearly evident. Other ports either pressed for agreements with employers, or the union rules were accepted in the port. The Port Adelaide Workingmen's Association rules for example came into effect in 13 September 1901 with little disruption.

Thus between the time of the Hughes' proposal for a federation in May 1901 and February 1902, when he announced the formation of the Waterside Workers' Federation, workplace industrial
organisation and agitation of port unions lead to a number of agreements with employers around the country.

Through the second half of 1901 Hughes contacted Labor politicians in waterfront seats. These politicians contacted wharf labourer unions with the proposal for a national federation. Although, like Hughes the politicians were not wharf labourers or did they have more than passing contact with wharf unions. Yet as I have shown in the case of Senator DeLargie from Western Australia, industrial action by the unions during 1901 spotlighted these unions. Fredrick Bamford, Egerton Batchelor, Alexander Poynton, Andrew Fisher, Henry Turley and Hughes were members of the House of Representatives and William Higgs, David O'Keefe and DeLargie were in the Senate. Only Hughes and Fisher were members of wharf labourer union branches – Sydney and Maryborough, Qld, respectively. The politicians received sufficient support for the proposal for Hughes to report to the SWLU in December 1901 that the federation was due to be consummated in the near future. On 7 February 1902 at a meeting of the politicians at Parliament House in Melbourne the Federation was born. It covered eleven ports with a nominal membership of 6300. Hughes declared the formation of the Federal Council of Management of the Waterside Workers Federation, on which Hughes was 'elected' as President, Bamford Vice-President, DeLargie Treasurer and the only working watersider Joe Morris as Secretary.

In this section I have argued that a critical aspect of the formation of the Waterside Workers Federation in early 1902 was the dynamic of workplace industrial relations over the previous two to three years. Moreover, on the basis of this, wharf union leaders around the country pressed for some recognition of industrial authority in the labour process. In some ports union rules continued to prevail (eg Port Adelaide), or were recognised by employers for the first time in more than a decade (eg Sydney), or existing agreements were successfully defended (eg Fremantle), or new ones established (Melbourne and Newcastle). In contrast some action or agreements were less favourable to port unions (eg Brisbane and Albany). The process that was driven by workplace organisation by the rank-and-file that continued to display the characteristics of informality. Although the traditional type of autonomous regulation had given way to more formalised model. Some employers tried to control informality for their own ends, others to circumvent it. Undoubtedly Hughes was driven in some measure by political advantage, but his action facilitated the development of national unionism on the waterfront earlier than may have otherwise been the case. The context just mentioned and the organisation of employers shown in chapter seven were more favourable conditions for national unionism than 1890. However the policy focus of port unions on their local issues in the period leading up to the formation of the Federation was not a favourable sign for the future.

3. WWF Organisation 1902–1914

This section will concentrate on unionisation in the early years of the Waterside Workers Federation and the pattern of industrial relations. The general local policy focus of port unions was an unfavourable condition that was reflected in the organisational scope of waterside workers in the period covered here.

Initially, the WWF reflected the 'political side' of unionism emphasised by Hughes at the first meeting of the SWLU two years earlier. The politician dominated leadership immediately sought a
political avenue to address waterfront problems around the country. Before I turn to the conduct of union business, the organisation of the union needs to be outlined.

Nominally the members of the Federal Council were representatives of the states from which they came. But as politicians they were clearly not active waterside workers nor had they worked on the waterfront (only Trustee, Senator Henry Turley was an exception). The formation of the Federation represented a break with the society traditions of the waterfront. But the distance of the leadership from the workplace prompted many ports to view the Federation as incapable of dealing with the detail of waterside work and waterfront industrial matters. Moreover meetings were formally monthly, but were often far more infrequent in the early years. Indeed DeLargie suggested in early 1905 that more regular meetings were required but little change occurred.

The eleven member ports of the first meeting were slow to forward the quarterly 3d. per member dues to the Federation to cover a total of 5047. Only eight ports forwarded membership dues by the end of the month, and just over half of the members were from Sydney. And several, including Sydney had yet to pay. Larger ports such as Melbourne, Newcastle, Hobart, Fremantle and Pt Adelaide were absent. Many of these ports joined over the next twelve months, although Fremantle and Port Adelaide remained outside the Federation and some small ports, for example Cooktown, refused to join. By the end of the year 18 ports, with membership of 6,248 had joined the WWF. Table 9.2 provides relevant membership figures for major ports, by state, for available years.

**Table 9.2** WWF Membership 1902, 1906, 1917, 1924 (no. of ports in brackets)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Main Ports only</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1902</td>
<td>1906</td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>1917</td>
<td>Total</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brisbane</td>
<td>500</td>
<td>500</td>
<td>1202</td>
<td>1478</td>
<td>3253</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Townsville</td>
<td>177</td>
<td>156</td>
<td>653</td>
<td>587</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Rockhampton</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>170</td>
<td>269</td>
<td>250</td>
<td>3253</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Queensland Total</strong></td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1117 (*9)</td>
<td>2762 (13)</td>
<td>3253 (13)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sydney</td>
<td>2,555</td>
<td>2556</td>
<td>3064</td>
<td>3491</td>
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<tr>
<td>Newcastle</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>400</td>
<td>235</td>
<td>286</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>New South Wales Total</strong></td>
<td>2936 (2)</td>
<td>3,426 (4)</td>
<td>4416 (4)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Melbourne</td>
<td>911</td>
<td>672</td>
<td>2999</td>
<td>2711</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pt Phillip</td>
<td>1,100</td>
<td>711</td>
<td>938</td>
<td>2028</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Victoria Total</strong></td>
<td>1383 (2)</td>
<td>3,956 (4)</td>
<td>4739 (14)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pt Adelaide</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1551</td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pt Pirie</td>
<td>400</td>
<td>396</td>
<td>484</td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>South Australia Total</strong></td>
<td>396 (1)</td>
<td>2,480 (6)</td>
<td>3382 (6)</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fremantle</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>841</td>
<td>722</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Albany</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>158</td>
<td>123</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Western Aust Total</strong></td>
<td>170 (2)</td>
<td>1,240 (6)</td>
<td>1,270 (6)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hobart</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>158</td>
<td>245</td>
<td>430</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Devonport</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>171</td>
<td>196</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Launceston</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>114</td>
<td>146</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Tasmania Total</strong></td>
<td>-</td>
<td>211 (2)</td>
<td>704 (6)</td>
<td>1,149 (6)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL Number</strong></td>
<td>6,248</td>
<td>6,213</td>
<td>14,568</td>
<td>18,209</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* number of ports covered  
# report only give these two branches in Melbourne, no mention of Geelong and small ports.

Source: compiled from; for year 1902, Healy, Brief History of the Australian Waterfront and the Waterside Unions, p.2; 1906, basis of membership dues to WWF, COM, Minutes, 21 Jan 1906, p.60, ANU/NBA T62/1/1; 1917, WWF Membership ANU/NBA T62/37/5/3; 1924, WWF Australia Membership, ANU/NBA T62/37/5/5
National membership stabilised in 1905–6 at over 6,000, but financial income did not. By early 1906, none of the 18 branches had paid regularly for all quarters to January. Only four had paid dues for 13 quarters, one 12 quarters, two 11 quarters, one 10 quarters, one 9 quarters, two 8 quarters, with the rest paying 7 quarters or less. Pt Pirie and Brisbane had dues waived due to an inability to pay, as they had in the past years. Thus over a four year period just over half of potential income was received. If the large ports of Fremantle and Pt Adelaide were included as potential membership figures, then the proportion falls to less than half.

Although Hughes secured authority from the SWLU to negotiate with other port unions to establish the Federation the Sydney union was equivocal over its involvement. Fearing that its WWF membership jeopardised its Arbitration Court application in NSW, it withheld its first dues payment when Hughes was in Melbourne, much to the latter's chagrin. On his return Hughes forcefully stressed that the union's organisational strength secured its gains for its members not registration under the state act. Nevertheless the SWLU remained laggard in paying its dues over the next decade, in approving the new inter-port transfer system and in other actions.

Instability of branch membership dogged the WWF for several years. Furthermore, it could not assert any significant authority over industrial policy. The MWLU questioned its authority in handling industrial issues as early as the first months of its life and eventually withdrew in August 1907 despite pleas from Hughes not to leave. His later pleas for reaffiliation also went unheeded for more than four years until late 1910 when the Melbourne men rejoined. The SWLU resolved to disaffiliate on several occasions only to be checked by Hughes as it had been in 1902. Smaller ports such as Geraldton in WA, withdrew in April 1908 fearing that the WWF would take all their money, others such as Albany, WA couldn't function successfully due to strong resistance of employers union. WWF resolutions and letters to Pt Adelaide and Fremantle attempted to attract these ports into the Federation over the first decade. But they failed. These unions had a long history of strong informal networks and worker organisation based on the society model – Pt Adelaide one of the oldest unskilled workers' organisations in the country – and wanted to preserve their independence. Both were geographically separated from the capital city, and critically both had secured more favourable industrial agreements with local shipowners than the eastern states. The Fremantle lumpers defended themselves against an employer offensive only a few years earlier. Fremantle did not join the WWF until 1910 and Port Adelaide five years later. Even then it was difficult to get Fremantle's participation in proposed national agreements.

The WWF's difficulty in exerting authority over port unions on industrial policy stemmed from a weak administrative mechanism to develop policy. The federal office holders were politicians. Only Joe Morris was a working wharf labourer. After 1910 a state delegates were added to the Federal Council – one delegate for each 500 members. But the ports could not afford to send representatives and so Sydney and Melbourne dominated. It was not until 1913 that the Federation could draw direct representatives of the port unions together at a national conference. Moreover the union had no full-time secretary – Morris was only part-time, but the politicians still relied on him to carry on day-to-day functions. Tucker (MWLU) assisted were possible in the early years but the Melbourne union withdrew in 1907. Morris remained part-time for more than a decade. The October 1913 national conference established the position of full-time secretary,
despite opposition from Sydney and other ports. The union also established its own office in the Market Building in William Street Melbourne. Matt McCabe of the Brisbane branch, was elected the first full-time secretary but, unable to find suitable accommodation in Melbourne, resigned in January 1914. Morris took over the job again.\textsuperscript{220}

Communication with the port unions, that were in theory branches, was poor. Each looked to securing its own wages and conditions, making the coordination of Federation policy and action difficult. Communication with the rank and file was even poorer. The union newspaper, the \textit{Waterside Worker Gazette}, appeared irregularly and eventually disappeared in May 1914.\textsuperscript{221}

Some consolidation of the national union flowed from the national agreements with the ASOF after 1910. A new union constitution put in place after the first federal assisted the process. But by this stage the union listed 30 branches in April 1915, with the only outstanding port union being the PAWA that joined soon after. By the end of 1915 the WWF had some 17,000 members.\textsuperscript{222}

4. Summary

In sum, for more than a decade of its existence, the Waterside Workers Federation was unable to secure significant organisational capacities. Smaller ports had more to gain from the Federation than larger ones. Thus small ones were more likely to remain in and support the union but their financial contribution was small and tenuous. The larger ports were less enthusiastic, with some standing outside the Federation for some or all of it first decade. The politicians holding official positions gave the union a continuity that it may have otherwise found difficult to sustain. But the 'political side' of unionism and the centralisation of industrial relations proved difficult to achieve.

From an organisational perspective it may be concluded that there were obstacles to national unionism of waterside workers. Despite continued workgroup action, the employers were under less industrial pressure than may have been the case with a stronger unionisation. The next section examines the conduct of industrial relations over this period.

V. WWF, ASOF and Towards National Industrial Relations, 1902–1910

This section focuses on the pattern of industrial relation in stevedoring from the formation of the WWF to the beginning of 1910. Recall that Collins stabilised the freight market in this period and integrated organisational structures in shipping absorbed stevedoring operations but control-systems developed slowly. A new pattern of industrial relations soon developed based on port level collective bargaining and agreements. The first part of this section examines the central features of this pattern of industrial relations. Later parts explore other elements of the pattern which played a role in the development of industrial relations in later years.

1. Agreements and Awards – Collective Bargaining and Formalisation

In a similar manner to the SWLU, Hughes saw the Federation as a vehicle of industrial peace. For local disputes would be removed from "the local bias and prejudice" and dealt with centrally. The Federal Council of the Federation would "deal directly with the heads of the various steamship companies" in order to settle industrial disputes "on their merits."\textsuperscript{223} This labourist policy proved difficult to implement.
1 The Industrial Dominance of Localism

In the first year several approaches were made to state and federal politicians over industrial issues on the basis of existing or proposed legislation, with little success. Although the appeal to legislation and approaches to politicians continued the dynamic of the development of the WWF lay with industrial relations. Here it was less successful. Early attempts at centralised negotiation fared no better than appeals to politicians. In answer to a Brisbane inquiry about a new agreement the Council suggested a conference with shipowners at the local or federal level. If it failed then the men would have to work without an agreement. Of course, many ports had negotiated port, or sectional, agreements over the preceding two years.

The union did tackle the problem of the labour market. In view of the mobility of workers between ports, to work seasonal cargoes for example, the Federation wanted to provide a system to facilitate such movement of unionists. Through 1902 it solicited opinions from branches regarding a transfer card system between ports to save members additional membership fees. The transfer system was adopted in early 1903 and gave the union the potential, at least, to gain authority over the national labour market.

But many branches were primarily interested wages and conditions – and pressured the Federation for some action. Workplace agitation by the rank and file continued and the major ports pursued industrial issues alone. The SWLU wage claim in December 1901, was refused by employers on the grounds of deteriorating trade. The ASOF continued to refuse to consider increases to rates or conditions under the Melbourne agreement. The MWLU considered terminating it, but decided to let it run through into 1902. They would have preferred another six month agreement. After the end of January 1902, the six week rule came into operation. The Brisbane agreement expired on 24 February and union sought a wage rise. The Federation approved wage demands of 1s.6d. and 1s.10 1/2d. per hour ordinary time for both Brisbane and Rockhampton. Several tropical north Queensland ports already had a rate of 1s.3d. an hour or higher. Howard Smith had conceded 1s.6d. an hour in Mackay in early 1902, precipitating an unsuccessful strike in support of a general rise for the whole port. In Sydney the SWLU sought wage increases as well as the exclusion of non-unionists. A conference with the employers brought no result. In Newcastle the dispute over hours and wages of men working for the NHRSSCo resurfaced.

The NHRSSCo reversed the 1900 agreement, by again hiring by the week in April 1902 because they were dissatisfied with the supply of labour. They offered 48s. for a 60 hour week or 9 1/2d. per hour, with preference for other employment for union members. Of course casuals were paid a minimum of 68s. for 60 hours made up of ordinary and overtime hours over a 44-hour week. The new rate offered was effectively a thirty percent wage cut. The newly established NSW Court of Arbitration heard the case two weeks after Justice Cohen became President of the Court. Negotiations between the NWLU and the company had broken down and the company had employed non-union labour from Sydney. Hughes took a personal interest in the case as, in his view, it could upset plans for an arbitration award for the SWLU. The Court found that the reversion to weekly employment was in effect a lockout. Hughes had pointed this out to the company, with no effect. The NSW Court handed down its first industrial award in this Newcastle case, and restored the preference of employment of the casual men at the rate of 1s. an hour and
reinforced the 8–hour principle. Although provision was made for the employment of outsiders if the union failed to provide sufficient competent labour.\textsuperscript{234} The NWLU as a whole then submitted new rules to the employers which included increases across several areas. Some employers granted wage increases, while others did not.\textsuperscript{235} The Townsville waterside workers threatened to stop work over the issue of non-union labour.\textsuperscript{236} In all these instances the ASOF urged united action by employers. In the Townsville dispute the men returned to work when all companies refused to employ union labour after the men had walked off. The unionists quickly returned to work.\textsuperscript{237} Trouble was also reported in Tasmanian ports.\textsuperscript{238}

These, and other, claims around the country prompted the WWF to seek a conference with the ASOF in August 1902. Anticipating the ASOF reaction the Federal Council identified the issues as, recognition of branches, wage increases and the standardisation of allowances and conditions across ports.\textsuperscript{239} The ASOF was wary in light of NHRSSCo experience under the NSW Arbitration system and the continued industrial agitation around the country. It delayed any response for several weeks. Then in a measured communication to the WWF the ASOF pointed out that this was the first official contact between the new union and the shipowners. There they required information such as; the ports covered by the WWF, the nature of the unions' authority, the issues for discussion and names of the union representatives before any meeting could be agreed to.\textsuperscript{240} Indeed the conditions appeared to go further. Hughes reported a week later that at an interview with Appleton and Grayson, the shipowners wanted to specifically know if the union covered the MWLU and if wage reductions were discussed, did Hughes have authority to agree at a conference. Hughes stated that he could not agree to this.\textsuperscript{241}

From the WWF perspective the proposed national agreement created some internal dissension and organisational integrity. Tucker questioned the wisdom of the union campaign for a 3d. wage rise in mid-1902. He saw little chance of success based on the Melbourne experience over the previous year. Moreover his members would question the authority of the Federation to determine their wages and conditions.\textsuperscript{242} Tucker was not willing to push employers given their offensive of wage reductions for the coalies, and others. Fremantle already had an agreement with the ASOF. They would agree to being represented at the conference, but it was more to gain any increases rather than a commitment to federal unionism.\textsuperscript{243} The April 1899 agreement had been varied in 1900, 1901 and 1902 and the Lumpers saw no reason to enter national negotiations.\textsuperscript{244} Port Adelaide remained outside the Federation and the SWLU remained sceptical of any benefits flowing from a national agreement. An agreement between the PAWA and shipowners was concluded in January 1904.\textsuperscript{245} At a meeting in September 1902 it was not possible to achieve anything of substance. Thus by the end of its first year the WWF had not succeeded in surmounting the existing pattern of port level bargaining.

2 \textit{State Arbitration in New South Wales}

From the shipowners perspective, there were a number of considerations that undermined any serious resolve to establish a national agreement. This is despite a general agreement amongst shipowners that standardisation of waterside workers wages and conditions was the preferred policy. In part the passing of the NSW Industrial Arbitration Act reinforced the local focus. The Sydney employers were concerned over the effect of the proposed Act in late 1901. But they reported to Melbourne that little could be done since NSW Attorney–General Wise was unlikely to
consider amendments.\textsuperscript{246} They were specifically concerned about the power of the Court to order the production of books. Legal advice was sought from Dr George Sly in 1902.\textsuperscript{247} The employers were empowered to renew the existing Sydney agreement for twelve months at the conference with the SWLU in January 1902 which was referred to above. The SWLU had intimated it would seek increases through the new Arbitration Court if needed. The shipowners merely resolved to appeal to the Court for continuation of existing conditions if that was the case.\textsuperscript{248} In early February Dr Sly confirmed the Sydney employers' view that "no time should be lost in registering", particularly as the overseas stevedores had already lodged a formal application. Indeed, the ASOF accepted registration in principle by the end of 1901\textsuperscript{249} and then sought views on a single stevedoring company from Sydney.\textsuperscript{250} The NSW Interstate Shipowners Association was registered by the end of February 1902, although Appleton of Huddart Parker and Hunter of McIlwraith McEacharn opposed it.\textsuperscript{251} By mid-1902 Henry Howell had devised a plan to re-establish a central labour bureau but the Sydney committee waited on an opinion form Melbourne.\textsuperscript{252}

In registering under the Industrial Arbitration Act, both employers and unions gained the status of \textit{industrial} organisations in addition to the status of trade unions under the original 1881 Act. The Newcastle & Hunter River SSCo company award was the first test of the NSW Court of Arbitration for shipowners and they lost on almost all issues. The President of the Court, Judge Cohen, noted that the NSW Act considerably modified the right of freedom of contract. Although voluntary agreements remained part of the system, the terms of such agreements could no longer be altered at will by one party or the other. Since an object of the Act was to ensure continuity of operations, the absence of agreement on change meant that the parties had to approach the Court to effect change. This point was stressed by ASOF legal adviser Dr George Sly in August 1902. The companies had to continue paying the rate awarded or approach the court for variation.\textsuperscript{253}

This result, and the application by the SWLU to the Arbitration Court for increases to the overseas rates, saw the employers reluctant to enter into direct negotiations with the WWF. Waterside workers were again successful in the Deep-sea case at the end of 1902. The SWLU gained 1s.3d. per hour ordinary time and 1s.9d. overtime, higher rates for working during meals (2s.3d. or 2s.6d.), and payments for special cargoes such as frozen meat. Moreover the labour market was regulated through preference to unionists and a rudimentary system of worker registration. Union members were to be registered with the Stevedores Association. Justice Cohen had conceded not only preference to the union but some discretionary power for the union to impose "reasonable restrictions" on numbers.\textsuperscript{254} Constant employment was limited to some men on lighters and on deck, but their numbers were limited to 25 distributed amongst all employers in the trade. They were excluded from direct stevedoring work especially on the wharf apron. Finally manning was set at minimum of 4 men in the hold for the first hour and thereafter not less than 6.\textsuperscript{255}

The SWLU immediately signalled its intention to apply to the Court for the overseas award to cover all stevedoring work in Sydney. Hughes initially approached Capt Webb of the NSW Interstate Steam Shipowners Association to negotiate an agreement based on the overseas wage rates. Webb declined. The ASOF wanted Dr Sly to handle the impending case personally, and if unable to, the Chairman of the ASOF Appleton, was to handle the case.\textsuperscript{256} It was not, however, heard until the second half of 1905, almost three years later. As insurance against any adverse effects of the Court, most of the shipping companies offered weekly employment to a number
workers in late 1902. This policy was formalised by the registration of an industrial agreement in early 1903 between weekly employed men and shipowners.257

A common rule application for all overseas work was granted later in 1903 with only Orient and P. & O. opposing the application.258 Work control by wharf labourers underpinned the Court outcome in the Deep-Sea Award. Employers agreed to pay 1s.3d. per hour if they were given freedom of engagement. Master stevedore William Brown explained "They [wharf labourers] gave us the right to put on and knock off whom we like provided they got the increase of wages." The existing practice did not allow employers to discharge men at will, "[i]f you knocked off one [before the job finished], the others left you." Men could only be discharged went work on a ship was completed.259

The drift of events between August and December also saw ASOF members in Melbourne reassess the possibility of wage cuts, which were suggested at the September meeting with Hughes. After some discussion the general feeling was against seeking wage cuts to 10d. ordinary and 1s.3d. an hour overtime. But all hope was not lost, the committee saw it as a "question of tactics," which Appleton and the NSW Interstate SSOA could deal with.260 In this context the shipowners were unwilling to enter into direct negotiations with the WWF at the national level over any industrial relations matters.

Finally, over the next six months the political environment featured public debate over a range of Federal Acts discussed in chapter seven Debate over the coastal clauses of the Navigation Act in the context of the proposed Arbitration legislation had brought adverse press comment. Therefore the ASOF drafted a press release denying the existence of any "unnatural alliance" with the "representatives of its employees" in order to justify secure the inclusion of coastal clauses in the Act.261

Thus in the context of 1902–1903 the employers considered they were unable to enter into direct negotiations on a national scale. The WWF as a national body was unable to force an issue as the dynamic of industrial relations remained at the port level. Fremantle, Port Adelaide, the Melbourne unions and Brisbane all had local agreements which all considered acceptable with the exception of the latter. Newcastle and the Sydney union had awards or agreements. Indeed over the next four years the Sydney union arbitration case was a central feature of the waterfront industrial relations. Union preference granted for Newcastle and the Sydney overseas section addressed to some extent the structure of the stevedoring labour market. This issue loomed large in the SWLU interstate case.

The December 1902 award for overseas men largely reflected the new union rules. A challenge to the jurisdiction of the award to cover the coastal men was lost.262 This being the case the Sydney union sought to reinforce its position in the labour market. In early 1904 it closed its books and refused admittance to certain non-union men. Men who had worked as constant men were not elected to membership as required by the SWLU rules. Judge Cohen condemned "the autocratic and tyrannical" action of the union. Moreover the preference clause was rewritten to substantially remove the exclusionary procedures of the membership process. In particular all ballots or other elections for membership were excluded. Failure to supply sufficient competent men in reasonable time was grounds for the employers to engage non-unionists.263
The Deep-Sea Award had to be continually enforced. But the wharf delegate structure was strengthened through monthly meetings and, as I have shown above, workplace organisation was strong which allowed information to be relayed to the union. Financial secretary Harrison corresponded with the Stevedores Association over incorrect wage payments and other industrial matters that breached the award. The union found legal representation by Brown and Beeby in the Arbitration Court expensive and it proceeded with some cutbacks. Delays in the interstate case were due to a variety of reasons. The new Court had too many cases to handle and this delayed hearings. In early 1903, Hughes warned the SWLU of the possibility of a year delay. Then 1904 pushed into 1905 and Judge Cohen died and the incoming President Heydon took ill on several occasions. The employers saw the appointment of Heydon as a gain for them, since Cohen was seen as favouring labour. The case itself was extensive, with more than two dozen watersiders, several other unionists and many employers giving evidence over the twenty-seven days of hearings, and Judge Heydon reviewing company records in confidence. The case was time consuming. The ASOF commented that the NSW Act increased its workload considerably. One employer noted that employers held "meetings almost everyday and even into the night" and pessimistically wrote, "I am afraid we shall have to pay the increase asked for."

The case turned on two issues, wages and the structure of the labour market that produced an unequal distribution of work. The union sought an increase in wages to 1s.3d. an hour to match the overseas award, and award provisions for employers to more equally allocate work. There were two aspects of the latter claim that Hughes sought to demonstrate. First, that only a minority of the labour force received almost constant work which was at the expense of the majority. Thus many competent workers received inadequate earnings of 25s. or less, while a majority made good money of 40s. or more. Second, that the heavy manual nature of the work, made it imperative that work be more evenly distributed.

The Court established that the labour market in the interstate trade required 765 men to accommodate the pattern of labour demand over the six months from January to June 1905. With more than 1200 unionists seeking work the market was clearly oversupplied. In considering 'normal' contingencies such as the exigencies of trade, the casual nature of labour, the waiting required, effects of the weather and so on, Heydon determined that the average weekly hours for a waterside worker was approximately 30 or 31 hours. On the basis of a 30 hour principle he adjudged the existing wage of 35s.9d. as adequate and did not grant an increase. Unlike Cohen in the Deep-Sea case, Heydon took little or no account of the companies capacity to pay.

The Court accepted that the labour market was structured by employer practices to serve their own interests. The preference or privileged men at some companies were usually engaged without attending the pickup and non-preference men were often discharged to give the preference men more work. The Court canvassed several options to deal with the problems this created; sliding scale of wages, loading for waiting time for non-preference casuals and constant employment, but all were discarded in favour of a greatly reduced relativity between ordinary time and overtime. By increasing ordinary time to 1s. 1 1/2d. and reducing overtime to 1s.4d. the overtime penalty rate fell from time and a half to less than time and a quarter. Heydon argued that the higher ordinary rate would assist those on less than 30s. a week by about ten percent, those up to 40s. by less and those
over 40s. would be unaffected. Moreover Heydon significantly recast employment terms. Preference was amended to prevent the union from taking action again members for transgressing certain rules and required unionists work with non-union constant workers. Employers were free to employ constant men at will, thereby overturning the limitations on constant labour and non-unionists central to the Newcastle and Deep-Sea awards. Constant men had been, since 1902, a continuing source of antagonism to the casual waterside workers on the Sydney waterfront.

In effect the award was a recipe to redistribute the existing wage pool - to address the problems identified by the union without additional cost to the employers. Also, in constant employment, Heydon saw a mechanism of combining a level of security and a wage guarantee for more workers without raising wages. The SWLU immediately objected to the award on both counts. It was seen as tantamount to a wage cut. For casuals depended on overtime rates to boost earnings and constant employment meant a lower hourly rate, despite the relative stability of employment. Moreover the casuals saw constant men as a employer mechanism to deprive them of work. Thus the Heydon award did not solve the long-standing problem of constant work.

Hughes approached the NSW Interstate shipowners in an attempt to negotiate an alternative agreement in the face of rank-and-file anger. Some shipowners "decided that as the wharf labourers had gone to the Court for their working conditions, and received same, they should abide by them." Others did not share this view, as was clear twelve months later. In the meantime the original overseas award expired on 31 Dec 1905. Bitten by the experience of the interstate case the SWLU quickly negotiated an industrial agreement with the Stevedores Association, effective from 12 January 1906. Inter alia the preference clause was amended to allow the union to ballot for membership entrance and vary the entrance fee or subscription. Moreover the exclusion of the constant men from core waterside work was maintained.

The employers' responded to industrial action against the interstate award by recruiting free labour to carry on and threatened deregistration proceedings. They also considered again the formation of a single stevedoring company for the interstate trade with the aim of functioning like the labour bureau of the 1890s. Moreover since the union refused to admit Richard O'Dwyer, who had worked during the strike, the Industrial Registrar initiated deregistration action. He asserted that the union had defied the preference conditions of the award. Preference was cancelled by the Court, but in a split decision in August on appeal the union retained its registration. Judge Heydon dissented.

Hughes was forced to accept the award by May 1906 largely to avoid the employers' proposed single stevedoring company. But, as the SWLU feared, constant men were hired to cut wage costs where possible. A similar pattern to the Newcastle model of the 1890s in which the effective hourly wage was below 1s. developed. Ironically, the Newcastle agreement specifically excluded constant men and was due for renewal. It was heard by the Court in mid-1906. Meanwhile the SWLU still sought a conference with the shipowners, but no agreement emerged from negotiations by the end of 1906. Although an in-principle formula was arrived at in November to phase in wage increases over 1907 and 1908, it was subsequently rejected by the Federation. From the NSW Interstate SSOA this forestalled a further approach to the Court of
Arbitration by the SWLU. Moreover, Macdonald of the AUSNCo thought that in view of Hughes' prominence in the Federal ALP and as a prospective Attorney-General who was against combines that "it may be politic ... to give a sop to Hughes."  

In short, the early experience of arbitration was confounded with the practices of localism. Apart from the administrative problems of the Court, the awards acted as formalised measures for industrial demands, rather than as mechanisms to regulate the terms and conditions of employment. Industrial action was a constant part of the waterfront and the parties gravitated to local level negotiations to solve problems.

3 Agitation and Port Agreements

The waterside workers took direct action in January 1907 over bullion and other cargo. They refused to work at Scott Fell and Co. for less than the overseas rates of 1s.3d. ordinary and 1s.9d. overtime, rather than rates awarded by the Court. Fell and Co. were outside the NSW Interstate SSOA and conceded the increases. Later in the month the SWLU instructed Hughes to seek a further conference with shipowners. But the men were impatient and again direct action was taken in mid-January. Ships of several companies were left idle as negotiations between Hughes and Howell of the Interstate Shipowners Association proceeded. Employers not only had to deal with waterside workers but demands from other maritime workers. Some thought that the Arbitration Court was "absolutely powerless to assist" them.

Hughes urged the men to return to work as he had done on many other occasions. Employers engaged a "large number of Non-Union labourer[s] ... as constant hands at £2 2s. per week and overtime". Negotiations then included the problem of the constant men. Hughes was able to secure agreement based on an immediate restoration of the 1s.6d. rate for overtime and the overseas rate for 'special' cargoes, such as copper, ore and bullion. Higher overtime rates after 5pm. Saturdays, overseas trade meal hours and other minor changes were made. Importantly, the preference provisions agreed mirrored the overseas agreement, that is the union had the right to elect its members. Although the conditions of competent and sufficient labour also applied. The constant men were to be dismissed.

The Industrial Agreement was signed on 21 February 1907, effective from 1 February. From the employers point of view they had succeeded in disentangling themselves from arbitration decisions. The issue of constant men create "some differences of opinion amongst the shipowners as to the wisdom of ...[the] course, as it may involve the principle of 'freedom of contract'." Indeed the AUSNCo was opposed as it "was absolutely necessary to establish and retain freedom of contract." Again the general opinion amongst the shipowners was that a single stevedoring company, which would engage sufficient constant men for all the interstate work, was the only long-term solution to labour agitation. And again the idea lapsed as an agreement was signed.

As a consequence of the dispute and the union's right to elect new members reestablished, the Registrar again brought deregistration proceedings against the union – on 19 February 1907. As the Industrial Agreement was not yet finalised, the December 1905 award was still in force. The non-unionists were told by the employers they would be re-employed under the new Agreement if they joined the union. But the SWLU refused to admit four of these men through its election procedure. Thus the SWLU was in breach of the award. This time it was deregistered by the Court. In his comments Judge Heydon was as critical of the shipowners as the union. He argued that the
employers did not seem to value the benefits of the industrial agreements. As the union excluded men, both in the O'Dwyer case and the 1907 one, they did nothing as long as they were not "inconvenienced". He said,

They are, therefore, it seems to me, tacitly – but quite knowingly – parties to the course of conduct which it was the intention of the Act to forbid; and if, under such circumstances, the cancellation of the registration swept away the industrial agreement and replaced it in the position of a private agreement outside the Act, I should think that any great wrong had been done to the steamship companies, who, ... agree to give preference to the members of the union; stand by and see the union penalise the men [non-unionists] who helped them, and convert itself into a close corporation, and then argue before this Court that preference should not be granted to the union.298

The SWLU thus lost its industrial registration under the Act. In effect the 1907 agreement was little different from other port agreements around the country – contract agreements under common law. The Industrial Registrar referred a dispute to the Court in March 1908. It involved the SWLU and the NSW Coastal SSOA, but the dispute could only be heard if the union was summoned to file a claim. The President, Judge Street, gave the union seven days to do so. It didn't, although the dispute was a large one.

The experience of compulsory arbitration in NSW brought the port unions and shipowners back to negotiated local industrial agreements. In other ports around the country, collective agreements were established and renewed throughout the period to 1910. In 1904 the Fremantle Lumpers' attempted to eliminate managerial prerogative over hiring, from the port agreement. The shipowners strongly resisted and the provision remained. It also remained in a subsequent three year agreement, effective from 20 December 1906.299 The Albany agreement of 1902 was renewed in substance in 1905 and subsequent years.300 The PAWA was more successful in its 1903–1904 negotiations with the Adelaide employers than their counterparts in other ports. The 1904 PAWA working laws saw the men still paid on a daily basis. Both overseas and interstate rates were the same 12s.6d. for a 10 hour day – 1s.3d. an hour – and other conditions were better than the industry standard. Wheat rates were 1s.6d. per hour, travelling time rates, minimum payments and other conditions were higher than elsewhere.301

MWLU negotiated a new agreement in September 1906 effective from 31 October. In addition to an extra night meal period, the union secured recognition of freezer work as a special cargo, paid at the 1s.6d. and 2s. for day and night work respectively.302 In the following year the MWLU submitted a claim for 1s.3d. an hour after withdrawing from the WWF believing it could do better outside the Federation. Hughes was summoned by the ASOF to explain the position of the WWF in reference to the Melbourne claim. The shipowners were prepared to offer only the same as the Sydney Agreement and no more.303 The resultant Agreement, effective from 1 November 1907, gave general cargo workers the same rates as Sydney, viz., 1s.1 1/2d. and 1s.8d., but left special rates unchanged. The Melbourne coal rates were only marginally increased – between 1/4d. to 1/2d. per ton for piece work. Only in working coke – up 3d. to 1s.6d. a ton and ores, added 8d. ton – did the coalies receive more significant rises.304

New agreements were signed with Brisbane, Townsville and Cairns.305 The 1906 Brisbane agreement specified 'working rules and regulations', paid 1s. and 1s.6d. for interstate men and 1s.3d. and 1s.9d. for overseas men. Special cargoes, for 3d. and hour, covered bagged cargo (over 200 pounds and more than 50 tons) and five other cargoes. Coalwork (still covered by WWF men) paid
1s.6d. by the stevedores, who retained freedom of contract, manning, work allocation and the right to convert the work to contract. Port Pirie forged an agreement with shipowners in 1907.

4 Efforts at Co-ordinated Agreements

The Federal Council of the WWF renewed its efforts to secure collective agreements, particularly in light of two developments. First, it was feared that the proliferation of port agreements "seriously interfered with the best interests of the federation." The Queensland politicians Bamford and Fisher successfully proposed that all port agreements be submitted to the Federation for approval. Second, there were numerous complaints from many smaller ports that they suffered under unfair conditions. The Federation called for a conference with ASOF to negotiate collective agreements "under fairer conditions" with waterside workers in ports such as Albany, Brisbane, Port Augusta, and Townsville and a number of other north Queensland ports. The lack of preference clauses gave existing local agreements no teeth. Negotiation took place over the next twelve months between the WWF and the ASOF covering Queensland ports. In the case of the Western Australian ports, the ASOF through its industrial body the CSOA, concluded collective agreements with a number of ports including Fremantle under the jurisdiction of the state arbitration machinery. Agreements were made for the ports of Albany, Bunbury, Busselton and Perth through 1907 to 1911. Although the effectiveness of some of these agreements was questionable. Albany was still suffering under the employers union mentioned earlier.

For Queensland the experience was different. With numerous small ports and no state industrial machinery until late 1908, waterside workers turned to the Federation for assistance. Only after negotiations commenced with the ASOF was the Wages Board Act of 1908 effective (from 1 September). The Brisbane Coalworkers established a Board, registering an agreement in late 1908 after they had left the Brisbane Waterside Workers the year before. The Queensland WWF COM members Bamford and Fisher were keen to assist in establishing a negotiated agreement for the state. A series of Agreements were concluded by the WWF on behalf of a number of north Queensland branches – Rockhampton, Mackay, Maryborough, Cairns, Bundaberg, Bowen and Townsville – in 1908. This was the first set of collective agreements, signed by Hughes and Morris, in which the Federation assumed authority over the industrial conditions of several of its member branches. It was a benchmark for the industrial relations development of the union, although several of the ports were later to create significant problems for employers and the union.

The north Queensland agreements formalised many practices seen in these and other ports around the country. First, shipowners retained the existing wage level of 1s.1 1/2d ordinary time and time and a half for overtime. But existing additional regional allowances for work in the tropics were incorporated into the wages rates. Thus sub-tropical ports south of Rockhampton (eg. Maryborough and Bundaberg) received the basic rate applicable to interstate men in other ports. In central Queensland, south of Bowen, the wage rate was 1s. 4 1/2d. an hour and in the tropical north, 1s.6d. Overtime, special and holiday rates were pro rata.

Second, they covered payment for waiting, travelling and minimum engagement times, and working during meal breaks attracted the overtime rate. This continued the process of formalisation of working and ancillary time in the service of the employer. Moreover the Queensland branches, through local agitation, had expanded the provisions for special cargo rates that covered; carrying
bagged cargo (applicable to 200 pound bags and over); freezer work; handling bulk coal and coke; manures; sulphur; bone dust; lime and cement; bulk ironstone; copper blister; explosives; and other 'obnoxious' or dangerous cargoes. The special rates varied from 1s.3d. to 1s.8d. (for explosives) an hour at the base ordinary wage scale (and adjusted for the central and northern regions). The result was that working certain obnoxious cargoes on Sundays or holidays was paid at 5s. an hour day or night in any of the ports covered. That is, more than three times the ordinary rate in that port or four and a half times the ordinary interstate rate in Sydney or Melbourne.316

Third, employers conceded union control over labour recruitment as they had in Sydney. Unionists had preference provided sufficient competent labour was supplied. There were two aspects here; preference permitted balloting for union membership, and second constant workers could join the WWF and their replacements had to be recruited from union ranks in relevant ports. Employers did retain the right to employ seamen according to existing practice.317

The fourth and final feature covered a much expanded provision for dispute resolution and industrial conciliation. Each agreement included provision for consultation concerning "any question, difference or dispute ... hereto relating to any matter connected with or arising out of this Agreement, or in respect of any industrial matter at any time arising between the parties."318 Initially matters were to be dealt with by a port level conciliation committee consisting of three representatives from each of the ASOF and the WWF. If not resolved the matter was referred to Melbourne where a similar national board existed. If still not resolved it was referred to an independent Arbitrator appointed by majority and binding vote of the national Board of Conciliation.

Hughes was praised by the Federal Council for "doing away with freedom of contract"319 in the agreements. The Federation was however faced with the problem of implementation. Not only in terms of employer compliance but also of waterside workers themselves in these ports. In response to this problem Morris was dispatched to Queensland to explain the agreements, "so that they will know what to do in compliance to their part of the agreement."320 Morris was also to visit South Australian and Tasmanian ports because, apart from Port Adelaide, most of the ports in these states were small and could gain from the assistance of the Federation. Morris was able to report that the Queensland ports were satisfied with their agreements.321 The wage level in the north also applied to northern WA, where the Port Hedland lumpers received 1s.6d. an hour as well.322

Employer support for a more national view was influenced by the role of differences in wages and conditions between ports and trades. During 1908 the Sydney agreement remained a source of volatility and a strike occurred in April. The union was successful with the support of the Transport Workers Council. The WWF donated a £100 pounds to the latter organisation, as Hughes was also President of the Joint Executive of the Council. All casual labour was now organised in Sydney.323 In May 1909 the MWLU submitted a demand for a special rate for manures of 1s.6d. an hour – the same as the southern Queensland rate. The employers representatives argued that if the manure was in bags there was no case for an increase. The following month the union sought the abolition of work after midday on Saturday, except if a vessel was due to sail. This too was rejected.324

In sum, the period between 1902 and the beginning of 1910 represents a period of transition in industrial relations. The recognition of port unions by employers in the years immediately prior
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to the formation of the WWF was continued through the rest of the decade. Thus collective bargaining was established as the primary form of setting wages and conditions. Negotiations were conducted on regular basis around the country by waterside worker unions acting relatively independently. The issues negotiated expanded from an initial focus on wages and hours to issues of labour market structuring, special rates and labour intensity. In nominal terms wage were essentially little different from the pre-1890, but modest increases were achieved, particularly by overseas waterside workers.

Union preference gave workers a significant measure of control over engagement. Moreover later provisions of the clauses formalised the employers reliance on informal methods of labour organisation in the labour market. It allowed union control over recruitment of the labour supply. Special rates for obnoxious or dangerous cargoes provided some degree of compensation for such cargoes, but little additional regulation of labour intensity was developed or implemented.

The expansion of bargaining as a method of setting the terms and conditions was boosted by the role of state compulsory arbitration, although the early experience of NSW system was poor. The next section reviews the role of arbitration in more detail over the first decade of this century.

2. The Role of Arbitration

In chapter six I showed that in both Melbourne and Sydney employers adopted the policy of voluntary arbitration in the attempt to encourage moral based compliance to industrial agreements. The Kemot decision was one result in Melbourne. This section examines the employers and union policy on arbitration. It also provides an assessment of the role of arbitration in the development of industrial relations discussed in the previous section.

The employers position on the role and operation of arbitration was equivocal. They used it in some instances but opposed compulsory arbitration, but after 1910 demonstrated a willingness to use the mechanisms to regulate agreements that were directly negotiated with waterside workers and other occupational groups in the maritime industry. In some other groups the employers had been forced to federal arbitration after they had been unable to restrict the jurisdiction of the Court.

Their experience of arbitration had been mixed. The 1880s experience of conciliation and arbitral mechanisms through cooperation with Trades Hall was soon abandoned. This was primarily through the absence of compliance norms of unions and the rank-and-file. As the pressure of change – and the 'sweating' of stevedore contractors – had an increasing impact on workers they expanded their capacities in the defence of work control. The result for employers was the deterioration of the 'labour question'. The 1890 strike and its aftermath saw employers develop more effective control–systems in production as they demanded 'freedom of contract.'

In Sydney the maritime employers at the Royal Commission on Strikes supported conciliation schemes, but baulked at arbitration. The manager of the Hunter River company for example specifically rejected Kingston's Bill as unworkable.

After the 1880s the Victorian shipowners were even prepared to use arbitration in the 1890s, in selected circumstances. When pressing for a 15 percent wage cut for marine engineers in late 1893, private arbitration was used to obtain a settlement. While the employers were displeased at the 10 percent decrease decision they accepted it "under the circumstances." They felt that the arbitrator, had "exceeded instructions in entering into any agreement arrangement beyond the
question of wages. Three years later the employers agreed to a conference with the engineers provided it was limited to wages for men on charted vessels. However, two weeks earlier they refused to recognise the Melbourne wharf labourers.

The Victorian employers' position hardened by the mid-1890s, particularly over the issue of compulsion. Some VSOA members expressed concern at the direction of negotiations between the Victorian Employers Federation, the Chamber of Commerce and Trades Hall on this issue, but Melbourne SSCo's David Syme stressed that their interests were in hand. The shipowners considered any scheme, such as in New Zealand or the South Australian proposal as undesirable and continued to oppose it through the 1890s. After 1900 the Victorian employers in general forestalled State arbitration. The Victorian shipowners, as I have shown above negotiated local agreements in Melbourne, but were generally keen to cut wages and conditions.

In contrast the Sydney shipowners were more open to the notion of conciliation schemes if not arbitration. Like their Victorian counterparts they opposed any limitation on managerial authority. The 1892 NSW legislation which arose from the Royal Commission was viewed with detachment by the SOAA. In withholding condemnation or public comment shipowners felt it would "at liberty" to use the Act "if the occasion should arise" in the future. However the voluntary provisions of the NSW Act meant that it had no impact on the conduct of industrial relations. Unions were in no condition to take advantage of the Act and this weakness over the decade saw the Act wither. The SOAA was confident enough of its position to cancel its registration as an industrial organisation in mid-1895.

In sum, while the employers saw some benefits in the use of 'neutral' private arbitration, they resisted any provision restricting their full authority over the labour process. The policy of enlisting the aid of trade unions in labour control, through the scheme of conciliation and arbitration as in the 1880s was abandoned through the 1890s in NSW.

The formation of the ASOF centred employer policy on arbitration. The shift of influence in policy in general to Melbourne, meant that employers continued to oppose arbitration.

The Federation was wary of the WA Association's desire to register under the Western Australian Industrial Conciliation and Arbitration Act which came into operation in December 1900. But since the Fremantle and Geraldton Lumpers registered in March and April 1901, the employers had little choice. As we have seen, the ASOF also opposed the NSW legislation of 1901. Apart from protests to politicians, a "influentially signed" petition was presented to the government in October 1901, as the Industrial Arbitration Bill was in debate. One moderate employer described the proposed legislation as containing provisions,

of a most dangerous character, of crude and experimental nature, and of such tendency as to paralyse enterprise, harass and restrict employers, drive capital already invested out of the country, and prevent prospective investors from venturing any further investments in the State.... [it is] now replete with anomalies, and threatens employers with injustice and hardship ... so [they] can't continue operations.

Unable to block the Act, the interstate shipowners were forced to register, under the name NSW Steam Ship Owners Association in early in the new year as did the overseas Stevedores and the local companies. Some optimism regarding the role of arbitration was evident in the first
case – the Newcastle wharf labourers discussed above. It was hoped that the court would not support wage rises or smoko payments and "other serious and extravagant demands." The Court did little more reinforce existing practice, despite reservations over the perceived bias of Judge Cohen. This decision restricted 'extravagant' demands but it also frustrated the expectations of wage reductions by employers in periods of trade downturn. Recall that the ASOF abandoned thoughts of wage cuts (1s. down to 10d.) in the Deep-sea SWLU case at the end of 1902. Three years later, in the Sydney Coal Lumpers case, the Court rejected the union's wage demands (soon after the interstate waterside workers case). In Heydon's view, wages would have probably fallen, if it were not for the Court. From this perspective the SWLU escaped wage reductions through Heydon's attempted redistribution of the existing wage pool. The union saw it as a wage cut.

In the Federal sphere, the employers were quick to lobby politicians for changes to the proposed arbitration bill. But as the Conciliation and Arbitration Bill moved through the Parliament in late 1903 and into 1904, the attention of the ASOF was focused more on the Navigation Bill and similar legislation. As I have shown earlier the ASOF was keen not to draw connections between the cabotage clauses and the proposed arbitration bill. There is thus little evidence of a sustained campaign against the industrial legislation, although the Federation did report that the common rule provision for coastal vessels was rejected. The Federation immediately set up a number of meetings at which the rules were drafted for its industrial body, the Commonwealth Steamship Owners Association. The latter was registered in July 1905.

As noted above, Hughes was a strong supporter of bargaining and negotiation in which compulsory arbitration was an important institution. Remember also that initially the SWLU officials were wary of affiliation with the WWF lest it interfere with its registration under the NSW Act. After this hesitation Hughes explained that the Court of Arbitration should not be seen as the only method of securing advances for the union. It was through the "stability of our own Union" that "wrung concessions" from the employers. Of course, Hughes consistently implored members not to engage in impulsive industrial action. But it was a persistent element of waterfront industrial relations.

The WWF eagerly anticipated the Federal Bill. As early as March 1903 the WWF notified branches that copies would be forwarded "to see if the conditions therein will be good for the Port and if not the Branch to, point out where the defect is", as soon as the Bill was drafted. It warned branches not "to cause friction" until the Bill was safely through both Houses of the Federal Parliament. Soon after the Bill was passed in late 1904, approval to register was granted by the Federation and it gained formal registration in July 1905.

In NSW the initial support for arbitration by the SWLU waned over the following five years primarily from the delays in the State interstate case and the antagonism to the 1905 Award. Although the Award was largely discarded in favour of an industrial agreement, its provisions were used the Registrar against the union to deregister it. Moreover Court appearances and legal cost where a substantial drain on union finances. In contrast by negotiating collective agreements the union escaped unpopular Court decisions and high costs. In a similar vein, employers were able to largely escape decisions of the Court and to an extent costs as well. And as I have shown earlier, both parties were content to rely on negotiated agreements after 1905.
Thus antagonism to arbitration in Sydney remained to the end of the decade. The Industrial Disputes Act of 1908 replaced the Industrial Arbitration Act of 1901, which expired after its seven year life. The new Act made provision for wages boards and although such Waterside Worker Boards were established in both Sydney and in Newcastle for general cargo men and coal trimmers, the SWLU initially declined to participate. However a Sydney Wage Board was established after an application by the overseas stevedores association, the SSWLA. The SWLU nominated two members. But when they did the Permanent Waterside Workers' Union and the Free Labourers' Association applied for one of those positions. These organisations represented the constant men and the free labourers hired during union disputes, particularly in early 1910, respectively. They were successful.

In Western Australia the employers turned State arbitration for stability and protection. With exception of Fremantle the port agreements in that state favoured employers. This was particularly the case in Albany, a port that employers supported a rival union to the WWF and was undoubtedly seen as an alternative to the labour problems in Fremantle. Thus when the Fremantle Lumpers challenged the right of employers to 'freedom of contract' in 1904 and encountered resistance, the FWLU remained with the existing agreement. Like other states the agreement was renewed over the decade. In Brisbane, the passing of the Wages Board Act of 1908, saw some sections of the Brisbane waterfront employed under an award in 1909 determined by a wages board. Under the Act winchmen, lightermen and coal workers, were covered under Awards by the Brisbane Master and Engineers, or Brisbane Coal Working and Lightering Board.344 But the vast majority of the men were covered by Interstate or Overseas section collective agreements. Finally the Federal arbitration system played no part in waterfront industrial relations during the period covered in this chapter.

In assessing the role of arbitration two levels of analysis need to be addressed. First, its direct role in setting wages and conditions of waterside workers and coalworkers. Second its role in the transition of the pattern of industrial relations. In regard to the first element the role of arbitral tribunals in the industry was limited. Only in NSW did the industrial tribunal directly investigate and set terms of employment – in Newcastle, Sydney overseas and interstate workers and coal workers in stevedoring. But the SWLU withdrew from the Court with the complicity of the employers. From the employers perspective, the ability to negotiate collective agreements in the sections – overseas and interstate – was preferable to dictates of the Court. In particular the freedom to employ constant men and blacklegs was a central aspect of employer strategy. The goal was to maximise workplace flexibility through a significant dependence on informalism, and structure the labour market to maintain this control. Only at the end of the decade did the employers entertain any type of multi-port agreement with the WWF. From the unions perspective direct bargaining with employers at the port level gave the local union the maximum input in the determination of their wages and conditions and allowed it to retain autonomy. In the larger ports direct action and informal union organisation was sufficient to permit significant bargaining. Small ports on the other hand looked to the WWF for representation and protection.

The second and more critical role of arbitration in this period centred on the adoption of bargaining. State and federal arbitral legislation provided the framework which assisted the speed and scope of adoption of bargaining in determining wages and conditions of employment.
Employers could no longer pursue a policy of non-recognition of unions. In preference to arbitration they followed a policy of separate port agreements. The framework was used to register agreements.

In terms of the scope, the operation of arbitration was unpredictable. The issues that would arise and their outcome were unknown, particularly for employers. Shipping companies for example viewed with dismay the need to submit books to the Court in NSW. Employers were consistent in attempting to limit the coverage of tribunals and scope of awards. But as the discussion of the outcome of bargaining in the previous section indicated, the scope of agreements increased over the decade. The traditional wages and hours were expanded to cover aspects of the labour process, the labour market and dispute settlement. In other words, areas of informal regulation were transferred into the bargaining arena in the transition to the formalised pattern of industrial relations. In the employers' view this was best controlled through direct negotiation rather than the uncertainties of the courts. In symbolic terms the transition of work control from workers' to management was reflected in the demise of working laws as a part of union rules after 1900. Indeed by 1910 the influence of union rules was specifically excluded in agreements.

Nevertheless union rules and direct action underpinned the flow of labour demands and the strength of the union position. Collective bargaining emerged as the process of the new industrial relations but arbitration provided the framework. More importantly work control and action remained the key to industrial authority — the 'frontier of control'. For as a foreman in the 1920s later noted, "rules may have been in the book, but the book was seldom read." The next section examines the ideological and political basis of worker consciousness and action.

3. The Politics of Labour

Sydney wharf labourers refused to touch coal handled by free labour in January 1910. When employers approached the SWLU secretary to discontinue the action he replied he could do nothing. This was a common experience of employers and union officials through the decade after 1900 in Sydney and in other ports. In the experience of fundamental transition of the pattern of industrial relations all elements and practices of the system are altered.

I have argued through the chapter that direct action of this type underpinned the industrial relations agenda. Workers continued to 'stick-up' employers to gain extra rates above union rates that they began before the official reformation of the SWLU. Two significant points must be noted. The first refers to the internal organisation of the union, the second to the nature of formalised industrial relations.

In terms of internal organisation the relation between union official and men was poorly developed. Where work issues were local and significantly influenced by the initiative of direct workers they were tied to the moral weight of society rules. However where work rules were the outcome of bargaining they expressed an instrumental rationality, where organisational and economic factors were used to gain advantage. But the undeveloped state of bargaining norms (such as internal discipline of the parties) gave workers opportunities for opportunism in the context of the demands of management control. In other words, the breakdown of moral constraints on the extent of work control associated with customary practice paved the way for expanded local instrumental bargaining. This encompassed demands for work control over labour intensity, or alternatively higher wage demands to compensate for arduous work.
As noted earlier the internal authority in union governance moved to representative leadership, but procedures were undeveloped. For example, a report on the role of the SWLU’s COM in January 1901 was accepted “after considerable discussion”. The report indicated that the COM had no executive power, and could only act when called together by the secretary in cases of extreme urgency or in the case of serious unofficial stoppages. Yet where seven members of the COM and the President considered urgency was required, they could only request the secretary summon such a meeting. In short, the role of the secretary was more independent than a decade earlier and was pivotal for practical policy of the union.

The second point of significance of direct action concerned relations with employers. The ban on unofficial stoppages in the SWLU, carried in October 1900, was incorporated into the Working Laws (Rule 17) and the fine was raised from 2s. to 10s. for any breach. Only the union, or in urgent cases, the secretary, could order a stoppage of work. Again the role of the secretary was enhanced.

Despite the gestation of these organisational rules, direct action continued. Moreover the transition to the application of new rules and interpretations was a long process. The union refused to “endorse the action of the men refusing to go to work at Union rates” in January 1901 an on this basis disclaimed responsibility for men claiming extra payments on 27 and 28 May. But less than a week after the COM policy was carried, the union refused to censure men, or even set up a committee to investigate an unofficial strike by overseas men on 5 February 1901. Although the COM did investigate some disputes. The administration of agreements with the shipowners and overseas stevedores became a continuous role of the union, but it did not fit well with the rank-and-file nor many officials. This function necessarily the leadership from the membership as the nature of leadership moved from delegation to representation. In this aspect the formal representative leadership of Hughes and other politicians was a facultative mechanism for waterfront unionisation. On many occasions Hughes was able to curb direct action in the service of wider union goals.

Representative leadership and instrumental bargaining opened an expanded social space for contestation of industrial goals. Moreover the legitimation of goals could no longer simply rest on the moral authority of custom. Industrial legitimation was increasingly tied to political philosophy and ideology. Although the labourist framework of the waterside leadership dominated this early period the direct action sparked from pressures in the labour process was receptive to alternative ideologies. As I have noted earlier Hughes actively supported close connections with the Political Labour League, but spurned affiliation with the Sydney TLC. His keen political sense rejected the networks of potential militancy in favour of the liberal collectivism of Labor Party politics. As early a 1901 Hughes encountered criticism of the socialist Harry Holland for ‘blackleg tendencies’. Hughes' commitment to the political side of unionism was decidedly institutionalist.

The experience of the 1890s saw wharf labourers, like other workers, search for explanations of state action and work change. In this search political ideology was shaped by existing framework of understandings. Thus on one hand the SWLU condemned the NSW police in the Lucknow miners dispute for “aiding and abetting” employers in cutting wages and for their “attack [on] civil Rights” of workers. On the other hand the union alleged it was the "corrupt use of power to protect Blacklegs at the bidding of Jews to in order starve [sic] the Workers.” Through practice political
ideology displaced the authority of traditional moral axioms in the consciousness of industrial and social change.

The spread of political organisation grew from the 1890s from the experience of industrial defeats but also from the experience in the transformation in work and authority accelerated by these defeats and economic depression. The Australian Federation of Labour was influential in Queensland. So too was republicanism, syndicalism, socialism and later communism. Several Queensland ports were still able to offer support to the shearsers in the years after defeat in the 1890 maritime strike. As in Sydney direct action continued in Queensland ports and others after 1900.

The political influence of the AFL grew in the decade after 1900 in Queensland. The spread of radicalism was easier between ports in Queensland as a result of the waterfront labour force mobility. Sugar, fruit crops, wheat and meat all created seasonal labour demand for a dozen Queensland ports. Moreover contact with other industrial labour, particularly agricultural workers and miners amplified the networks for the spread of ideas. Its influence grew Brisbane by 1910. Indeed the Brisbane men sought advice on whether they should remain in WWF or join the AFL. The WWF COM advised Brisbane that it was free to follow that course, but to remember that the WWF had done more for the branch than others and not to expect assistance from the WWF in the future if it did quit.357 The American Industrial Workers of the World (IWW) became influential from about 1907, in Sydney, and in other areas. In particular, the role of direct action in IWW propaganda, found a receptive audience on the waterfront. The IWW also favoured industrial unionism.358 Such radical and socialist ideas provided essential moral maxims that either supplemented or replaced the moral bulwarks of informalism. As one worker put it, "I suggest, as a cure for the unemployed difficulty, socialism, [as unemployment] ... is more than this Court, or any other Court, can solve."359

Though this was not the only solution. Understanding the importance of widespread collective organisation for political purposes Hughes used his status and union position to launch the Transport Workers Federation. He announced in October 1908 that such a Federation would be formed as soon as the Carters and Drivers had formed their own organisation. The following April, Morris was elected WWF delegate to a proposed conference in Melbourne to form a federation.360 The Federation was still not formed in September 1909 when DeLargie and Bamford where elected to represent the WWF at a future conference. In October, Hughes reported that a draft constitution was in the pipeline.361 With this device Hughes was able to demonstrate the efficacy of a labourist policy.

Finally, the propensity for the politicisation of the waterfront was greater than other industries for a number of reasons. Despite the local character of labour organisation the industry itself was increasingly national in scope. The development of intercolonial shipping companies in Australia recast ports as branch parts of a larger and increasingly more integrated whole. The small number and centralisation of these companies assisted this process. Second, labour mobility between ports grew as the organisational capacities of the WWF to impose a national cast on the industry. The interport transfer scheme assisted this – it allowed continuous labour market attachment in the industry to expand to a national scope. Third, the nature of the work continually generated contingent industrial situations and the potential for an informal 'stick up'. As I have shown,
casualism under the authority of employers generated a stratified labour market, the bull system and continuous pressure of labour intensification.

4. Organising Authority – Norms and Power

The success of the employers labour strategy in the 1890s centred on the authority wielded over engagement and the labour market. Union organisation was singularly undermined by the depression, the use of 'volunteer' labour, the formation of employer sponsored unions and, in Sydney and Melbourne, the Labour Bureau. After 1900 these conditions disappeared. But I have argued above the employers structured the labour market in order to maximise labour effort in production. This section examines in more detail the normative and organisational basis of the labour market. I will concentrate on Sydney here.

The mediation role of agents and contractors gave way to a consolidation of shipowner authority in the labour process in the 1890s. They controlled the pick-up and sought to subordinate informalist relations to the formal authority of company labour control–systems. The key to this was the role supervisory personnel from the wharfinger down, particularly the full–time foreman.

The position of the foreman became increasing distilled from the cross–currents of the informalist, local and particularistic relations of the earlier period. The exclusion of foremen from waterside workers union and the subsequent emergence of separate unionisation of foremen was symptomatic of this shift. The period discussed here, the 1890s to 1910, was part of a transitional period to unionisation. The survival of assistant foremen as federation members in some ports, paradoxically created the most antagonistic circumstances on the waterfront in the interwar period and beyond. Foremen and 'pannikin bosses' of Sydney's 'Hungry Mile' were the critical personnel of the employers organisation of labour in this later period. Their operational role depended on a ingenious use of informal mechanisms within the continuously developing formal system of industrial relations. The contact of these two systems generated the conditions for discontent seen from 1899.

The labour market in Sydney reverted to the stratified structure after the Bureau was closed. The ASOF policy of employing constant men, adopted 1902, was put into effect by many companies. While their numbers and tasks were regulated by the 1902 overseas award, this was deleted in the 1905 interstate award and the subsequent agreement. This was despite the employers recognition of union preference for casual workers and the traditional objection to constant men by the union from the 1880s. Indeed the constant men formed their own union and registered under the NSW Arbitration Act. Although the antagonism to constant workers by the WWF varied from port to port (they could be recruited by the WWF under the Queensland Agreement), in general the rank–and–file thought them undesirable. For it meant being at the beck and call of the employer and having to perform duties outside normal wharf labourer work. Loading and unloading drays and maintenance work around the wharves were two examples. Moreover constant men were selected by employers for their higher labour effort and compliance with orders. As one employer argued, "it is absolutely necessary in our business that we should have a certain percentage of really good men ... [w]e pick the constant hands, and can weed them out and gradually get a fine staff of constant men. These constant men would have to take the leading positions on the wharf..." In the 'leading positions' constant men could speed up work. Moreover since they were not members of the WWF they undermined industrial action by continuing to work.
For individual workers the security of income of seeking or accepting constant employment had to be counterbalanced by the loss of autonomy and control. In addition, earnings were lower than the same hours at the casual pay rate. As I have shown in the case of the Newcastle & Hunter River SSCo workers through the 1890s and early 1900s, there were normative limits to the employer demands of constant work. The same limits also applied for the next stratum.

The next stratum of the labour market was that of preference men. These men often differed little from constant men except in payment method and so earnings. Preference or privileged men invariably were hired without attending the picked up, but were paid on a casual basis. Such "star men" either routinely began work or were automatically engaged at the pick-up. At the Union SSCo the "[p]reference man ... gets the preference of everything; ... as a rule, never goes outside the gate to get anything", they were "much the same as constant hands, they do all sorts of work." The AUSNCo kept a book of the names of preference men, and these men "go on first .... [when a] boat starts they walk in the gate and go to the Timekeepers Office" or, "they are called to the window and told off to their different gangs." Entry into the 'book' was based on the personal and informal ties of workers and foremen, "there are men I have never seen before who go straight in and turned to" reported on waterside worker. They are often men who had 'influence' - "you must know the manager himself", they are men "who turn up with a letter" or similarly, "to be a favourite, you have to have what I would term social influence and other things." Howard Smith manager R. Smith described 'privileged men' as workers "most suitable for the work" and although "social reasons" were considered his experience was that the best men for the job were selected. They were "good men [who] give the Company consideration; they are watchful; they will help you in many ways" and were dependable. One ASSCo 'privileged man' claimed that the "foremen compels them to work" for long hours and through meal breaks.

Workers however did not see such men as the best. In the opinion of casuals the role of social contacts and influence meant that experience and competence in the work were not as important. Moreover since employers defined 'a job' as the completion of a whole vessel, the preference men could be allocated to unfinished holds after they completed their hold, which meant that casuals were dismissed before they finished a hold. Casuals resented this displacement and viewed it as unfair and discriminatory. Preference men felt entitled to this additional work and employers had to engage in the practice to retain the loyalty of these men.

Therefore the perception of nepotism, favouritism, and arbitrary treatment were powerful symbols underlying the workplace discontent and agitation against employers in this period. For these reasons, privileged status was not universally attractive to workers. The norms of autonomy, freedom and egalitarianism shaped the views of many men. One man doubted that he would accept such a position, preferring the freedom of the daily pick-up to being at the beck and call of the employer, stating that as a "free man I can go and work where I like, and do what I like." Others echoed this sentiment. "I prefer to be independent", rather than obtaining a letter. For often it was not constantly attending for work, or following only one wharf and company that were the criteria to get work, but "getting letters to the Boss, and coming down and being put on. [Thus] I think they are put on if they are not good men." Another worker would never ask for, nor be, a preference man, "[b]ecause a body of men go to the gates to take their chance - let each man take his chance." It was "unfair" that privileged men replaced others thus depriving them of work.
Finally the normative limits were best expressed by one worker: to be a privileged man "you have to submit to all kinds of abuse and both filthy expressions and names." For most workers privilege breached the central tenets of solidarism.

A third stratum of worker in some sections of the Sydney waterfront labour market was a second-string preference, not the first nor the last to be hired. At the Union SSCo, one man described himself as "a heavy-weight; I know what that means — a man who gets a little extra show to any other." Since the Adelaide company had no preference men as just discussed, second string men received a good proportion of the work. Although this group generally described themselves as in the middling group, men who were usually part of the 'second gang'. Although they were often not picked up, because of the variability in work, they were encouraged to follow certain wharves and make themselves generally available. While men were rewarded for 'loyalty', the employers rejected any financial responsibility for waiting time. The employers likened availability to waiting for a taxi cabman — a necessary risk of the industry that wasn't paid for by the customer — since they "have not asked or forced him to wait about." In many cases, especially in downturns, casual wharf workers could not earn enough at one wharf and so usually frequented two or three. In doing so they had to trade off losing recognition by one company foreman against gaining work at another. They were caught between loyalty to one firm and sinking into 'outsider' status at all of them.

The final stratum were the outside fringe, who were perhaps ten to fifteen percent of the labour force in Sydney. The employers took no responsibility for these men, and argued that they were the responsibility of government. Indeed Hughes was pessimistic that they could ever receive a living wage. It was for the bulk of *average* members that he sought assistance for from the Court rather than this group.

A similar stratification of the labour force was a characteristic of all waterfront work. The rigidity of the strata varied in strength and extent in different ports and trades. Some were referred to by unusual names; the Sydney coalworkers had preference men — attached to particular colliers by the coal stevedores — 'preference hoodlums' — men attached to particular stevedores but worked on different colliers — and finally a third stratum, 'casual hoodlums', who were engaged to fill vacancies left after the employment of the first two. Some of this third level were able to make a good living.

The stratification opened up different dynamics in the hiring process at each level. The moral imperatives in hiring came from informal social relations. The growing antipathy to employer practices which fostered informal ties was based on their goals — discrimination against workers. Men generally accepted the ties that following one company implied but this needed to be balanced by fair hiring practices. One worker stated that when seeking work at other than his usual wharf, he would not inquire why he was not engaged, "I would not lower my principle because I am a casual worker, and I go there and stand my chance ... I reckon I would be degrading myself by doing so." In other words, the norm of reciprocity was balanced by self-respect and independence. Workers accepted the pick-up, provided it was seen to be fair, but were unwilling to sacrifice individual dignity by 'enforcing' fairness. The existence of fairness as a moral category had to be respected, unless evidence to the contrary was found. For this reason Union SSCo foreman Anderson, was seen as a "straighter-goer" (in contrast to Maxwell) by one worker, "I am a casual worker. I go
there [to a wharf] and look for a job; I go amongst the crowd; if the boss puts me on, I go and do my job; if he does not, I let him have his own reasons." Accordingly there was "great grievance on that [AUSNCo] wharf with regard to these privileged men." Moreover corruption of the market, such as bribery, was also condemned. One man stated that he had not "given the foreman anything yet ... I have not got as low as that yet". Fairness and freedom from arbitrary treatment became an important normative basis of worker consciousness.

The labour market increasingly took on an equivocal form. On the one hand rules advantaged workers in excluding full open competition of all available workers. Under informalism, local workgroup based exclusionary rules served worker interests for labour market security. Union membership increasingly supported this. On the other hand, after 1890, informalism was forced to operate in a new organisational context where the rise of employer authority marginalised informalism as set of protective rules, and moulded it to 'fit' the organisational control–systems in the service of capital.

The scope of authority of wharfingers and foreman increased under new conditions. Shipping company management was unable or unwilling to develop detailed labour management systems and supervisors imposed their own practices on the market. The bull system developed where company pressure for output on supervisors rose as the counterbalance of work control by watersiders declined. Workers' reacted with greater reliance on adversarial agitation and direct action. Recall also that the supervisory ratio rose steadily from this time that placed additional pressure on supervisors to maintain control and throughput.

In the face of these changes management attitudes and systems were not altered to address the resultant organisational and industrial problems. Indeed the employers' representative before the NSW Court of Arbitration stated that he represented the companies and not the wharfingers. The claim that if the latter "have unfairly or improperly used their authority, we will see to it at once" was often made over succeeding decades, but rarely followed through. In response Judge Heydon remarked, "power down at the wharf with regard to the men seems to rest, to a very large extent, with men who are working on the wharves [ie first line supervisors] and the employers cannot be always looking after those men, and they may take a pettier view of a thing than perhaps the employer will do." Hughes agreed observing that the "wharfinger is the sole arbiter as to who is put on or put off [and they] are not afraid of the Companies." Although expressed in individualistic terms, the personal power of first line supervisors reflects the systemic breach in organisational integration and control–systems of the major Collins group shipping companies.

Keep in mind also that the pick–up included the process of labour allocation in the workplace. One wharf labourer described the Union SSCo practice as follows, "Mr Anderson [foreman] has it worked this way, that he calls the first six men and those first six go aboard the ship, the first takes the hatch, the second takes the yard arm, and the four next go below." Thus the shape of industrial authority was moulded by the pattern of organisational integration. Gaps in organisation systems allowed the role of wharfingers and foremen to be expanded, particularly in organising labour. And they relied on existing patterns of informal relations, which accentuated their power. However with no alternatives, management merely ceded this power to it wharf side representatives.
Chapter Nine

5. Summary

This section has examined the pattern of industrial relations in stevedoring after the formation of the Waterside Workers Federation in 1902 to the end of the decade. In these years formal collective bargaining took root as a central feature of a newly constructed industrial relations terrain to organise industrial authority. Local collective bargaining developed as the key dynamic, and was shaped by the policy preferences of employers, assisted by the preferences of the larger port unions. The WWF was therefore ineffectual in shaping the pattern of industrial relations. Only negotiations for the Queensland agreements, concluded in December 1908, were handled by the federal union.

Yet management policy and organisational dynamics were tempered by two further factors; the influence of arbitration legislation and local demands for work control from rank-and-file. These established the framework for, and the content of, the industrial relations terrain, respectively. Paradoxically arbitration provided legal security for the collective organisation of the parties, but it also denied a role for workplace organisation. Since shipping companies ceded significant leeway to workplace supervisors, industrial relations were destined to be unstable.

VI. The Formalisation Imperative – Conclusions

This chapter focused on the period in which the dominance of informalism was displaced by the rise of a formalised pattern of industrial relations. It discussed the immediate aftermath of the 1890 strike and the regeneration of port unionism. Finally, it examined the national pattern of industrial relations after the formation of the Waterside Workers Federation and the ASOF. It was a period of deepening transition in patterns of industrial relations that saw a system of port level collective bargaining emerge.

The loss of the 1890 strike was critical. Not only did it symbolise the institutional end of informalism, but also provided the conditions for employers to reconstruct the framework in which labour organisation occurred in the industry. For the first time employers in the large ports sought to structure the labour market through the mechanism of the Labour Bureau. The transfer of industrial authority from local employers and workers to the companies was effected comprehensively in this period, although the Labour Bureau lasted only in Sydney. For employers the question then centred on how to management labour? The answer was in two parts, premised on the neo-mercantilist regulation of the product market discussed in chapter seven.

First, stevedoring was more closely integrated into the shipping company organisation. Second, employers continued to rely on informalism, albeit under conditions of greater work control of first line supervisors. In this way informal relations became marginalised, but retained in the service of capital. The result was the spread of the 'bull' system.

A reliance on informalism had to be counterbalanced by a mechanism of standardisation across the numerous workplaces controlled by each company and the Collins group across the industry. Ignoring unions was only a short-term solution, aided by the 1890s depression. It could not last in a context of arbitration and employers' turned to local collective agreements. Port unions were recognised and bargained agreements were secured for most ports around the country before 1910. With central co-ordination, the terms and conditions of these agreements were only relatively standardised across the industry. Wage rates were kept below or about 1s. an hour for twenty years, hours generally standardised, and manning and labour allocation were in employers hands. Agreements tended to limit the scope of issues and over this period work regulation was
disentangled from union rules. In short, labour market regulation complemented product market regulation. The organisational imperative operating at the level of the capitalist company penetrated labour management as a formalisation of industrial relations. This was conducted through the peak organisation, the ASOF.

For unions, a new context emerged. Policy and organisation were opened to greater indeterminacy than hitherto. The general response was to maintain a local focus in policy and organisation. The employers recognised port unions and often agreed to union preference. This was a corollary to the dependence on informalism. However the latter continued to be articulated as the foundation of industrial action and union organisation. Local demands for work control were continually generated in the labour process, particularly in light of the continued demands for labour effort by employers. The decline in the saliency of normative or informal structures in the regulation of employment converted workplace organisation into a resource of resistance for workers as much as an economic resource for employers. Under these conditions some port unions adopted more formal organisational techniques to cover the workplace. Wharf delegates fulfilled this role. This was necessary since informal work control was marginalised. The stronger ports still depended on the solidaristic organisation of informalism despite the rise of collective bargaining. But overall, at the port level, the conceptualisation of increasing organisational capacities in a more formalised system was weak.

Hence the tepidity of support for the Waterside Workers Federation over this period, particularly by four of the largest unions, FWLU, PAWA, MWLU and the SWLU. Of the large unions only the Port Phillip Stevedores, under Joe Morris' direction, remained steadfastly with the Federation. The WWF however was largely an organisational shell, lacking any direct access to rank-and-file waterside workers. Although Hughes and the other politicians on the COM had contact with the employers, collective bargaining was conducted at the port level. The WWF was unable to successfully press the ASOF for any national level bargaining. Not until the latter half of 1908 did the WWF secure a collective agreement on behalf of member branches – several Queensland ports. Even then this was negotiated from an employer initiative.

The employer's reliance on informal relations in the workplace was not surprisingly given their key role in work organisation and methods. It was nevertheless contradictory. Informalism and the bull system assisted the employers' view of efficiency, but gave supervisors greater idiosyncratic power. This generated industrial discontent and provided leverage for union bargaining but undermined and destabilised union leadership and organisation in pursuit of industrial goals. Thus Wright's characterisation of 'simple control' of foremen seriously misrepresents the nature of authority and industrial relations between 1890 and 1910.

Direct action dismayed some union leaders as it did employers. Indeed the nascent politicisation of informalism provided a new rationale for direct action over negotiation. It also fuelled demands for local autonomy, thus restricting the national scope of WWF organisation. The local and national conciliation boards established under the ASOF–WWF Queensland agreement was an attempt to contain local discontent generated in this process.

Finally, what part did arbitration play in the transition to formalised pattern of industrial relations? This can be best assessed in a comparative context. In the United States no national unionism developed until after WWI to be then split by internal division. Despite large scale
industrial action, dating back to the general strike of 1887 under the influence of the Knights of Labor, waterside unionism in New York was not formally recognised before WWI. With no form of bargaining in existence only the informal influence of unionism was conceded by employers, mainly to minimise discontent. On the west coast early moderate successes of unions were overwhelmed by employer offensives during and after WWI. By 1920 little genuine unionism on the coast was left.

In Britain, the success of 1889 dockers strike were short-lived in the face of concerted employer action and internal union division. Collective agreements secured in 1890–91 either withered or were discarded by employers at will. Revival of active unionism again in 1911–12 was again defeated by employers. The cycle began again in 1922 with the formation of the Transport and General Workers Union. But at no stage before WWI were the vast bulk of waterside workers covered by one union. Unions, whether national or not played little or no part in hiring schemes in ports across a number of countries. Only in New Zealand did national unionism develop before WWI. But the formation of the NZ Waterside Worker Federation in 1906 was accomplished under the umbrella of national compulsory arbitration.

Thus only in Australia and New Zealand did national unionism develop prior to WWI. In both arbitration provided legal security for the collective organisation of the parties. Yet to attribute national unionism primarily to arbitration understates the critical role of the industry structure and organisation. The dominant position and coherent policy of Australia employers were not matched in the US or Europe. The differentiation and complexity of the industry was matched by sectional differences amongst waterside workers. These factors made national unionism very difficult overseas. The industry wide structuring of the labour market in Australia – through for example the transfer system – combined with the relatively small size of ports where sectionalism was relatively limited, were major factors in bolstering union growth. The dynamic of segmentation was not entrenched as it was in large overseas ports and the collective agreements displayed greater similarity. These factors were all overlooked by Beasley in the discussion of this period in union development.

The conclusion is that however halting, the transition to formalised pattern of industrial relations based on recognised union organisation and active bargaining was more advanced in Australia than other countries.

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1 Indeed, in terms of the model developed by Marshall, this period was one the beginning of a further transition in societal rights. Formal political rights, already supplemented by civic rights, were to be further supplemented by social rights, see T. H. Marshall, *Citizenship and Social Class and Other Essays* (Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1950). Arguably the development of social rights is primarily underpinned by the failure of formal political rights as they have developed to address the concerns formally regulated by the moral economy.


3 F. Tonnies, *Community and Society (Gemeinschaft and Gesellschaft)* trans. and ed. C. Loomis (Michigan State University, East Lansing, 1957)

4 Tonnies, *Community and Society*.


6 At meetings before the strike that 800 or more members attended; protest meeting at employers’ Labour Bureau in December 1890, 130 union members attended; less than 200 voted at meeting in December for union positions, SWLU *General Minutes*, 18 July 1890, p.67, 29 Dec 1890, p.143, 17 Dec 1890, p.140, ANU/NBA Z248/Box 95; at the Royal Commission McKillop stated that the union had 1694 members and that 375 men had been enrolled "lately", but there is little evidence that this was actually the case, Minutes of Evidence Qs.738,1108, *RCon Strikes* (1891) pp.28,36

7 eg it was stated that Ellis had been blackballed by the coal stevedores, SWLU, *General Minutes*, 14 Nov 1890, p.97, ANU/NBA Z248/Box 95. The shipowners drew up a list of officers who had left their ships in 1890 strike and all men on ships in the last strike (over wage cuts to seamen months earlier, SOAA *Minutes* 27 Sept 1893, in VSOA *Minutes Book*, p.3, ANU/NBA E217/1.
For example, Tom on the Sheathers Union stated that bona fide wharf labourers who had fought for them in the recent strike would be admitted to his union. SWLU, General Minutes, 9 Aug 1891, p.180, ANU/NBA Z248/Box 95

SWLU, General Minutes, 12 Nov 1890, pp.91-93, ANU/NBA Z248/Box 95

SWLU, General Minutes, 12 Nov 1890, p.90. This was reinforced by the suspension of Rule 33, re admission to the union, General Minutes, 29 Dec p.144, both ANU/NBA Z248/Box 95.

SWLU, General Minutes, 14 Nov 1890, pp.95-97, ANU/NBA Z248/Box 95

SWLU, General Minutes, 19 Nov 1890, pp.99-101, ANU/NBA Z248/Box 95

Resolutions by McKillop, SWLU, General Minutes, 29 Dec 1890, p.144, ANU/NBA Z248/Box 95

Resolutions by McKillop and Gordon, quotation from McKillop, SWLU, General Minutes, 29 Dec 1890, p.144, ANU/NBA Z248/Box 95; Evidence of R. McKillop, 9s.1062-1065, RC on Strikes, (1891) p.34

SWLU, General Minutes, 12 Nov 1890, p.93, ANU/NBA Z248/Box 95

SWLU, General Minutes, 8 April 1891, p.166, see also 1 April 1891, p.93, ANU/NBA Z248/Box 95

The vessel was the "Exportor", Minutes of Evidence, Q.659, RC on Strikes, (1891) p.20.

McKillop stated that men favoured it and were willing to make it work (QS.1141-1142) a week.

Consideration of the Co-operative Scheme was to stand over to a future date, 6 May 1891, p.173. A motion to authorise the purchase of a boat for such a company lapsed due to the lack of a seconder, but a motion authorising the Secretary to seek work was carried after some debate, where it was stated that a similar motion had been passed for the previous Secretary and nothing resulted, SWLU, General Minutes, 12 Aug 1891, pp.182-184. That the union did own an engine (although it required repair) SWLU, General Minutes, 21 Jan 1891, p.155 both ANU/NBA Z248/Box 95.

For example notice of meeting from the Co-operative Alliance was received in Sept 1896, but this may have been random, SWLU, General Minutes, 9 Sep 1896, ANU/NBA Z248/Box 95

Newcastle Morning Herald and Miners Advocate 18 Aug 1897

The SWLU held 10 meetings from 12 Nov 1890 to the end of the year, SWLU, General Minutes, 29 Dec 1890, p.144, ANU/NBA Z248/Box 95

Entrance fee and contribution income amounted to more than £45. The entrance fees collected were £27.18s., and assuming a rate of 5 shillings (half fee in 1891) means that 110 members joined. Since the fee to rejoin was 1s. in 1891 and was formally set at that in mid-1896 it is likely that it was less than 10s., probably 5s. (set at this in 1901) or even 1s. (giving 110 to 558 new members). Contributions assumed at 2a. 6d. a quarter (giving approx 145 workers). Industrial Commission TU File 11, NSW Archives, A.O. Box 10/42118.

While a gap between 1890 and 1901 exists in the submission of registers, no cancellation of registration is recorded as is the case in other unions, see T.U. File 11, Industrial Commission, NSW Archives, A.O. Box 10/42118.

A point made by Mitchell, Wharf Labourers, p.82, however with little additional primary evidence.

Condensation of these developments by Ramsay Mc-KiUlop and A. J. Kelly, SWLU, General Minutes, 29 Dec 1890, 7 Jan 1891, 31 July 1893, pp.143, 147, loose sheet, ANU/NBA Z248/Box 95.

SWLU, General Minutes, 7 Jan 1891, pp.147,148, ANU/NBA Z248/Box 95. Defunct here meant, lifeless, spiritless or something bygone, for the union clearly continued to exist. It met on 12,14,19,26 Nov, 3,5,10,17,29,31 Dec 1890 following the collapse of the maritime strike, see SWLU General Minutes. But the sentiment was clearly evident in the union, Platt expressed the view that the union should be dissolved for 2 or 3 months and was opposed by McKillop and Davis General Minutes, 9 Jan 1891, p.149, ANU/NBA Z248/Box 95.

SWLU, General Minutes, 5 Dec 1890, p.131; also see discussion of £75 for the TLQ in 1891 and was formally set at that in mid-1896 it is likely that it was less than 10s., probably 5s. (set at this in 1901) or even 1s. (giving 110 to 558 new members). Contributions assumed at 2a. 6d. a quarter (giving approx 145 workers). Industrial Commission TU File 11, NSW Archives, A.O. Box 10/42118.

A point made by Mitchell, Wharf Labourers, p.82, however with little additional primary evidence.

Cuts of 20% were anticipated, down to 10 hours for 8c., SWLU, Minutes, 31 July 1893, lose sheet, ANU/NBA Z248/Box 95.

Manager of the Labour Bureau suggested a subsidy for the Society, Minutes of SOAA, 10 April 1894, in VSOA Minutes Book, p.61, ANU/NBA E217/1.

Newcastle Morning Herald and Miners Advocate 1 Jan 1891

The 400 ballot papers for the 1992 office holder election was cut to 200, SWLU, General Minutes, 2 Dec 1890, p.193, ANU/NBA Z248/Box 95

SWLU, General Minutes, 1 Oct 1892, p.204, ANU/NBA Z248/Box 95

Lockwood, Ship to Shore, ch.8, pp.93-96.

Newcastle Morning Herald and Miners Advocate 9,10,12,13,16 Dec 1892, 9 Jan 1893

Newcastle Morning Herald and Miners Advocate, 11,18 Dec 1893, 4 Jan 1894. The union suspended activities from 18 Jan to 20 Sept 1893 due to financial pressures (only 8 or 10 of over 100 members were paid up), see L. McVity (sec. NWLU) to Industrial Registrar, 5 Feb 1894, 19 Nov 1893, 1. W. Smith (Trustee NWLU) to Industrial Registrar, 31 Oct 1893 and enclosed press reports n.d. Industrial Commission T.U. File 11, NSW Archives, A.O. Box 10/42122. Further legal disputes see Newcastle Morning Herald and Miners Advocate, 14 Sept 1895.

The 1888 union still had 100. lying in the bank, Newcastle Morning Herald and Miners Advocate, 21, 30 Nov, 1. 10 Dec 1897.

In a typical informal manner the dozens of men involved met in local hotels to organise the appeal, see Newcastle Morning Herald and Miners Advocate, 15,22 June, 1,7 July 1897

Returns of the Registrar of Trade Unions, South Australian Archives, 1877-1902, cited in Powell, Uncertain Frontiers, pp.15-16

Powell, Uncertain Frontiers, pp.17-18

Membership in Unions, Brief History of the Australian Waterfront, p.2, Powell, Uncertain Frontiers, p.18

Returns of the Registrar of Trade Unions, South Australian Archives, cited in Powell, Uncertain Frontiers, p.18

The Eight Hour Union was a predecessor to the Queensland Trades and Labour Council. Membership records for the year 1899-1900 are missing but the Brisbane waterfront workers union was in existence in this year, QLD Archives, Fryer Library (UQ) Collection 118

Coghlan, Labour and Industry in Australia, p.2076; employers reported that shipping had been "brisk" in 1897, Annual Report, for 1897, 31 Jan 1898 Fremantle substituted for Albany for mail steamers, Annual Report, for 1900, 18 Mar 1901, McKellar Collection ML. MSS 4548/Box 249
Membership Books—Western Australian Branches, WWF Federal Office, ANU/NBA T62/29; note that in the registration of the FWLU as an industrial union under Western Australian legislation, the membership figure on 1 Mar 1901 was given as 548, Reports of Proceedings Before the Boards of Conciliation and the Court of Arbitration, Vol 1, 1901, p.211

Vaaden Driessen, "Confrontation and Reconciliation on the Waterfront", p.30

Two unions in Albany, WA, Reports of Proceedings Before the Boards of Conciliation and the Court of Arbitration, Vol 1, 1901, p.211.

The Bunbury Lumpers' Union of Workers was formed in 1899, WWF Federal Office, ANU/NBA Z55/Box 44

AUSNoCo, Fourth Annual Report, (to 31 Dec 1890), 28 May 1891, McKellar Collection ML MSS 4548/Box 9

Statement by wharf labourer, Mr Horn, SWLU General Minutes, 9 Jan 1891, p.149, ANU/NBA Z224/Box 95. More than 70 union men were ordered off the Howard Smith wharf in Jan 1891 for not having a Bureau ticket, Newcastle Morning Herald and Miners Advocate, 2 Jan 1891.

Minutes of Evidence, Qs.1086-1090, RC on Strikes, (1891) p.35

John E. Andrews began as a wharf labourer in 1885 and moved to a station with his wife for 5 years and only return to the waterfront when "Hughes started the Society" four years ago [1900]. For not only would he not blackleg, but also he could not get a job as he was "a Union man", SWLU vs. NSWSSOA and NSWCSSOA case, Court of Arbitration, Transcripts Vol 2, 1905, pp.552,556, NSW Archives, Industrial Commission File 2/29.

It had to negotiate with the wool stockmen (mainly for overseas companies) for "uniform action" for this, SOAA, Eight Annual Report, 16 Aug 1892, pp.5. There appears to be no evidence to support the rumour that 6d. was deducted from the weekly wage of men to fund the administration of the Bureau, evidence of McKellar, Minutes of Evidence, Qs.1092-1093, RC on Strikes, (1891) p.35

Newcastle Morning Herald and Miners' Advocate, 30 Dec 1890

SOAA, Seventh Annual Report, 18 Aug 1891, pp.4,7,13; Eight Annual Report, 16 Aug 1892, p.5, McKellar Collection, ML MSS 4548/Box 249

SOAA, Ninth Annual Report, 21 Nov 1893, p.5 [emphasis added], McKellar Collection, ML MSS 4548/Box 249

On the available evidence, employers supplemented the Bureau in 1892 and 1893, SOAA, Eighth Annual Report, 16 Aug 1892, p.8, Ninth Annual Report, 21 Nov 1893, p.6, both McKellar Collection, ML MSS 4548/Box 249

Calculated from SOAA Annual Reports, of 1892 and 1893 McKellar Collection, ML MSS 4548/Box 249

Henry Howell (Sydney Manager of Howard Smith Co.) submitted a proposal to the Sydney Branch of the ASOF in July 1902 which was passed to the ASOF in Melbourne. But nothing was done about the proposal, ASOF, Minute Book, 24 July 1902, p.135, ANU/NBA E217/2

I. from W. Howard Smith to the Victorian Association, VSOA, Minutes 26 Nov 1896, p.247

VSOA Minutes, 11 Sept 1896, p.217, 24 Sept 1896, p.223, ANU/NBA E217/1

Eg AUSNoCo employed engineering apprentices at its Kangaroo Point workshop in Brisbane for an indenture payment of 100/., which was paid in two instalments, after 6 months and then after 2 years. Half of this payment went to the company and the other half to the workshop supervisor "for his trouble in teaching the lad his trade". Macdonald stopped the payment to the supervisor as "the apprentices were raw and company machinery may be injured", although apprentice wages were low, between 5s. and 15s. over five years. Mackay agreed that the payment should be discontinued, see Letters to Mackay, 26 July, 1901, James Mackay, Letters, 1900–1906, McKellar Collection, ML MSS 4548/Box 160

quotes from SOAA, Eighth Annual Report, 16 Aug 1892, pp.3,5, [emphasis added], McKellar Collection, ML MSS 4548/Box 249


Australian Workman, 8 May 1897

SWLU, General Minutes, 14 Jan 1891, p.153, ANU/NBA Z224/Box 95

Meeting was for the purpose of strengthening our Society, SWLU General Minutes, 5 Aug 1896, p.223, ANU/NBA Z224/Box 95

SWLU General Minutes, 12 Aug 1896, ANU/NBA Z224/Box 95

Rain & Co. McKellar Collection, Central Wharf, Sinclair, Orient Co. Robertson, Sussex Street, Roberts, Moore's Wharf, Luxton, SWLU, General Minutes, 12 Aug 1896; Soderblom volunteered as delegate for Flood's, General Minutes, 19 Aug 1896 ANU/NBA Z224/Box 95

Resolution by McKellar and Roberts, SWLU, General Minutes, 16 Aug 1896, ANU/NBA Z224/Box 95

The relevant rules, were 1,2,4,5, 6,11,13,18–21,15, SWLU, General Minutes, 16 Sept 1896, the Union also changed its meeting place from the Prime Labor Hall to St. Phillips Schoolroom (Rule 3) ANU/NBA Z224/Box 95

SWLU, General Minutes, 16 Dec 1896, no pagination, ANU/NBA Z224/Box 95

Although details of the revision are not available, SWLU, General Minutes, 6 Jan 1897, ANU/NBA Z224/Box 95

SWLU, General Minutes, 6 Jan 1897, ANU/NBA Z224/Box 95

Although details of the revision are not available, SWLU, General Minutes, 6 Jan 1897, ANU/NBA Z224/Box 95

Although details of the revision are not available, SWLU, General Minutes, 10 Mar 1897, ANU/NBA Z224/Box 95

Although details of the revision are not available, SWLU, General Minutes, 27 July 1896, ANU/NBA Z224/Box 95

Although details of the revision are not available, SWLU, General Minutes, 5 Aug 1896, ANU/NBA Z224/Box 95

Meeting was "for the purpose of strenghtening our Society", SWLU General Minutes, 7 Oct 1897, ANU/NBA Z224/Box 95

It was resolved to thank Hughes for his attendance at the 3 Oct meeting a few days later, SWLU General Minutes, 7 Oct 1897, ANU/NBA Z224/Box 95

SWLU General Minutes, 16 Sept, 4 Nov, 16 Dec 1896, ANU/NBA Z224/Box 95

SWLU General Minutes, 18 Nov 1896, 6 Jan, 10 Mar (Tillet invited), 15 Sept, 11 Aug, 15 Sept, 22 Sept 1897 (Tillet attended), ANU/NBA Z224/Box 95

Nelson, The Hungry Mile, p.33 claims that 'only' 350 members were enrolled. Fitzhardinge claims that this number was no more that one-seventh of the men employed on the waterfront, in a labour force of 2450. The latter figure is improbable as only 2500 to 2700 men were on the waterfront in 1902. The labour force was probably closer to 1500 that puts the density at 23%. On the basis of wages paid by the Bureau and the effects in later Bureau (eg 1928 Brisbane Bureau where the labour force went firom 1600 to less than a 1000, for much

Before the Boards of Conciliation and the Court of Arbitration, pp.22-24

Nelson argues that the defeat of 1890 that the union collapsed until 1899 with the exception of July 1896 to Dec 1897 (which was largely a failure), The Hungry Mile, pp.22-24

SWLU General Minutes, 29 June 1897, ANU/NBA Z224/Box 95

SWLU General Minutes, 19 Aug, 16 Sept, 30 Oct, 21 Oct 1897, ANU/NBA Z224/Box 95
There had differed on the size of the cut but immediately fell in line to support McDawith's, SOAA, Ninth Annual Report, 21 Nov 1893, p.3. The SOAA had complained of high sea-going wages before, Eighth Annual Report, 16 Aug 1892, p.4, McKellar Collection, ML MSS 4548/Box 249. Marine engineers' wages were cut in November 1893, through negotiation. AUSNCo reported that the £2 per month reduction in wages for seamen, firemen and trimmers saved the company £9,500 p.a. and a further £700 for the engineers reduction, Report on the Working of the Company and Analysis of the Company's Accounts, 31 Dec 1893, p.16, McKellar Collection ML MSS 4548/Box 125 Envelope 363.

Cable to Shipping Federation, London, to C. Hudson (Sec. VSOA), which read in part as follows, "Shipping Federation branches report Eagoon plentiful if you require they will assist...", VSOA, Minutes, 25 Sept 1893, ANU/NBA, E217/1, p.1. The Victorian Association wrote to the Sydney employers urging them to "stand firm". The SOOA in Sydney agreed with the policy and was prepared to fight strike action, ASOA, Minutes, 27 Sept, 3 Oct 1893 in VSOA, Minute Book, ANU/NBA E217/1, pp.3-8.

Memorandum of Understanding of 13 Nov, reported at VSOA meeting, Minutes, 24 Nov 1893, p.32 ANU/NBA, E217/1.

VSOA, Minutes, 30 Nov 1893, p.50, ANU/NBA, E217/1.

SWLU, General Minutes, 27 Oct 1897, ANU/NBA Z248/Box 95.

SWLU, General Minutes, 4 Nov 1896, ANU/NBA Z248/Box 95.

NSW Employers Union, commented that although business remained depressed and labour trouble was low, labour was going to WA and had already raised wages of seamen and carpenters, Eighth Annual Report, 30 Sept 1896, McKellar Collection ML MSS 4548/Box 118 Envelope 231.

SWLU, General Minutes, 9 Aug 1891, p.179, ANU/NBA Z248/Box 95.

SWLU, General Minutes, 9 Aug 1891 pp.179,180, ANU/NBA Z248/Box 95.

SWLU, General Minutes, 12 Aug 1891, p.182, 9 Jan 1891, pp.149-150 a 4 man deputation was elected, ANU/NBA Z248/Box 95.

SWLU, General Minutes, 9 Aug 1891, p.179, ANU/NBA Z248/Box 95.

SWLU, General Minutes, 26 Oct 1896, ANU/NBA Z248/Box 95.

SWLU, General Minutes, 8 April 1891, p.166, ANU/NBA Z248/Box 95.

SWLU, General Minutes, 9 Sept, 23 Oct, 26 Aug 1896, ANU/NBA Z248/Box 95.


Fremantle Branch of the SOOA, First Annual Report, 31 Dec 1896, McKellar Collection ML MSS 4548/Box 249.

The men walked of the job at Huddart Parker for bagging work, and returned to work a week later, Newcastle Morning Herald and Miners' Advocate, 14,16,21 May 1891; freezer work dispute was at Dalgety & Co., (SWLU said they get ls.6d.) beginning on the 1 Dec. It extended to Gibbs Bright on 7 Dec 1892 over the use of non-unionists and the men sent from Sydney to work on the wharves then returned to Sydney. The company then refused to recognise the SWLU. The strike was eventually called off in early January 1893, Newcastle Morning Herald and Miners' Advocate, 1,8,12,16 Dec 1892, 9 Jan 1893.

Newcastle Morning Herald and Miners' Advocate, 6 Nov 1896.

Newcastle Morning Herald and Miners' Advocate, 30 Sept, 1.2 Oct 1897.

see letter to editor, 'Wharf Labourer', and the court case of the assault, Newcastle Morning Herald and Miners' Advocate, 4 & 20 Oct 1897 respectively. The Newcastle men wrote to the SWLU complaining about Sydney men working in Newcastle, by the SWLU resolved to ignore the correspondence, SWLU, General Minutes, 20 Oct 1897, ANU/NBA Z248/Box 95.

There were complaints reported about no taps or toilets along the wharf, Newcastle Morning Herald and Miners' Advocate 14 Feb 1900.

The strike in June 1900 will be discussed below.

Details of a dispute on the Katoomba' on 15 Sept were reported to the union by secretary M. Wilson; dispute at Moore's Wharf involved seamen join the union. The SOOA in Sydney agreed with the policy and was prepared to fight strike action, VSOA, Minutes, 25 Sept 1893, ANU/NBA, E217/1, p.1. The Victorian Association wrote to the Sydney employers urging them to "stand firm". The SOOA in Sydney agreed with the policy and was prepared to fight strike action, ASOA, Minutes, 27 Sept, 3 Oct 1893 in VSOA, Minute Book, ANU/NBA E217/1, pp.3-8.

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Mitchell, Wharf Labourers, Firsthandings, "W. M. Hughes and the Waterside Workers".

Sydney Morning Herald, 30 Dec 1899; the union reported 1614 members 5 weeks later, SWLU, General Minutes, 7 Feb 1900, ANU/NBA Z248/Box 95.

Delegates were introduced 12 Aug 1896; reports re fee cards, 16 Sept 1896; delegates report "as to the success they have received from their efforts", 16 Dec 1896; suggestion for assistant delegates to speed up collection of dues 25 Nov 1896; favourable reports, 2 Dec 1896; Riley's lengthy report "good start" at Orient wharf, all of the men at the North Coast Co. joined and new delegates appointed at Huddart Parker, where fair results were expected, and the men at Union and AUSNCb were impressed, Riley also suggested some remuneration for delegates 23 Dec 1896; 'favourable reports' and "much enthusiasm" at Floods, McLean, Taylor & Co, Lamb and Robertson, also secretary's visits to wharves to collect dues to continue 12 May 1897; great hopes of signing up constants at AUSNCo wharf 18 Aug 1897, all SWLU, General Minutes, 2 Nov 1897, ANU/NBA Z248/Box 95.

The date of the closure of the Labour Bureau is unclear. Employers made the decision in Jan 1899, and it was closed before August, the "principal event [of the year was]...closing of the Labour Bureau, which was decided upon in January last [1899]; it having been found impracticable to carry it on as an annual affair under existing conditions", SOOA, Annual Report, 12 Aug 1891, p.1, McKellar Collection ML MSS 4548/Box 249. But Hughes claimed in March 1900 that the Bureau was to be closed, SWLU, General Minutes, 27 Mar 1900, ANU/NBA Z248/Box 95. Some functions of the Bureau may have remained until early 1900. Mitchell, Wharf Labourers, p.102 accepts it as 1900 as does Beasley, pp.17-18, citing the latter.


Mitchell states (p.93), citing Nelson, p.24, that a local publican Jack Kullberg, first suggested to Hughes that he may be able to aid the SWLU. Firsthandings, "W. M. Hughes and the Waterside Workers", p.172 makes the same claim. No such suggestion appears in Nelson, SWLU, General Minutes, 27 Dec 1899, ANU/NBA Z248/Box 95.
The export trade hours were changed to 6am to 4pm and Sat to 12 noon, SWLU, I -- Export trade and 8am to 5pm and to 12 noon Saturday in the import trade all year round, 1 Nov meeting.

Chapter Nine

It appears that the negotiations between the SWLU and the SOAA in the second half of 1900 were conducted independently for the ASOF.

HoweU does not give dates of the negotiations between him and Hughes. But Hughes initiated contact and conferences with a number of employers from March 1900, as will be discussed later in the chapter. Evidence of HoweU, NSW Court of Arbitration, Vol 2, 1905, p.772-773. The payment of 1s.3d. for bagged wheat in the deep-sea trade was accepted by the employers after a strike at Wellington, Mar 1899, cited in Vanden Driesen, "Confrontation and Reconciliation on the Waterfront" p.33

Also, rail truckers in the ports of Albany and Geraldton went out in sympathy with the Fremantle men, Vanden Driesen, "Confrontation and Reconciliation on the Waterfront" pp.34-45; this became the basic Fremantle agreement, ASOF, Report for 1904, 1905, 1906, p.23, ANU/NBA E217/89.

The West Australian 2 Mar 1899, cited in Vanden Driesen, "Confrontation and Reconciliation on the Waterfront" p.33

Some confusion remained over the actual terms of the agreement while the company decided what to do which prompted a short strike in Newcastle and Moresby the next week. A few constant men remained - at 44s. for a 44 hour week, Newcastle Morning Herald and Miners Advocate, 10, 19, 24, 25 Oct 1900, NSW Industrial Arbitration Reports, Vol 1, 1902, p.5

A detailed account of the strike is found in Vanden Driesen. The discussion here is taken from this work. Cuts in travelling time rates also announced. Wage rates to be 1s.1/2d. and 1s.3d. per hour for ordinary time and overtime, flat rate of holiday pay to 2s.3d. per hour (old ranged between 2s.6d. and 4s.), 9d. a ton rate introduced for coal (6d. less than Albany), travelling time to be cut from ordinary hourly rate to 6d. per hour and hours of work before overtime to be paid 6am to 6pm rather than the existing 8am-5pm as in the vast majority of ports in the colonies, Vanden Driesen, "Confrontation and Reconciliation on the Waterfront" pp.30-31.

As soon as Hughes and I fixed the October 1900 agreement the Newcastle wharf labourers and the Queensland wharf labourers made extra [ie 1s.3d. an hour] for carrying, because they [wharf labourers] would not carry you did give them extra [sic] (p.655), see evidence of William Parsons and Brown, Transcripts, Vol 2, 1905, pp.646-648,654-655, both, NSW Archives, Industrial Commission File 2/59.
Fire of 2s. for breach of this rule was introduced, SWLU, General Minutes, 10 Oct, 1900, ANU/NBA 2248/Box 95

Bagged cargo and non-union labour mentioned briefly earlier were other issues of dispute, evidence of Henry Howell, manager, No 76 of 1902, NSW Court of Arbitration, Transcripts, Vol 2, 1905, p.854, NSW Archives, Industrial Commission File 2/59. Howell went on to say that her spoke to union secretary Harrison about the issue, concluding that "it was one instance of where the men had not complied with that [ie 1900] agreement."

Both ports were immediately invited back into the WWF, COM, SWLU,. reaffiliation recorded.

Healy, J WWF, COM, Hughes (NSW), DeLargie (WA) Fisher (central Qld), Bamford (north Qld), Poynton (SA), Batchelor (SA), O'Keefe (Tas) Higgs (Qld), reported in ASOF,

Macdonald to Mackay 16 Aug 1901, Macdonald

Macdonald

Teleg. McDwraith to Mackay 3 Dec 1900, James Mackay Correspondence 1900-1906, ASOF,

ASOF Minutes, 5 Sept 1901, p.76, ANU/NBA E217/2. Northcote of the ASSCo had organised the supply of free labourers weeks before,

ASOF Minutes, 27 May 1901, p.45, ANU/NBA E217/2. The Sydney rate was ordinary time and Fremantle 1s 1/2d ordinary time and relevant overtime rates at time and a half.

The parties had already met by the middle of June, ASOF Minute, 13 June 1901, pp.51,57, ANU/NBA E217/2. The agreement was dated 22 July 1900, copy from AEWL Head Office Sydney; referred to in ASOF, Report for 1904, 1905, 1906, p.21, ANU/NBA E217/89.

Existing wages and conditions and union issues included in copy of Tucker correspondence to the Federation, ASOF, Minutes, 27 May 1901, pp.43-44, ANU/NBA E217/2; Memorandum of Agreement and Schedule 1 (Instructions to Stevedores Re General cargo Workers), 22 July 1901, copy from AEWL, Head Office, Sydney.

The 3 July correspondence possibly included claims for the coalworkers. Memorandum of Agreement and Schedule 2 (Instructions to Stevedores Re Coal Workers), 22 July 1901, copy from AEWL, Head Office, Sydney.

Memorandum of Agreement and Schedule 2 (Instructions to Stevedores Re Coal Workers), 22 July 1901, copy from AEWL, Head Office, Sydney.

In particular special rates for overtime and cargoes were not covered in the Melbourne agreement.

ASOF Minutes, 8 Aug, 22 Aug 1901, p.72,73, ANU/NBA E217/2

ASOF Minutes, 5,19 Sept 1901, pp.76,78 ANU/NBA E217/2

eg ASOF Minutes, 17 Oct & 8 Nov 1901, pp.86,94,96 ANU/NBA E217/2

Mitchell, Wharf Labourers, Their Union and Leadership, p.310

ASOF Minutes, 5 Sept 1901, p.76, ANU/NBA E217/2. Northcote of the ASSCo had organised the supply of free labourers weeks before, 15 Aug. More than 70 men were to be supplied at a minimum wage of 3l. a week. Any excess over that sum earned in loading and discharging will be paid at 1s.3d. per ton. Contract would be for 3 months from the time of departure from Melbourne. 1. Macdonald to Mackay 16 Aug 1901, Macdonald Private Letter Book, No 1, p.20, McKeillar Collection ML MSS 4548/Box 127. This was an expensive policy to attack the Albany coalworkers.

DeLargie had a letter published in the press to the ASOF where he took some issue and view of Hughes' connections with the SWLU, contacted him, ASOF Minutes, 8 Nov 1901, p.92, ANU/NBA E217/2

WA, Reports of Proceedings Before the Boards of Conciliation and the Court of Arbitration, Vol 1, 1901, p.228f.

Indeed it was reported that many of the unionists did not want to strike. Only the interstate men went out and a Labour Bureau was contacted, ASOF Minutes, 27 May 1901, pp.45,46, ANU/NBA E217/2

eg The Coal Yard Employees Union in Melbourne, who were employed by McDwraith McEacham, Mackay Wharf Labourers Union, ASOF Minutes, 17,31 Oct, 12 Dec, 19 Sept 1901, pp.88,90,98,78, ANU/NBA E217/2

Hughes (NSW), DeLargie (WA) Fisher (central Qld), Bamford (north Qld), Poynton (SA), Batchelor (SA), O'Keefe (Tas) Higgs (Qld), Lookwood, Ship to Shore, Vol 2, 1905, p.310. Lookwood provides a critical sketch of these politicians, pp.102-105

SWLU, General Minutes, 12 Dec 1900, ANU/NBA 2248/Box 95

The ports were Sydney, 2800, Port Pirie 450, Port Phillip Steamers 2100, Townsville, Cairns, Thursday Is. 720 in total, Maryborough, 30, Brisbane 500, Fremantle, Geraldton and Albany, 700 in total, WWF, Federal Council of Management (COM), Minutes, 7 Feb 1902, pp.12,13, ANU/NBA T62/6/1

Eg at the Oct 1902 meeting Hughes closed the meeting and indicated another would not be held until Jan 1903. The next recorded meeting was 2 Mar 1902, WWF, COM, Minutes, 9 Oct 1902, 2 Mar 1903, p.34, ANU/NBA T62/6/1

WWF, COM, Minutes, 4 Apr 1903, p.54, ANU/NBA T62/6/1

WWF, COM, Minutes, 4 Apr 1902, p.18, ANU/NBA T62/6/1

WWF, COM, Minutes, 9 Jun 1902, p.23, ANU/NBA T62/6/1

Healy, Brief History of the Australian Waterfront, p.7; also taken from WWF, COM, Minutes, 2 Feb, 4 Apr, 9 Jun, 1 Aug, 3 Sept 1902. 3 Mar 1903, pp.12,18,23,27,29,35, ANU/NBA T62/6/1

Membership as of Jan 1906 was 6213 on the basis of dues paid, WWF, COM, Minutes, 21 Jan 1906, p.60, membership dues waived for 1903 for Brisbane and Pt. Pirie, Minutes, 4 Mar 1904, pp.42,43, both, ANU/NBA T62/6/1

WWF, COM, Minutes, 15 Mar 1902, p.15 ANU/NBA T62/6/1

SWLU, General Minutes, 31 Mar 1902, ANU/NBA 2248/Box 96

WWF, COM, Minutes, 23 Aug 1907, p.66; Hughes attended a meeting at MWLU in regard to reaffiliation, Minutes 24 Sept 1907, p.70; reaffiliation recorded, Minutes, 10 Nov 1910, p.107, all ANU/NBA T62/6/1

SWLU, General Minutes, 25 Dec 1904, 30 May, 31 Oct 1906, ANU/NBA 2248/Box 95

Both ports were immediately invited back into the WWF, WWF, COM, Minutes, 8 Apr 1908, p.79, ANU/NBA T62/6/1

Wrote to Port Adelaide to join, WWF, COM, Minutes, 1 Aug 1902, 9 Jun 1904, pp.26,44; motion to write to Fremantle and Port Adelaide to get them to join, Minutes, 9 Sept 1909, p.93; letter to Fremantle to join to be part of the national agreement due to expire 28 Feb 1911, Minutes, 31 Aug 1910, pp.103,104; wire to Fremantle to have national agreement with rest of the branches, Minutes, 30 Dec 1913, p.140, all ANU/NBA T62/6/1

220 In a temporary capacity until a formal appointment in May. Healy, *Short History of the Australian Waterfront*, pp. 15–16; WWF, COM, Minutes, 8 May 1914, p.185, ANU/NBA T62/1/1

221 WWF, COM, Minutes, 8 May 1914, p.183, ANU/NBA T62/1/1

222 WWF, COM, Minutes, 20 Apr, 21 Dec 1915, pp.196,208 ANU/NBA T62/1/1

223 reported in the *South Australian Advertiser*, 11 Feb 1902

224 Eg. Geraldton complained of the use of 'coolie' labour, approach to W.A. Premier Barton by DeLargie regarding using Alien Act. Morris and DeLargie then approached federal Minister of Customs Kingston, with the object of 'getting an Act passed compelling all Foreign Vessels to have cargoes discharged or loaded with Stevedore tackle within the Commonwealth'. Also approaches to PM and Attorney-General, COM, Minutes, 15 Mar, 9 Jun 1902, pp.16,22; deputation to Minister of Customs over starting times of work that was affecting waterside workers, Minutes, 4 Apr 1902, p.19; Hughes appealed to the NSW Attorney-General Wise to call the State Court of Arbitration into session to deal with a Newcastle dispute, Minutes, 23 Apr 1902, p.20, ANU/NBA T62/1/1.

225 WWF, COM, Minutes, 7 Feb 1902, p.14, ANU/NBA T62/1/1

226 Sydney was dilatory in approving the scheme, WWF, COM, Minutes, 4 June 1903, 9 June 1904, pp.37,45, ANU/NBA T62/1/1; Beasley, *Wharfies*, p.23

227 ASOF, Minutes, 12 Dec 1901, pp.97–98, ANU/NBA E217/2

228 ASOF, Minutes, 23 Jan, 6 Feb 1902, pp.105,108, ANU/NBA E217/2

229 I. Macdonald (AUSNCo) to Mackay, 18 Jan 1902, Minutes, 6


231 as noted from the Sydney Branch of the Shipowners, ASOF, Minutes, 23 Jan, 6 Feb 1902, p.108, ANU/NBA E217/2

232 see *NSW Industrial Arbitration Reports*, Vol 1, 1902, pp.5–6

233 see WWF, COM, Minutes, 4 Apr 1902, p.20, ANU/NBA T62/1/1; SWLU, *General Minutes*, 23,25,30 Apr 1902, ANU/NBA Z248/Box 96


235 ASOF, Minutes, 5 June, 10 July 1902, pp.127,131, ANU/NBA E217/2

236 ASOF, Minutes, 20 June 1902, p.131, ANU/NBA E217/2

237 ASOF, Minutes, 10 July 1902, p.133, ANU/NBA E217/2

238 ASOF, Minutes, 3 Aug 1902, p.143, ANU/NBA E217/2

239 WWF, COM, Minutes, 3 Aug 1902, p.26. ANU/NBA T62/1/1; recorded ASOF, Minutes, 7 Aug 1902, p.138, ANU/NBA E217/2

240 ASOF, Minutes, 28 Aug 1902, p.143, ANU/NBA E217/2

241 WWF, COM, Minutes, 3 Sept 1902, p.27, ANU/NBA T62/1/1

242 WWF, COM, Minutes, 3 Sept 1902, p.29, ANU/NBA E217/2

243 WWF, COM, Minutes, 3 Sept 1902, p.27, ANU/NBA T62/1/1; Healy, *Brief History of the Australian Waterfront*, p.12

244 ASOF, Report for 1904,1905,1906, p.23, ANU/NBA E217/89


246 The Sydney association missed one employers meeting due to lack of notice and was informed of the meeting later, ASOF, Minutes, 5,19 Sept 1901, p.78, ANU/NBA E217/2.

247 ASOF, Minutes, 23 Jan 1902, p.105, ANU/NBA E217/2

248 ASOF, Minutes, 23 Jan 1902, p.105, ANU/NBA E217/2

249 In fact the Federation suggested the name. New South Wales Interstate Shipowners Association, Industrial Union of Employers, ASOF, Minutes, 23 Dec 1901, 9 Jan 1902, pp.99,103 ANU/NBA E217/2

250 ASOF, Minutes, 6 Feb 1902, p.108, ANU/NBA E217/2

251 ASOF, Minutes, 27 Feb 1902, p.114, ANU/NBA E217/2

252 ASOF, Minutes, 24 Feb 1902, p.135, ANU/NBA E217/2

253 ASOF, Minutes, 28 Aug 1902, p.144 ANU/NBA E217/2

254 *NSW Industrial Arbitration Reports*, Vol 2, 1903, pp.143–145


256 ASOF, Minutes, 11 Dec 1902, p.160, ANU/NBA E217/2


258 As this affected their government mail contracts, *NSW Industrial Arbitration Reports*, Vol 2, 1903, p.517


260 ASOF, Minutes, 11 Dec 1902, p.160, ANU/NBA E217/2

261 ASOF, Minutes, 26 Aug 1903, p.203, ANU/NBA E217/2

262 *NSW Industrial Arbitration Reports*, Vol 3, 1904, p.54

263 Clause 11 of the 1902 Award was varied. The only grounds to exclude men from the union were that they were not 'reasonably competent to perform the work of a wharf labourer, and ... of good character and sober habits [and] to join the union upon written application and upon the payment of an entrance fee not exceeding 10/- and an annual subscription not exceeding 10/-', *NSW, Industrial Arbitration Reports*, Vol 3, 1904, pp.290–295

264 SWLU, *General Minutes*, 10 Apr 1901, ANU/NBA Z248/Box 95

265 The union cutback in having no 1905 8-hour display. Legal fees amounted to £200 not including payments to members to attend hearing, SWLU, *General Minutes*, 20 Sept 1905, 16 May 1906, ANU/NBA Z248/Box 96

266 SWLU, *General Minutes*, 8 Apr 1903, ANU/NBA Z248/Box 96

267 Heydon took office on 3 July 1905. Also one of the officials representing the union was admitted to a mental asylum.

268 Heydon - 'not so easily moved as the late President Cohen whose leaning was clearly in favour of workers', I. Macdonald to Mackay, 9 Aug 1905, AUSNCo Correspondence, *Letter Book*, No 1, p.180N, *McKellar Collection* ML MSS 4458/Box 127

269 For example companies were required to submit certified copies of company balance sheets for 1902–1904, see I. Macdonald to Mackay, 8 Sept 1915; AUSNCo Correspondence, *Letter Book* No 1, p.208, *McKellar Collection* ML MSS 4458/Box 127


272 I. Macdonald to Mackay, 8 Sept 1905, AUSNCo Correspondence, *Letter Book* No 1, p.208, *McKellar Collection* ML MSS 4458/Box 127

273 Later Book

274 Private Letter Book

275 ML MSS 4548/Box 127

276 *Later Book*
273 On the basis of the evidence submitted over the 156 days considered labour demand ranged between 129 (next lowest, 204) and 1,029 men. Notwithstanding the fact that it was not uncommon for men to work for two employers on the same day, only 15 days did the number of men exceed 800 days over the six month period, see NSW, Industrial Arbitration Reports, Vol 4, 1905, pp.377-381.


276 SWLU, General Minutes, 4 Oct 1905, ANU/NBA Z248/Box 97


278 The Brisbane United Coal Workers and Lightermen's Union was a breakaway union from the Brisbane wharf labourers. The employers wanted to cut the ordinary and overtime rates by 1/2d. which was successfully resisted but ordinary hours were extended to 48 a week. The wheat carrying rate was cut by 1 1/2d. an hour but their hours remained at 44 with a later start, see SWLU, General Minutes 20 Dec 1905, 17 Jan 1906 ANU/NBA Z248/Box 96.

279 J. Macdonald to Mackay, 14 Nov 1905, AUSCo Correspondence, Letter Book No 1, p. 265K, McKellar Collection ML MSS 4548/Box 127. The industrial action included an overtime ban and stoppage.

280 NSW, Industrial Arbitration Reports, Vol 5, 1906, p.225


282 SWLU, General Minutes, 6 May 1906, ANU/NBA Z248/Box 96

283 J. Macdonald to Mackay, 22 Dec 1905, AUSCo, Correspondence, Letter Book, No 1, p.311, McKellar Collection ML MSS 4548/Box 127

284 On the basis of the existing agreement the NWL.U applied for a new award. Th existing agreement Clause (S) read in part "Constant men not to handle in transit from the shed or store to the ships after it leaves the door of the shed or store", Application for a Newcastl Award, Court of Arbitration, Transcripts, Vol 30, 1906, p.6, NSW Archives, Industrial Commission File 2/85.


286 Negotiations in Nov 1906 fixed overtime wage increases at 1/6d. from 1 Jan 1907 and 1/6d. from 1 Jan 1908 in a proposed 3 year agreement in which it was "agreed to formally concede these points." The final arrangements had yet to be reached, J. Macdonald to Mackay, 30 Nov 1906 p. 380. The Federation's refusal to ratify the terms, precipitated the dispute in 1907, J. Macdonald to Mackay, 11 Feb 1907, p.440D, both in AUSCo Correspondence, Letter Book No 2, McKellar Collection ML MSS 4548/Box 127.

287 J. Macdonald to Mackay, 20 Nov 1906, AUSCo, Correspondence, Letter Book No 2, p.380. Macdonald had urged owners to concede some issues to avoid the Court before the conference. J. Macdonald to Mackay, 16 Nov 1906, AUSCo Correspondence, Letter Book No 2, p.355, both in McKellar Collection ML MSS 4548/Box 127.

288 J. Macdonald to Mackay, 16 Nov 1906, AUSCo Correspondence, Letter Book No 2, p.355, McKellar Collection ML MSS 4548/Box 127

289 SWLU, General Minutes, 16 Jan 1907, ANU/NBA Z248/Box 96

290 Sydney Morning Herald, 25 Jan 1907

291 J. Macdonald to Mackay 25 Jan 1907, AUSCo Correspondence, Letter Book No 2, p.429, McKellar Collection ML MSS 4548/Box 127

292 SWLU, General Minutes, 23 Jan 1907, ANU/NBA Z248/Box 96

293 J. Macdonald to Mackay, 1 Feb 1907, AUSCo Correspondence, Letter Book No 2, p.435, McKellar Collection ML MSS 4548/Box 127

294 Clause 13, NSW, Industrial Arbitration Reports, Vol 6, 1907, p.20

295 ASOF, Report for 1904,1905,1906, p.24, ANU/NBA E217/89; the Agreement appears as 22 Feb 1907, NSW, Industrial Arbitration Reports, Vol 6, 1907, Appendix V.

296 In particular differences between Hunter of McElrath McEacham and Appleton of Huddart Parker appear to have also been personal, J. Macdonald to Mackay, 1 Feb, 11 Feb 1907, AUSCo Correspondence, Letter Book No 2, pp.435,437-438, 440D, McKellar Collection ML MSS 4548/Box 127

297 J. Macdonald to Mackay, 11 Feb 1907, AUSCo Correspondence, Letter Book No 2, p.440D, McKellar Collection ML MSS 4548/Box 127


301 PAWA, Rules, 1905 ANU/NBA E51

302 Rules of Pay and Meal Hours Clauses, Schedule 1, Memorandum of Agreement between ASOF & others and MWLU. 31 Oct 1906, copy from AEWL, Federal Office Sydney; Macdonald of AUSCo was of the view that it was a "satisfactory agreement, J. Macdonald to Mackay 16 Nov 1906, AUSCo Correspondence, Letter Book No 2, p.354, McKellar Collection ML MSS 4548/Box 127.

303 It had not to fight for this they were prepared to do so, WWF, COM, Minutes, 24 Oct 1907, p.72, ANU/NBA T62/1/1.

304 Rules of Pay and Meal Hours Clauses, Schedules 1 and 2, Memorandum of Agreement between ASOF & others and MWLU, 1 Nov 1907, copy from AEWL, Federal Office Sydney.

305 ASOF, Report for 1904,1905,1906, p.5, ANU/NBA E217/89; Macdonald thought the Townsville agreement was satisfactory. J. Macdonald to Mackay 16 Nov 1906, AUSCo Correspondence, Letter Book No 2, p.354, McKellar Collection ML MSS 4548/Box 127

306 Working Rules and Regulations for the Port of Brisbane, 22 Dec 1906, para1,12,16, McKellar Collection ML MSS 4548/Box 118 Envelope 229


308 These were Cairns, Cooltow, Mackay, Rockhampton and Maryborough, WWF, COM, Minutes, 24 Oct, reaffirmed 21 Nov 1907, pp.73,77. The Brisbane men were "not treated fairly" when they went to Brisbane for a conference, COM, Minutes, 23 Aug 1907, p.68, all ANU/NBA T62/1/1.

309 Conferences in reported in May and Oct 1908, WWF, COM, Minutes 8 May, 2 Oct 1908, pp.80,84, ANU/NBA T62/1/1


311 Complaints about Albany recorded in WWF, COM, Minutes, 21 Nov 1907, 8 April 1908, pp.77,79, ANU/NBA T62/1/1

312 The Brisbane United Coal Workers and Lighteman's Union was a breakaway union from the Brisbane wharf labourers. The Industrial Gazette, records the first agreement at 8 September 1908, yet the Government Gazette, lists the Board's formation at 26 Dec 1908 after hearings beginning on 5 Dec. It was a four member Board, two employers (Richard Cleghorn and Henry Noble) and two coalworkers (John Scully and John Doyle). Queensland Industrial Gazette, Vol 1, 1916, p.17; Queensland Government Gazette, Vol 41, No 112, pp.1106,1154,1233

313 Industrial Agreement ASOF and the named WWF Branches 31 Dec 1908, copies from AEWL, Federal Office, Sydney

314 Clauses 3,4,5 WWF (various branches) and ASOF Industrial Agreement, 31 Dec 1908, AEWL, Federal Office, Sydney
315 Eg the year before Macdonald of the AUSNCo (along with Howard Smith and the ASSCo covered much of the Old trade) complained, in general, of labour troubles, "no sooner fixed up one port and another one comes along". In particular Cairns made "extravagant demands", yet he expected that the problems to be fixed "up amicably by giving something away", I. Macdonald to Mackay, 16 Nov 1906, AUSNCo Correspondence, Letter Book No 2, p.354, McKellar Collection ML MSS 4548/Box 127.

316 Eg working bulk coal or coke on Sundays, Christmas Day, Good Friday or Eight-Hour Day, Clause 4 or 5 for the ports covered by these agreements.

317 Various clause numbers for each agreement. In Cairns the employers

318 Various clauses for each agreement, eg Clause 14(b) Bowen Agreement pp.3-4, Clause 15(b) Rockhampton Agreement, pp.3-4 and so on.

319 WWF, COM, Minutes, 8 July 1909, p.89, ANU/NBA T62/1/1

320 WWF, COM, Minutes, 8 July 1909, p.90, ANU/NBA T62/1/1

321 WWF, COM, Minutes, 9 Sept 1909, p.93, ANU/NBA T62/1/1

322 Sydney Morning Herald, 27 Jan 1910

323 WWF, COM, Minutes, 5 May 1908, p.81, ANU/NBA T62/1/1

324 Minutes of Meeting of Marine Superintendents and Company Representatives, 17 July 1909, ASOF, Minute Book, p.299, ANU/NBA E217/3

325 Eg for officers (Merchant Service Guild) and the engineers (Institute of Power Engineers), see CAR Vol 1, 1906, pp.1-246f.

326 See Table in Section I Conciliation Appendix, WE on Strikes (1891), p.79

327 They had initially wanted to rescind the decision, but then voted 4 to 2 in favour of acceptance, with 2 abstentions, VSOA, Minutes, 30 Nov 1893, p.51, ANU/NBA, E217/1

328 VSOA, Minutes, 8 Oct 1896, p.224, ANU/NBA, E217/1

329 VSOA, Minutes, 9 Oct 1896, 16 July 1896 ANU/NBA, pp.87-88,201, E217/1

330 SOOA, Eighth Annual Report Year to 31 July 1892, 16 Aug 1892, 8 McKellar Collection, ML MSS 4548/Box 249

331 1. members of SOOA to Industrial Registrar, 13 Aug 1895, Industrial Commission T.U.58, Min. to Dept of Industrial Relations, (UNSW, 1982)

332 The ASOF appointed a sub-committee to look into the reasons for their request, ASOF, Minutes, 9 March 1903, ANU/NBA E217/3.

333 2. Macdonald to Mackay 26 Oct 1901, ASOF Correspondence, Private Letter Book No 1, p.59 (emphasis added), McKellar Collection ML MSS 4548/Box 127

334 ASOF, Minutes, 27 Dec 1901, 9 Jan 27 Feb 1902 pp.99,103,114 ANU/NBA E217/2

335 3. Macdonald to Mackay 16 June 1902, Macdonald Correspondence, Private Letter Book, No 1, p.173, McKellar Collection ML MSS 4548/Box 127

336 A complaint noted by an employer, 1. Macdonald to Mackay, 8 Dec 1905, AUSNCo Correspondence, Letter Book, No 1, p.294, McKellar Collection ML MSS 4548/Box 127

337 ASOF, Minutes, 27 June 1901, p.58, ANU/NBA E217/2

338 Reference to a full consideration of the Bill was proposed in early 1904, ASOF, Minutes, 7 April 1904, ANU/NBA E217/2. But such a consideration, if undertaken does not appear in the Federations minutes; ASOF, Report for 1904,1905,1906, p.10, ANU/NBA E217/89

339 This process included a meeting with the Industrial Registrar, J. C. Stewart, ASOF, Minutes, 13, 27 April, 11 May 1905, pp.14,18, ANU/NBA E217/3; ASOF, Report for 1904,1905,1906, p.10, ANU/NBA E217/89

340 SWLU, General Minutes, 31 Mar 1902, ANU/NBA Z248/1895

341 WWF, COM, Minutes, 2 Mar 1903, pp.34-35, ANU/NBA T62/1/1

342 WWF, COM, Minutes, 4 April 1905, p.53, ANU/NBA T62/1/1

343 WWF, COM, Minutes, 20 July 1905, p.61, ANU/NBA T62/1/1

344 Coal Working and Lighterage Industry Board – Brisbane, Award of 12 Dec 1911 and winchers and other lighterage not engaged in the coal industry were covered by an Award from the Masters and Engineers of River and Bay Steam Boats and Barges – Brisbane of 10 Sept 1909, Schedule 1 of The Industrial Peace Act of 1912, DGG Vol 49, No 162 9 Dec 1912, pp.1634,1635


346 eg. Clause 8, Union Rules "There shall be no Lumpers’ Union Rules which may conflict with this Agreement ..." Industrial and Conciliation Act, FWLU Industrial Agreement, 17 Dec 1910, p.10, copy from AEWL Sydney

347 Gaby, The Restless Waterfront, p.12

348 Free labour was used in a coal strike in Newcastle from December 1909.

349 eg. Sydney Committee to ASOF, included in ASOF Minutes, 2 Feb 1910, p.29, ANU/NBA E217/4

350 SWLU, General Minutes, 30 Jan 1901, ANU/NBA Z248/Box 95

351 SWLU, General Minutes, 9 Jan, 12 June, 6 Feb 1901, ANU/NBA Z248/Box 95

352 eg one report in Feb 1901 indicated that the men were unaware of changes, regretted their action and returned to work, SWLU, General Minutes, 13 Feb 1901, ANU/NBA Z248/Box 95

353 Incorrect wage rate paid at Pyrmont; trouble over hours, overtime payment at Dalgety; abuse by foreman Frost at ASSCo.; complaint on an hour overtime payment not paid at Orient Wharf; overtime at Dalgety; low day wage for lighterage at Keane’s; arbitrary treatment by foreman Fox at Huddart Parker, and so on, SWLU, General Minutes, 27 Feb, 20 Mar, 3,17,10,24 Apr, 15 May, ANU/NBA Z248/Box 95

354 There were parallels in the Lib–Lab politics of the British docker leadership in the same era, see eg. Scheuer, Jonathan, Men Tilers; Portrait of a Labour Leader, (Croom Helm, London, 1982)

355 Lockwood, Ship to Shore, p.112

356 SWLU, General Minutes, 22 Sept 1897, p.19, ANU/NBA Z248/Box 95

357 WWF, COM, Minutes, 13 Sept 1910, pp.105-106, ANU/NBA T62/1/1


359 Evidence of Robert Mahoney, Secretary of SPDU, with many members also in SWLU, No 76 of 1902, NSW Court of Arbitration, Transcripts, Vol 2, 1905, p.605. NSW Archives, Industrial Commission File 2/59.

360 WWF, COM, Minutes, 30 Oct 1908, 30 April 1909, p.87, ANU/NBA T62/1/1

361 Hughes reported in Sept that he, along with the secretary of the carters and Drivers, had been elected to represent the carters, WWF, COM, Minutes, 9 Sept, 7 Oct 1909 pp.95,96, ANU/NBA T62/1/1

362 It is felt that this was on both sides of the fence, worker and fulltime foreman could condemn the system, see Nelson, The Hungry Mule and Gaby, The Restless Waterfront

363 Evidence of Henry Howell, manager, No 76 of 1902, NSW Court of Arbitration, Transcripts, Vol 2, 1905, pp.801,802, NSW Archives, Industrial Commission File 2/59. Howell alleged that in general (and it was the practice in overseas work) it was the responsibility of the consignee to load and unload loads, but competition amongst interstate companies lead to the introduction of this loading and unloading as each "tried to give the best facilities [ie service] possible" for shippers.

In my experience ... [there is] difficulty in getting what are called preference men to take constant positions because they earn more money in the casual way”. Evidence of Henry Howell, manager, No 76 of 1902, NSW Court of Arbitration, *Transcripts*, Vol 2, 1905, p.845, *NSW Archives*, Industrial Commission File 2/59.


Evidence of William Cavanagh, wharf labourer, No 76 of 1902, NSW Court of Arbitration, *Transcripts*, Vol 2, 1905, p.697, *NSW Archives*, Industrial Commission File 2/59. Cavanagh did point out that he and 11 others, were paid extra for working through meal breaks and for the 13.5 hour stretch he was paid 19s.6d. He also boasted that no one at Adelaide made as much as he did (p.698).

Kelynack Q. "Did the preference men consider they were entitled to that [additional stacking work]"? Howell A. "Yes ... certainly non-preference men are discontinued – always happens", No 76 of 1902, NSW Court of Arbitration, *Transcripts*, Vol 2, 1905, p.842, *NSW Archives*, Industrial Commission File 2/59.

"... there is "a lot of favouritism at a lot of the wharves" and as a result he can't get work, evidence of Robert Lisk, wharf labourer, No 76 of 1902, NSW Court of Arbitration, *Transcripts*, Vol 2, 1905, p.768, *NSW Archives*, Industrial Commission File 2/59.


Unions of about a 1,000 or more members. Brisbane and Hobart during this period had considerably less than a thousand, Brisbane losing the coalworkers in 1907.

*Wright, The Management of Labour*, pp.15-19

*Barnes, The Longshoremen* [1915], chs 7-8

Schneider and Sceif, *Industrial Relations in the Pacific Coast Longshore Industry*, pp.1-10; Larrowe, *Shape-Up and Hiring Hall*, chs 1,2 esp. pp.27-39

London, New York, Liverpool, Manchester are examples of the entrenched sectionalism, based not only on trades, but on ship type (steam or sail), waterfront type (river men or dock men) function (ship men and dockers) ethnicity/race (Irish versus blacks), cargo type (comporter, tea, produce men, coal heavers, and so on), see Barnes, *The Longshoremen*: Lowell, Stevedores and Dockers; and "Sail, steam and emergent Dockers' unionism in Britain, 1850-1914", *International Review of Social History*, Vol 32, 1987, pp.230-249

*Beasley, Wharfies*, pp.20-34
Part 4

The National Scope: Uneasy Formalisation and Work Control

This Part deals with the period in which the national scope of industrial relations emerged in 1910–11 to the immediate post–depression period of 1935. The institutional structure of formalised industrial relations was in place, but employer, union and worker practices combined with the lack of appropriate organisational mechanisms resulted in a continued reliance on informalism. The tensions that were identified after 1900 between workplace practice and formal proceduralism were also sustained by the employers' continued reliance on traditional work organisation and methods in the labour process.

This period was the high point of the Australian coastal shipping industry in both general cargo and passenger markets. Water transport remained the main mode of long–distance transport, but it came under increasing pressure from rail and later road transport. The ASOF companies continued to dominate market share, rising to over eighty percent, helped by government support for a revenue pooling system.

The employers' industrial concentration was matched by greater cooperation and coordination in industrial relations. The overseas companies formed the Oversea Shipowners Representatives Association (OSRA) in 1912 in the face of WWF industrial demands. In response to such workplace challenges to their authority, the two employers' associations combined to form the Central Committee of Shipowners in 1927, formalised in mid–1928.

From the employers' perspective pressures for local arrangements by company operational and port level employers associations saw a continuation of local agreements in ports around Australia through WWI and into the 1920s. The influence of workplace informalism continued from rank–and–file workers. It sustained pressure for local and workplace autonomy. Informalism was now however increasingly politicised, by revolutionary unionism and communism. Although defeated in the 1917 NSW general strike, watersiders continued to make demands for work control. Indeed demands for 'job control' through direct action were increasingly successful, particularly in Queensland ports regulated under the Queensland arbitration system. Workers in several ports were able to exercise authority over most stages of the employment relation. This effectively countered the authority that employers' gained in the 1890s. In general the first decades of arbitration rested on an uneasy formalisation of industrial relations.

However the growing employers cooperation and coordination in labour issues was not matched by national organisation of the WWF. The weakening economy and labour market in the
late 1920s saw the employers seize the opportunity to defeat job control in a union strike over the 1928 federal Waterside Workers' Award, handed down by Judge Beeby. Shipowners' with the support of the federal conservative government inflicted a significant defeat on the WWF. Under the federal Transport Workers' Act, the employers were able to gain wide control of all stages of the employment relation and therefore the workplace. The depression further weakened the position of workers and the union. The next phase of the industry marked by the rise of communist leadership and national joint regulation under the Stevedoring Industry Commission established by the Federal Labor Government in 1942 lies outside the scope of this thesis.
Chapter 10
Bargaining and Federal Arbitration; Industrial Relations in Stevedoring, 1910–1918

I. Introduction

This chapter examines the conditions which lead to the parties opting for Federal award coverage and their early experience until the 1917 strike. From 1900 local collective bargaining emerged as employers sought to avoid arbitration. Although the demise of Collins and Hobson removed private product market regulation it was continued by bilateral freight agreements between companies and then war time government regulation and a revenue pooling system during WWI. In this context shipowners came to view the arbitration system as a vehicle for industry-wide labour management and control, based on collective agreements and then an award. They abandoned an avoidance policy. The Federal award of 1914–15 marked the beginning of a central place for Federal Arbitration in stevedoring industrial relations. Where arbitration provided a framework for collective bargaining prior to 1910, it then became the primary vehicle in the conduct and content of labour regulation and authority in the stevedoring industry.

The process was political as well as industrial since arbitration anchored wider socio-political rights in the sphere of production. It was an inherently ambivalent process, but arbitration legitimised the new industrial relations. The stevedoring labour process remained unchanged in this period and employers still relied on informal labour organisation. The ACAC found the myriad of local issues in the industry difficult to regulate, and was unsuccessful in dealing with the actions of the parties in critical periods. The next chapter demonstrates the importance of the political framework, expressed in the Transport Workers Act.

In this chapter I argue that although federal arbitration bolstered union organisation and provided a framework for bargaining, critically it was unable to alter the industrial relations dynamic of the stevedoring industry. Wartime conditions added new economic and market pressures, but the organisational dynamic of employers and workers remained intact. However industrial relations took on a stronger political dimension.

The chapter is organised in the following manner. The next section examines the trajectory of change signalled in the Queensland agreements discussed in chapter nine. Section III discusses the first federal award and its immediate effects. Section IV looks at the 1917 strike. The conclusion draws together the argument.

II. Federal Coordination & Collective Bargaining 1910–1913

Between 1910 and 1914 employers and workers faced new economic conditions as the industry matured. The ASOF companies reinforced their market position, but inflation appeared in
1911 that increased employers' costs and eroded the gains made by unions after the real wage cuts during the 1890s. Unionisation grew to 44 percent nationally in 1912 and over 50 percent in NSW. In 1911 there were more than 13,500 stevedores and waterside workers in more than 30 ports and 14,000 in 1914. The shipping industry had 41 unions covering 35,000 workers, in December 1912. Union density on the waterfront was high, often over 90 percent. In Sydney the SWLU had 3,700 members in 1912 and less than 500 non-union labourers offered for work. Exceptions such as Albany, where a company 'union' covered workers until a branch of the WWF was reformed in 1911, were rare. In sum, the industry was expanding but it faced unstable economic and political conditions. Thus the employers favoured national regulation. These conditions were also favourable for the WWF leadership to advance its long held policy of national recognition and bargaining.

This section addresses the following issues. The first part focuses on industrial relations between the beginning of 1910 and the signing of the first interstate collective bargaining agreement in October 1911. Based on the 1908 Queensland agreements it now fell under the umbrella of the ACAC. The second part examines the pressures that led to the collapse of this pattern of collective bargaining. The final part summarises the section.

1. National Collective Bargaining

The adoption of a national collective bargaining agreement by the ASOF and WWF in October 1911 was built on more than a decade of port level bargaining. The series of port agreements that flowed from national negotiations also reflected the development of the role of concessions in the bargaining process. Moreover, the agreements marked the impact of the federal system, as they were the first to be registered under the Federal Conciliation and Arbitration Act for the waterfront. The policy of greater dependence on arbitration was driven by the continued solidaristic direct action encountered by shipowners. Employers searched for greater enforcement powers for agreements.

As I have shown, interstate companies (and the overseas stevedores in Sydney) adopted a policy of direct collective bargaining around the country. Many agreements were registered under the state arbitration acts, particularly in WA. By the beginning of 1910, employment conditions of waterside workers were generally set outside arbitration. The SWLU agreement for example was not registered under the Industrial Disputes Act of 1908.

A bitter NSW coal strike beginning in November 1909 began a process of change. The strike, over the victimisation of unionists, was supported by rank and file waterside workers. The WWF COM was apprehensive and hoped that members would not be "squeezed" and the ASOF agreement broken. The executive recognised a response was required and consulted branches over a sympathy strike. Most were indecisive and apprehensive as was the COM. It held a combined unions conference on the issue, but nothing official was done. Hughes' involvement over the next three months was limited, since he was seeking re-election to the federal parliament. The WWF sank into inaction over the next six months. Hughes became Attorney-General with the election of the Fisher Labor government.

It was left to individual Port unions to determine their own attitude to the dispute. The MWLU, for example, resolved on 1 December 1909 not to handle foreign or non-union coal. No direct action was taken initially, but as the dispute grew effects flowed to all industries. Since the
dispute was centred in NSW, the attitude of the SWLU, the coalworkers and the NWLU and the Coal Trimmers were critical for the fate of waterside workers. The shipowners in NSW went back to arbitration, and were followed in 1911 by the shipowners at the federal level as they went into the federal arbitration system.

Coal shortages prompted a NSW government decision to import coal from Japan and India that provoked industrial agitation on the wharves. Action was taken against the Union SSCO and the Sydney coalworkers refused to work coal they believed loaded by non-unionists. In response the overseas company P. & O. also engaged non-union labour and unionist then refused to work P. & O. vessels and others. It was reported that,

no orders [are] taken from the union officials. The men do not apply to their leaders for advice as to whether any steamer should or should not be worked. If the officials advise no work is an illegal act and consequently the men decide the matter among themselves. They do not even take a vote at a mass meeting.

Hughes had continually argued for discretion and moderation against the 'irreconcilables.' Although some 450 non-unionists were taken on through the weeks of January and February 1910, the on and off nature of the agitation saw many employers give preference to SWLU men, "as they know the ships' thoroughly, and consequently they have considerable advantage over strangers from the employers point of view." In Melbourne, there was differences between members over the MWLU executive decision to rescind the 1 December resolution. They were not asked to resign, by a vote of 245 to 117, and indeed the Hughes policy of not banning coal was adopted.

In Sydney the position became more uncertain. The unchecked spread of rank and file action in the port was addressed at a rowdy meeting of the SWLU on Saturday 22 January. Hughes argued for internal discipline and likened disorganisation to anti-unionism and pointed to the debacle of 1890. Amid yelling from the 'irreconcilables', it was decided to put the coal question to a ballot. Held over the following week the ballot resulted in further confusion. Although the formal vote to work coal was supported by 883 to 787 with 25 informal (of the 3,700 union members), the report of the returning officer was soundly rejected at a meeting on 29 January - by a vote of four to one against. The "red flags" dominated the meeting of some 200 workers. A further meeting three days later was again rowdy and inconclusive.

The political conflicts played out in the SWLU were a reflection of broader divisions. Hughes came under sustained attack at a political meeting in his West Sydney electorate during the same week. His socialist opponent Harry Holland, the radical miners' leader Peter Bowhing and others in the crowd charged him with being a traitor and a liar. They argued that Labor had sold out workers and that the Wade government and the party were synonymous with capitalism, because it had prosecuted the miners' leaders. The meeting closed with a motion in support of the socialist Holland.

In general the influence of radical politics spread. Socialist, syndicalist and splinter groups all fed the agitation on the wharves. The influence of the Industrial Workers of the World (IWW) grew in Sydney and in the ranks of the waterside workers. The Sydney IWW Club condemned the action against the miners' leaders, including Peter Bowling, the removal of the case to Sydney, and their conviction in February. The IWW supported direct action. The organisation condemned the penal provisions of the Industrial Arbitration Act and "the attempt, in the name of Labour, to continue the pernicious principle of compulsory arbitration ... [for] the right and power
to strike is admitted the strongest weapon of the workers to resist aggression and obtain better working conditions.\footnote{13} Members such as Bill Beattie and colleague Fred Morgan joined in early 1915 and "worked on the wharves and together we trod the hungry mile in Sydney."\footnote{14} The IWW Hall was in Sussex Street at the centre of the Sydney maritime industry. Splinter groups such as the 'International Industrialists' distributed pamphlets to the Labor Council. They too condemned the Wade government a tool of the "mine-owning capitalists" which instituted "the most brutal system of coercion ever known in any civilised country". This group advocated working-class demonstration in the streets and a 48–hour general strike.\footnote{15} In other words, the infusion of political ideology into industrial relations was growing apace.

With continuing industrial agitation the Stevedores Association warned in late January 1910, that it would seek the establishment of a wages board under the Industrial Disputes Act. The SWLU industrial agreement was due expire at the end of February. Also the miners had been convicted under the penal provisions of Disputes Act. The overseas stevedores hoped to stem the tide of unofficial action on the coal issue on the waterfront. The Association represented not only the overseas companies but also coal stevedores and coastal companies. All were affected by the rolling action. The union was conceding no ground in claiming that "there were strikes here and there, just as the gangs handling the goods take it into their heads .... [leaving] in a state of uncertainty and bewilderment". The Association cancelled the Deep-Sea agreement with the SWLU a few days later.\footnote{16}

Sporadic industrial action continued.\footnote{17} Initially the interstate companies had recognised the possible impact of the coal strike, but each company handled their ships as the need arose.\footnote{18} They used constant men, free labourers and staff to work vessels. In February 1910, the ASOF in Melbourne considered the hold up of the "Ashridge." Like the overseas stevedores they concluded that the SWLU secretary was unable to control the rank and file, but decided not to employ free labourer at that time. Some dissenters, such as Mills of the Union SSCO were critical of ASOF decision - arguing that the companies should retain that right.\footnote{19}

In response to the agitation, the overseas employers opened a Freedom of Contract Bureau in Reiby Lane off Pitt Street a week later. The Bureau was harassed and disrupted on its first day and a copy of the Bureau's scheme of operation, submitted to P. & O., was reported stolen.\footnote{20} Moreover a stevedore, A. Richardson, advertised the formation of a Free Labour League. Holding its first meeting only days later, the Free Labourers' Association was formed with the motto 'Freedom of Contract'. It registered free labourers for all trades, not only the maritime industry.\footnote{21} In contrast, the interstate employers were divided on the issue and decided not to form a stevedoring company that would operate like a labour bureau.\footnote{22}

Concern over the strike pay and the loss of work to the free labourers grew in the SWLU. Some 60 percent of waterside workers and 50 percent of seamen were reported to be out of work in December because of the miners strike. These figures were undoubtedly greater in February.\footnote{23} Nevertheless the SWLU opposed the Stevedores application for a wages board under Industrial Disputes Act. Moreover the Free Labourers Association, representing some of the 450 men who took the places of SWLU members, along with the Permanent Waterside Workers' Union, made an application for one of the two union positions on the Board. At the end of February, the
coalworkers who had returned to work, now refused to bunker vessels worked by free labourers. The overseas stevedores relented and replaced the free labourers with SWLU members.

The President of the NSW Arbitration Court was stinging in his criticism of the employers who had consistently granted preference to the SWLU, yet opposed it in Court. They had used free labourers in the disputes over the previous weeks only to later discard them. He regretted that employers could do this with impunity, since under the legislation only unionists, and not non-unionists, were protected from victimisation. The President permitted representation on the Waterside Workers (Deep Sea) Board by the permanent and free labourers. This decision only slowed the process of arriving at an award. The ASOF in Melbourne noted the constitution of the Board on 3 March.

It was not until November 1910 that the Board made an award that covered the overseas trade. It marked a return to the arbitration system by some employers and brought the SWLU back under industrial legislation that included enforcement powers. It regulated the only the Sydney overseas trade that employed about 1800 men. The award closely defined waterside work and did not include stores work. However it limited constant work to those employed for a minimum of twelve months. This award paved the way for the interstate employers to re-enter the arbitration system, although again without direct arbitral intervention.

During 1910 the ASOF were content to maintain the existing collective agreements. The Queensland agreement was due to expire in February 1911. Registered port agreements in Western Australian were well established on a renewal of one or two years. The Fremantle lumpers renewed an agreement in early 1910 and late in the year. In the other states port agreements were negotiated outside of any arbitration system. A sharp strike of waterfront timber sorters in Melbourne in March 1910 brought both the MWLU and the PPSA out in support. Both unions, and Seamen and Carters and Drivers refused to work with free labourers. This solidarity on the waterfront brought success as improvements in conditions were gained for the timber men. It also indicated that the radicals on the Yarra waterfront, like their counterparts in Sydney, were becoming more influential.

In NSW the interstate agreement expired in February 1910 – as did the overseas agreement as has been noted above. But there were no moves from the SWLU or employers for change in the format. The ASOF discovered in mid-1910 that SWLU was under the mistaken view that the Sydney interstate agreement expired on the same date as the Queensland agreements, namely February 1911. It "tacitly accepted" this situation. However the ASOFs national Conciliation committee in Melbourne (set up under the Queensland Agreement) had been examining complaints by the SWLU to the NSWSSOA over constant workers at Howard Smith and the rates paid for bagged ore.

As the expiration date of the Queensland agreement approached, the WWF arranged a conference with the ASOF in November 1910. The WWF made overtures for Fremantle to join the union, but it declined. However Melbourne voted to rejoin. And smaller ports, such as Launceston, joined as the federal union now covered more than two dozen branches and 10,000 members. Prior to the 28 November, the branches sought a union conference to frame the demands to shipowners. But negotiations proceeded with the shipowners with little formal input from the branches. In less than a month the COM reported that it secured "very good increases and
conditions for the whole of the branches" with only minor points outstanding. These could be settled by secretaries of the union and the employers. The agreement set the ordinary rate of 1s. 3d. an hour, and 1s.10 1/2d. for overtime and appropriate rates for holidays and special cargoes and brought the interstate men into line with the overseas trade. A draft agreement was sent to the branches, to be responded to before 8 January 1911. The haste to secure this agreement proved to be untenable. Not only was it not possible to achieve the necessary consensus but the economic and labour market conditions enabled the branches to press further demands before the agreement was even finalised. Employers started to pay the new rates from late January 1911, but the agreement was never formally signed.

The economic situation centred on rising inflation and a relatively buoyant labour market. The rising influence of radicals in many branches brought demands for wage rises and improvements in conditions. There was clearly resentment that wage rates had changed little in twenty years and that the bull system subjected workers to constant pressure of labour intensity. In early January, the Port Phillip Stevedores took matters into their own hands and pressed for wage rises to 1s. 6d. an hour ordinary time and 2s. 6d. for overtime. They settled for 1s. 5d. ordinary time. Strikes at the end of the month by the MWLU for similar demands saw rowdy scenes at a union meeting on 30 January. Discontent over the differences in the hourly rate of 2d. was only one aspect of rank and file feeling. Moderates Joe Morris of the WWF, Tucker and Hayes, President of the MWLU, urged members to return to work and negotiate for increases. Although the secret ballot went in their favour 354 to 195, the militants refused to accept the result and did not attend for engagement for days. Agitation and direct action continued – a strike over special rates on cement broke out in mid-February, and the refusal to handle agricultural equipment in March. Hayes approached the WWF in early February. The MWLU wanted a conference with the employers over hours, overtime and special rates – work to cease at 5pm (not the existing 5:30); Saturday work 12 noon–4pm to be at 1s.10 1/2d. an hour and an overtime rate of 2s. 6d. an hour; special rates to cover lime, bagged cement, superphosphate and other cargoes. The Melbourne agreements over the previous five years did not cover the range of special cargo rates which operated in Queensland for example. A conference was ruled out, but Hughes was to approach the employers over the issues. Pressure from the branches on other issues forced the COM to extend the scope of issues covered in the proposed national agreement. Yet some local port agreements were still finalised at this time, with little or no change from existing agreements.

The abolition of sailor labour in working cargo, and thereby consolidating the job territory of the waterside workers, was a central issue. Initially rejected by the employers, this demand was a central element in negotiations later in the year. In June, Hughes secured an extension of the national agreement which had not yet been formally signed. The shipowners were anxious to have a mechanism to restrain the continual stream of stoppages, and Hughes wanted to win branch support for the national agreement. He thus agreed to a penalty clause while the employers accepted winch driving as waterside rather than seamen's work. The penalties included fines of up to £50 per vessel affected by a 'partial' strike or lockout and up to a £1000 in the event of a complete cessation of work. Hughes was unsuccessful. Branches rejected penalties and the agitation and direct action continued.
The north Queensland sugar dispute in July 1911 emphasised the point. Like the coal strike eighteen months earlier shipping was entangled in a dispute outside its control. In mid-1911 Australian Workers Association members were in dispute with employers in the sugar industry. Seamen and Queensland waterside workers would not handle sugar milled by non-union labour. A mass meeting of Cairns members on 1 July voted not to handle sugar, soon followed by Townsville and Mackay. All these unions ignored advice from Morris and the COM to remain neutral. ASSCo permanent staff worked the cargo. A few days later the Cairns men handled sugar again. Hughes, now Acting Prime Minister, and the executive gave way to rank and file pressure from the branches. The Federation decided on 14 July to instruct the branches to clear the wharves and not to handle non-union sugar after 6pm on 18 July. Hughes publicly announced this a week later after securing agreement with the Seamen to join them. The employers response was only cool – warning that this implied loss of services to north Queensland ports. Agitation continued. Staff, clerks, ships' officers, bargemen and free labourers worked cargo over the next few weeks in Queensland ports. Indeed some free labourers actually joined the strike, indicating the strength of the labour market. The spread of action brought fears of a repeat of the 1890 strike. Hughes in his capacity as acting Prime Minister threatened to withdraw the sugar duty. By now the employers and the WWF were keen to find a way out of the dispute, although the employers again attempted to implement the £1000 penalty under the federal Act. The dispute was unexpectedly settled in mid-August after an interstate conference of politicians and eight unions in Brisbane. There was residual resentment in the Queensland ports, such as Mackay and Brisbane, but waterside workers returned to work over the next week.

During this dispute the national agreement lay on the table. As I have mentioned earlier wage rates and hours were effective from January 1911, but the penalty clauses remained a sticking point. Hughes had not officially accepted them by the end of July. He was mindful of the federal arbitration system, and so denied that the refusal to handle sugar constituted a partial strike in any form, under the federal Conciliation and Arbitration Act. Both the ASOF and WWF were registered under the Federal Conciliation and Arbitration Act, although no agreement or award had been entered into or handed down by the Court. Hughes had been careful to guide the WWF towards a national agreement from November 1910 and avoid employer or union antagonism in the process. Hughes was closer to his goal of a national agreement than ever before. Yet his organisational goals were wider still. Hughes saw the WWF as a key union in a national Transport Workers Federation encompassing all unions in the industry. He argued this was necessary for the union to maintain a strong industrial position. However his opinion in regard to the progress of the WWF was clear – in February 1911 he stated the goal for the union was to "look after itself ... [but it] will be a long time before such a state of affairs arrive[s]." His own priorities were also clear. When pressed on the potential for a conflict of interest between his position as federal Attorney-General and President of the WWF during the sugar dispute, he stated that he would have relinquished the latter if it was "questioned". Thus, given his preference for constitutional methods, Hughes found the battle to secure agreement with the branches as taxing as with the employers.
He had guided the Federation through the sugar dispute with no national industrial action. But immediately a new issue arose. The Sydney union resolved that the ordinary time hourly rate should be 1s.6d. Hughes now took a different tack, for penalties for industrial action had been redefined as 'damages', were larger and included a wider definition of strikes and lockouts. The coverage of agreements was wider. The urgency for Hughes appeared to increase.

A two year agreement was signed between the WWF and the CSOA on 6 October 1911 (to expire 9 November 1913) that incorporated agreements covering 18 ports in four states, although eleven were in Queensland and four in Tasmania. No Victorian or South Australian port was covered and only Albany in WA. That is several major branches, MWLU, PPSA, PAWA, FWLU and NWLU remained regulated by local agreements. The agreement was made under the authority of the federal Conciliation and Arbitration Act 1904–1910. It was in fact, the first national collective bargaining agreement signed between the WWF and the national employers registered body, the CSOA.

The agreement included a no strike clause in which continuity of work was a condition of conciliation. The port and national level conciliation procedure was retained from the 1908 agreement. However each of the ports agreed that petty disputes and strikes, partial strikes, and other delays were subject to claims for damages (from either party) to the amount of £50 per vessel per day. Strikes, total cessation of work "with or without its [union] consent or that of its Council", (and lockouts) were defined as action extending more than 24 hours in which work could not proceed. Such action was subject to claims for damages "for each and every breach the sum of £100." In addition, the Federation was subject to a penalty of £1,000 per breach to a maximum of £2,000 for a general strike of the union or members covering two or more ports simultaneously. The same applied for a lockout for employers.

The union enjoyed preference of employment, standardised hours, minimum manning, smoke-ohs, limits on weight carried and conditions found in previous agreements. The local differences in special cargoes, travelling time paid and other conditions were narrowed and made dependent on the cargoes generally handled and the geographical conditions of each port. The Queensland wage rates retained the central and northern regional margins for weather conditions, now set at 1s.6d. and 1s.8d. respectively. However the sailor question still remained partly unresolved – the employers accepted winchmen as waterside workers, but limited this to Sydney, Melbourne, Brisbane and specified wharves in some Queensland ports. The employers retained the right to employ seamen in small ports.

In sum, this section has outlined the conditions that surrounded the negotiation and signing of the first interstate collective bargaining agreement in the stevedoring industry between the federal Union and shipowners. The 1908 Queensland agreements were a model for the 1911 agreements. The inclusion of Sydney and Hobart (and a number of smaller ports) established the national scope to waterfront industrial relations and the role of the WWF. While a bitter national dockers strike was underway in Britain, the conclusion of the previous chapter was confirmed in Australia – that union security was underpinned by the arbitration framework and enabled such an agreement to emerge. With the exception of Sydney and to some extent Hobart, small ports gained most protection and more favourable conditions from the national agreement. For as the SWLU stated,
We have higher wages more constant employment, and better conditions of labour to-day then ever before thanks to unionism and the industrial laws. But we are bound to honour a solemn pledge not to work alongside a non-unionist, or handle cargo, .... That pledge is sacred and binding, and will not be broken under any pretext whatsoever.

The position of the employers was weakened by a number of conditions; brisk trade, low unemployment, rising costs and a suspicious Federal Labor government. The employers were unwilling to risk a major dispute with the largest maritime union. Moreover, federal arbitration provided a national framework to complement the employers use of the state systems, particularly in Western Australia. Their 'accommodation' to the system was however driven more by its potential to control unions rather than as a preferred method of labour management. While they had recognised the control effects of arbitration as early as 1901 employers resisted the recognition and role that compulsory arbitration accorded unions. In 1911 they opted for collective bargaining as preferable to direct intervention of the Court.

But this was short lived. There were two central reasons for this. First, while the compromise on penalties gained signatures, the branches never accepted the principle of penalties for industrial action. At a mass meeting in Sydney the rank and file rejected the agreement. Despite the language of moral commitment in the above quote, the rank and file increasingly conceived industrial action as a basic political right, and did not abandon the type of solidaristic direct action I have identified. Second, contemporary economic conditions generated further demands. Inflation precipitated wage demands from the branches.

2. National Bargaining Under Pressure

The October 1911 Agreement did not stem industrial agitation. It continued over the next two years and pushed the industry out of collective bargaining into the Federal Conciliation and Arbitration Court. This section examines the period immediately prior to the handing down of the first award by the Federal Arbitration Court in May 1914. The new economic context created pressures on the nascent system of national collective bargaining after 1911 that employers and the Federation leadership could not contain. Under these circumstances federal arbitration was inexorable.

Less than a fortnight after the signing of the 6 October agreement, the Sydney interstate men struck for the higher hourly rate demanded in August - £1.6d. and 2s.3d. an hour for ordinary and overtime respectively. Hughes and the COM ordered them back the following day stressing that the new agreement had been adopted and signed by the branch leadership. Hughes and the Sydney President again urged the men to return to work a week later. It was ignored. Other ports refused to handle cargo loaded by volunteers, but didn't go out. Ten days later Sydney overseas men went out in support. The COM again called on all men to resume work, as it feared legal action against the union since mail boats would be affected. When the shipowners claimed a penalty of £1,000 the Federation distanced itself from the strike. It stressed that the union was not consulted and since the action was "in violation of the recent voluntary agreement" the SWLU was liable for any fine that the union may be levied. The federal WWF was moving further away from the port union on industrial issues.

The ASOF took a firm stand, immediately informing the WWF that shipowners would seek penalties under the Agreement. Moreover they would not concede the rise in wages and intended to seek a compulsory conference under the federal Arbitration Court. Although some shippers, such
as the Fruit Merchants were willing to pay the extra rates to enable produce to be moved, the Federation was "very much opposed" to this.

No sooner had the Sydney men voted to return to work without a rise, the issue of working hours emerged. The customary hours in the interstate trade were four hours between breakfast and lunch and four hours between lunch and tea finishing at 5pm. In trying to bring them and the overseas trade into line created the extra half an hour a day from September. The men stopped work at 5pm on 6 November in support of a demand for the same overtime starting time of 6pm, and pay rate as the overseas men. The employers refused, but the men reluctantly turned to work. This was repeated for two nights and on the night of 9 November the men refused to work.

The Minister of Labour and Industry referred the matter to the state arbitration Court, but Judge Scholes found that there was no wages board to cover the dispute. Interstate men were not covered by the deep-sea board, established a year earlier. The interstate shipowners had argued that the Agreement registered under the federal Act was sufficient to regulate the industry. Judge Scholes heard submissions from the parties but held over his decision. Rank and file discontent grew over the possibility of a jurisdictional dispute. Three days later Scholes found that the seriousness of the dispute (which was confined to the one state) required state regulation. He refused the application to stop the formation of the board. A board with two representatives from each side was duly appointed.

The watersiders continued to informally enforce the 5pm finish. The Melbourne men soon followed and finished at 5pm. While the Howard Smith Co. protested by urging a withdrawal from the Agreement's Conciliation Board, this was rejected by the ASOF and the Melbourne action was isolated. The WWF appealed to the employers not to enforce the £1,000 penalty, since only one port – Sydney – was involved. Although unwilling to concede this the ASOF did let the issue standover to build up future bargaining leverage. The federal Arbitration Court refused to intervene because it determined that the dispute was confined to one port and was a matter for the state wages board. Scholes heard the case under the newly established board and awarded the men 1s.4 1/2d. and 2s. for ordinary and overtime respectively on 22 December. The men refused the offer.

Rank and file pressure for wage increases grew around the country over the next several months; Geraldton lumpers struck for higher wages in November 1911, Newcastle men wanted the Sydney rates for concentrates, Fremantle men wanted 1s.6d. ordinary time and various overtime rates, Melbourne men wanted 1s.5d. for ordinary time, 2s. 1 1/2d. for overtime and a 1d. per ton increase in coal rates, in January 1912 the Port Adelaide men went out, Brisbane men went out in February, Sydney in March and again in June to press a wage claim against the overseas stevedores, who already paid higher rates. The Brisbane and Sydney coalworkers sought new agreements, the former gaining an award in December 1911. In addition other maritime workers – seamen and coal yard workers – also made demands for wages increases.

In the face of the this pressure from rising inflation the employers found it difficult to contain the rises. The ASOF approved of the Newcastle rise provided that Howard Smith 'arrange' it through the WWF. A board constituted to hear the Fremantle case awarded them the full rise – 1s.6d. and 2s.3d. for ordinary and overtime. The ASOF moved quickly to negotiate with the MWLU – three days after the issue was considered by the committee on 8 January. During the two
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day conference the employers sought assurances that the union stick to the agreement. Tucker admitted that the union had "little control over some of the men, and they do pretty well just as they like...". He pledged union resolve to change the rules to enable it to deal with the men who "are the cause of sticking up of the vessels...". Six days later two companies – Huddart Parker and Howard Smith – signed an agreement with waterside workers working Port Phillip steamers at Melbourne and Geelong, giving them 1s.5d. and 2s. 1 1/2d., ordinary and overtime respectively.

The Melbourne shipowners thus granted the rises sought by the union, in a Melbourne agreement of 15 January 1912. The ASOF then offered the same rise to the SWLU, which had rejected the Interstate Board decision of 22 December. They rejected this offer, pushing instead for the Fremantle rates which the employers soon conceded – 1s.6d. an hour was paid in the Sydney agreement of 24 January 1912. Interestingly the agreement included provision for appeal to the state Industrial Court under the Industrial Disputes Act.

Also in January, the Geraldton lumpers upped their demand to the Fremantle rate and the shipowners reported that they had "no alternative but to agree." When Albany and Bunbury also demanded higher rates, they suggested an immediate settlement. The ASOF agreed, but limited the rise to the Fremantle rate for all WA ports. The Geraldton settlement and later the Bunbury agreement of 10 June 1912, paid the Fremantle rate of 1s.6d. ordinary and 2s.3d. overtime before midnight and 2s.10d. after. Special rates ranged between 1s.7d. and 1s.9d. with corresponding overtime and holiday rates.

In February 1912 Brisbane saw a general strike developed from a tramway workers dispute. Like the sugar dispute of the year before, strike action was taken by maritime workers in Brisbane and northern ports. Workers in other ports also banned cargo handled by volunteers which escalated the stoppages. A compulsory conference called by Justice Higgins, included WWF representatives McCabe from Brisbane and Hillyer from Sydney. The dispute however petered out in March after weeks of bitter action, but the watersiders had maintained the principle of not working with non-unionists. Again Hughes and other politicians played a role in placating the antagonists, and the local leadership – such as Matt McCabe in Brisbane – opposed the union's involvement in the strike. But like the 1899 Fremantle lumpers strike, the Brisbane strike precipitated a political solution – compulsory arbitration was adopted in Queensland with the passage of the Industrial Peace Act in December. Thus the criticism of Sydney officials of the Queensland system was addressed.

Other ports working under the terms of the October 1911 agreement gained wage rises through 1912. By the second half of 1912 the standard hourly rate was 1s.5d. in the eastern ports, with the exception of Sydney and north Queensland ports. In the west and Sydney 1s.6d. was the ordinary time rate, with overtime paid at 2s.3d. an hour. The northern ports ranged up to 2s.1d. and 3s.4d. for ordinary and overtime. Holiday rates were more than 5s. an hour and working during meal breaks even higher. Table 10.1 summarises waterside worker hourly rates (and higher coalworker rates) at the end of 1912 in each capital city.

Most of the rises to these levels were gained by the middle of the year – which meant that the hourly rate had increased on average between 20 to 40 percent from January 1911 (when the 1911 agreement wage increases were paid) to June 1912. While these were hourly rates and not weekly earnings, there was clearly considerable wage cost pressures in 1911–1912. Industry statistics for
wage changes in shipping and other transport sectors relative to all industries are shown in Table 10.2. Maritime workers made comparative gains in earnings through 1911–1912 (this included rises for seamen, firemen and trimmers, officers and others as well) as well as significant gains relative to the previous two decades.

Table 10.1 Weekly Rates of Wages*, Adult Workers Capital Cities, Stevedoring Occupations, 1912

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<th>Occupation</th>
<th>Sydney</th>
<th>Melbourne</th>
<th>Brisbane</th>
<th>Adelaide</th>
<th>Perth</th>
<th>Hobart</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Coal lumper</td>
<td>1/71/2</td>
<td>1/5</td>
<td>1/71/2</td>
<td>1/6</td>
<td>1/7</td>
<td>1/5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wharf labourer</td>
<td>1/6</td>
<td>1/5</td>
<td>1/5</td>
<td>1/5</td>
<td>1/6</td>
<td>1/5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Awards or Wages Boards determinations for a full week, for casual occupations expressed as an hourly rate.


Table: 10.2 Average Relative Wages, Transport Industries and All Industries, 1891–1912 (base average of one pound in 1891 prices and index of 1000)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Shipping &amp; Wharf Labour</th>
<th>Rail &amp; Tramways</th>
<th>Other land transport</th>
<th>All Industries</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Shillings</td>
<td>Index</td>
<td>Shillings</td>
<td>Index</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1891</td>
<td>20/0</td>
<td>1000</td>
<td>20/0</td>
<td>1000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1901</td>
<td>20/2</td>
<td>1008</td>
<td>20/7</td>
<td>1029</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1911</td>
<td>23/4</td>
<td>1166</td>
<td>22/5</td>
<td>1120</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1912</td>
<td>25/3</td>
<td>1262</td>
<td>23/5</td>
<td>1170</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


This section had demonstrated the fragility of the procedural practices of national collective bargaining. With the appearance of economic pressure the federal WWF executive was unable to reign in local demands and bargaining. The results of the renewed local bargaining was shaped by employers, they limited rises to standard wage rates despite their weaker market position. The national agreement became a platform for employers to monitor port demands – but it did not prevent local bargaining. The ASOF organisational capacity allowed the dominant ASOF companies to determine employer responses and set rates nationally.

Local bargaining also concerned the federal WWF leadership. Ports pursued different wage rises and other issues were varied port by port where the 1911 Agreement had attempted to standardise conditions such as special cargoes, maximum weights (200 pounds carried or stacked), union preference and some constant employment. Standard manning levels were specified in the Agreement – 4 holders up to 500 ton vessels and 6 for those over 500 tons – and working hours were nominally limited to 24 consecutive hours. But local provisions governed travelling and waiting time, engagement times, shortening gangs, transfers of men, working conditions, work organisation, safety and so on. The scope of worker authority in the labour process varied considerably. In the Melbourne agreement, "no variation from existing customs and practices ... shall be made except by mutual consent," whereas in others supervisors had full discretion (WA agreements usually allowed the stevedore or foreman full discretion over labour allocation, gear and working methods). Many of these issues remained contested for decades.

3. **Summary**

This section has examined a period in which national collective bargaining between the WWF and the ASOF was extended. Initially confined to Queensland, three years later the first
agreement covering several states was signed. Initially conditions were favourable: the federal arbitration framework for agreement, employers were cautious and wanted to avoid further public or political pressure, and were favourable to an agreement, trade was plentiful; unemployment low; union density was high, unionisation well established and a national agreement was WWF policy. And the federal WWF leadership did achieve considerable industry standardisation.

But the economic enabling conditions did not last. Inflation rose through 1911 and 1912 fuelling wage demands. Other demands followed. These exposed the organisational weakness WWF. It could not control local bargaining, which appeared to break out at random. Consistency of outcome arose from the employers' desire to limit wages and conditions, not from WWF policy. The union's leadership – notably Hughes, Bamford and Morris – did prevent an industrial disaster which might have resulted from local solidaristic actions growing into large strikes. They deflected national action, placated employers and nurtured a national agreement. Hughes intervened in disputes and calmed action. But the rise of radical politics on the waterfront was clear. Militants in Melbourne, Sydney and Queensland ports had a growing influence.

In conclusion this section has shown that the strength of union organisation at the port level and the negotiating skill at the national level could undertake national collective bargaining given favourable economic and political circumstances. However while formalisation continued, unfavourable conditions and the tension with an increasingly politicised solidarism in the workplace raised questions about the stability of this emergent system. It began to show more strain even before WWI broke out.

III. Federal Conciliation and Arbitration – 1913–1917

This section will focus on the developments immediately prior to the intervention of the federal Conciliation and Arbitration Court in the industry and the early experience of industrial relations under the first Federal Award.

The first part of the section will analyse the immediate context for the direct intervention of the Arbitration Court. The second part discusses the role of the Court and the Higgins Award – the first federal award in the Australian stevedoring industry. The third part will focus on the operation of the award. The fourth part examines the conduct of the 1917 strike and its aftermath.

1. The Collapse of Collective Bargaining

The success in gaining wage rises through 1911 and 1912 stood in contrast to the London dockers, where success in 1911 was lost in a mid-1912 strike. The WWF contributed £100 to the dockers in July two months after the strike began. The WWF supported the US longshoremen two months later, and sent £200 to the EXiblm transport workers in 1913. All were reminders of the struggles of waterfront workers overseas.

The lack of co-ordination and federal control over the branches outlined in the previous section was seen as a threat to the national agreement by the WWF Federal Council. In July 1912 the Council resolved to hold a conference of all branches later in the year. With representation criteria based on existing Council practice and voting weighted according to capitation fees it was the first conference of branch representatives. The Council declared two weeks before it met that the agenda could not clash with the Federal Conciliation and Arbitration Act – a move designed to marginalise radical issues. The first half of 1913 saw calm return to the waterfront as the 1911
agreement came up for renewal in early November. The conference commenced in early October to address union issues on a national basis.  

As I suggested earlier the emphasis on wage rises during 1911 and 1912 was driven by cost of living increases. Yet work organisation and conditions were not ignored, given that employers tried to lower costs. Only a month before the conference, in the week beginning 10 September, the Sydney branch launched an attack on labour effort in the interstate trade. The employers were notified of some thirteen union resolutions on manning, loads for hand trucks, winchmen's work, stacking and sling loads. They were unsuccessful in gaining a standard three bags per truck, several gains were made by the union; a maximum number of bags for more than 30 cargoes ("beyond which the employer shall have no right to call upon an employee to truck"), limited the weight on trucks to 6 cwt, winchmen could not be required to drive two winches simultaneously, a minimum of 6 truckers per hold, maximum sling load of 25 cwt and others, included in the NSW Transport Group Board decision of 22 September 1912 – 'Seale's Award'. In comparison, the Melbourne watersiders limited the sling load to only 14 cwt.  

Three weeks later at the national conference Hughes pointed to the recent British experience to support of his labourist politics and arbitration. The Labor party and organised industrial relations had put workers in a better position than those overseas. The conference responded with support for the Irish strikers. But it also had to face several major issues. First, the union's weak organisational capacity. The union resolved to appoint a full-time secretary. Brisbane's Matt McCabe was duly elected three months later, but could not afford the move to Melbourne and so resigned. Joe Morris took over as acting secretary and two years, in May 1914, was elected unopposed. Second, the formulation of a national log of claims. Hughes and Morris favoured standardised wages and conditions across the country. But this was not developed easily, for although the 1908 and 1911 agreements were a model they were designed to help smaller ports. Only Sydney and Brisbane of the large ones were party to it, but Sydney in particular continued to strongly pursue its own agreements. Large ports preferred autonomy and as the events of 1912 demonstrated even ports like Geraldton could be successful in pressing local claims. Thus agreement over the concept of a standard wage rate was secured more easily than the actual rate or agreement on thorny issues such as special rates, working during meals, Sunday work and so on. Opinions varied, but it was decided that a higher standard rate permitted more flexible bargaining. The conference also adopted Morris' suggestion that decisions on other issues would set minimum rates and conditions. Ports could then pursue local negotiations if they could.  

The 1913 Log thus included sixty–one clauses in the attempt to accommodate all claims. These may be grouped into five key areas of demands; wages, employment, work organisation, safety and compensation, and trade unionism. First, the union claimed 2s. an hour ordinary time and 3s. overtime, holidays and Saturday afternoon double time, with Sundays, Christmas and Good Friday 10s. an hour and special cargoes, for example, explosives at 15s. an hour. Thus cost disincentive for non–standard hours was increased, with Sundays and major holidays prohibitive for employers. Second, the claim for preference had the objective to tighten the stages 3 and 4 of the employment relation. The claim for wages to be paid from the time of engagement rather than at commencement of work made employers pay for the time after pickup. Thus the demand for full applicable rates for travelling time, waiting time, fares and standing by time (if a vessel was
moved). Minimum engagement of two hours before 5 pm, four hours after and six hours after midnight. The Log also claimed for one hour travelling time for those living between 1 and three miles (1.6 to 4.8 km) from the place of work.

Third, the union sought to limit work effort by regulating work organisation. Manning scales and load provisions were central principles in the regulation of stages 5 and 6 of employment. Manning for the hold were to be standardised – at 4 men for vessels under 400 tons (rather than 500), and 6 men above 400 tons – to account for the smaller vessels in small and medium size ports, and a minimum of 8 when working kerosene or bagged stuff. A minimum 6 truckers per gang was claimed, with right to return to their original hold if transferred. To control the rate of work the Log claimed a range of weight limits; a maximum sling load of 1 ton, maximum of 200 pounds to be carried, retention of special rates for weights over 150 pounds, maximum 100 pounds to be lifted, maximum weight of 14cwt for bales or standard packages (and the weight clearly marked on the package), maximum weight of 14cwt on trolley and 4cwt (or three Chapman\textsuperscript{106} sacks) on trucks, maximum of 5cwt on coal baskets and tubs would not be "recognised" by the union. Other conditions included a minimum freezer temperature of 15 degrees F. (\textdegree{}F) and 15 minutes changing time before and after meals.

Fourth, claims on work safety and compensation required foremen and employers to take "reasonable care ... to safeguard the members against danger" and if not, workers had the right to cease work until the danger was removed. Moreover specific claims included; more than 30 cargoes, with special rates from 2s.3d. to 3s. an hour, winches to cease operation when men entered or left the hold, hold to be ventilated by fan for 6 hours after fumigating, no work during boisterous weather at wrecks or in the rain and retention of climate allowance of extra 3d. (Queensland north of Brisbane and Strahan in Tasmania). Finally, the Log included an injury compensation claim – either a minimum of 35s. a week for time off due to injury or a maximum of £600 compensation for accidental death, with the right to take further legal action.

The fifth and final area was related to trade unionism. Union preference was central and the Log sought the abolition of sailor labour. The WWF would not receive or deliver cargo to non-unionists unless the unionists and dispute was laid before the Federation COM. Several issues were specifically left to local agreement – such as smoke-oh and meal times and engagement arrangements – and a covering clause claimed the maintenance of any conditions in any branch already superior to the log.

These demands where underpinned by three principles; first, regulate working hours into a standard working week through the prohibitive rates outside ordinary hours; second, the tighter regulation of the employment relation and conditions and third the extension of compensatory provisions for working conditions and safety.

The employers viewed 1912 with unease. Industrial agitation by the Sydney WWF against the overseas stevedores triggered national organisation of the overseas companies and their representatives. Capt Webb initiated the organisation in June 1912, and the ASOF immediately offered the use of its facilities. The Oversea Shipping Representatives' Association (OSRA) was formally operational in 1913\textsuperscript{107} and the strained relationship between the interstate the Sydney overseas trades dissipated. OSRA, the interstate, and coastal companies resolved in November
1913 to approach negotiations with the union as a unified group. The shipowners informed the Sydney union they would 'consider' a new agreement. The WWF Log was not formally completed until after the conference but the employers were informed of wage claims before the conference. A resolution for a meeting with shipowners and subsequent request at the end of October resulted in no talks. Indeed the Log was not officially submitted to shipowners until 20 December. Meanwhile disputes and legal action were in progress in Sydney and Hobart over support for the New Zealand men, the pickup and payment from the time of engagement. These disputes continued through December but the federal leadership was concerned with broader issues.

The leadership was determined to use the new Log and the existing national agreement as a platform to gain a comprehensive national agreement for all sections of the industry. To do this it had to ensure all branches were covered. Hughes knew that the breadth of claims, particularly those on work organisation, made agreement with the employers difficult. He contacted Justice Higgins, who instructed the union to gain the explicit inclusion of all branches, including Fremantle and Sydney. But the latter was already embroiled in its own action over the NZ dispute in December. The COM could do little more than invite Fremantle to send a delegate to incorporate their agreement with the new national claim. Second the integrity of an agreement had to be strengthened. The national conference gave the Log more authority but the COM went further and banned any separate branch or local agreements with shipowners "except through the Federation." An eight member negotiating team was elected, although nine eventually represented the union – four politicians and five waterside workers – in conference with employers.

Negotiations began on 13 January 1914 and were deadlocked on the second day – 15 January. This was not surprising given several factors; first, some thirty employers from seven employer groups and the WWF men were involved. Second, the issues discussed where not understood in the same way by each side. The first meeting, on 13 January, the issues of coverage of the WWF and enforcement had to be clarified for the employers, then wages dominated the discussion. On this question the Federation looked at earnings, whereas the employers were exclusively concerned with the hourly rate increase that amounted to 40 to 50 percent from 1905 to 1913 relative to cost of living of less than 25 percent. The employers pressed the issue of efficiency, where they were concerned with general efficiency (that is, the cost per ton in handling cargo) where costs had risen between 60 and 100 percent over the previous eight years. Hughes focused on individual worker efficiency and dismissed any argument that waterside workers were not as good as they were in the past.

Moreover Hughes and the leadership took a different view of the operation of the labour market. In the 1905 NSW interstate award case, Hughes dismissed the 10–15 percent of "fringe" workers in arguing the case for the average worker. In 1914 the leadership now argued that it was the responsibility of employers to provide a living wage (then 9s. a day) for all workers – "What we want is such a rate as will enable every man to get a decent livelihood. We think that 2/- per hour is the amount that will ensure it and that is the reason we ask it." This policy placed more emphasis on security of employment and had clear effects on the structure of the labour market.

The employers position quickly emerged as they reviewed the negotiations – reject all increases and go to the Arbitration Court. Only the Sydney OSRA representatives were concerned
that the SWLU may break away and make additional demands, however they did not oppose the
general position.\textsuperscript{117} When this policy was put to the WWF delegates early on 15 January the
conference broke up immediately. In Hughes' view no negotiations had in fact taken place. SWLU
delegate Jack Woods was more blunt – with no compromise from employers they were wasting
their time. Yet he did not want the union to go to Court on past experience, and did not think the
shipowners wanted to either.

The employers canvassed alternative courses of action after an early meeting on 15 January. They
decided to offer further consideration of conditions, provided a three year agreement was
accepted at the current rate of \textsterling \text{1.6d.} an hour,\textsuperscript{118} and if not they would go to arbitration. Chairman
Northcote presented the offer on resumption at noon. In rejecting the offer, Hughes pointed to
numerous problems in approaching the Court or forcing it to intervene by a strike. He preferred a
negotiated agreement. The employers merely restated what they saw as a counter offer and if
rejected they would go to arbitration. Hughes offered to look at the improved control of branches as
part of an agreement. This was also rejected and the conference concluded in less than half an hour,
at 12.25pm.\textsuperscript{119}

Hughes spoke to Northcote who agreed a later conference with the ASOF was likely. Hughes and
Morris also met with the Industrial Registrar, although no details are given.\textsuperscript{120} The
COM requested a further conference with employers on the basis of an amended log. This was to
be decided by the leaders on the conduct of the negotiations, but did include a drop in the wage
claim.\textsuperscript{121} The employers again stone-walled on the morning of 29 January, which clearly agitated
Matt McCabe.\textsuperscript{122} In the afternoon Hughes immediately reduced the claim to \textsterling \text{1.9d.} an hour,
decided three days earlier. This offer opened up differences between the employers, but was
insufficient to change their position. The coastal companies remained totally opposed to any
increases, whereas the Sydney overseas agents, lead by Mr. Story, argued it was politic to offer
some increase, \textsterling \text{1d.} or \textsterling \text{2d.} at most, and some changes in conditions given the compromise by the
WWF.\textsuperscript{123} He feared that without some compromise, the Sydney union would break away and
pressure OSRA for an increase that would set up a process of leap-frogging between trades and
ports. The interstate representatives rejected this view\textsuperscript{124} and the policy of no concessions prevailed.

This was conveyed to the Federation at the next day's meeting. Northcote outlined the
familiar cost arguments – that the \textsterling \text{3d.} an hour claim would add \textsterling 163,000 a year to their wage bill.
Employers also denied any responsibility for all union members implying that a surplus of labour
existed. McCabe pointed out to complaints by Brisbane companies of shortages, and Woods
offered to immediately recommend that Sydney close the books. The employers offered only to
cooperate with the union to develop a scheme for better work distribution, to "some hundreds" (in
Sydney) constant men at \textsterling \text{52s.6d.} for a 48 hour week.\textsuperscript{125} This amounted to no concessions at all.
The WWF delegates were surprised by the employers position and condemned its short sightedness
as the negotiations ended in deadlock.

In sum, for the Federation leadership the failure of negotiations was a surprise. Sydney
delegate Jack Woods had assumed the employers would follow their traditional policy of avoiding
arbitration. He also opposed the expense involved in going to the Court. Brisbane's Matt McCabe
expressed surprise, but supported arbitration despite delays in gaining decisions. Morris, DeLargie
and Laird Smith were dismayed as was Hughes, who still argued strongly for the advantages of
direct negotiation. Hughes made contact with the Court for advice.

For the employers, cost was the major factor in their reluctance to commit to any change. In
a post conference meeting Northcote explained to other employers that settlements with
watersiders, seamen, masters and others over the previous five years had added £256,250 to the
annual wages bill. While the wage and other costs concerned all companies, they found the
scope of claims on working conditions alarming. Some thought them unworkable, others had been
keen to relax existing practices on slung loads and trucking weights. Second, and more
importantly, shipowners were acutely aware of the scrutiny of their customers and public opinion.
They saw clear advantages in turning to federal arbitration — responsibility for any rise would fall on
the Court. They believed that on past experience, Higgins would not grant the union's "grossly
extravagant" demands. Third, they believed that the penalty clause in the 1911 Agreement could be
effectively enforced and thus saw their case as a test of the power of the Court. Fourth, the Court
could curb port unions and enforce a national award. Finally, the Court stop the constant leap­
frogging of wages and conditions between ports. In short, the collapse of collective bargaining
was a clear policy shift set by the shipowners.

2. The First Federal Award

The employers' stone-walling policy provoked the WWF leadership. It abandoned its usual
opposition to direct action, and recommended industrial action. It called for an indefinite overtime
ban commencing 9 February 1914, and for branches "to make provisions to ensure a fairer
distribution of work amongst members." Informal workplace action was already openly evident,
including an overtime ban. Stop work meetings were held in Sydney and Melbourne in January
to consider the issue, since the problems in the conference had been reported in the press. The
Sydney men banned overtime on the right of 16 January and the days following. The COM was
determined to press the overtime ban and pushed all branches to enforce it. It also prohibited any
separate branch agreements with the employers. Hughes used the press to publicise the
responsibility that employers had for all labour needed for the industry and pay a living wage to
them.

A compulsory conference called by Higgins met on 11 February, at which he urged the
parties to agree on interim measures to lift the ban. Higgins suggested an extra 1d. an hour, but both
parties soon rejected this. The next day Higgins consented to hear the case on condition that the
overtime ban was removed. Although both parties agreed, negotiations proceeded while the
bans continued. Higgins was already concerned over the lack of control over union branches and
suggested a ballot for a resumption of work. If successful the case would begin on 20 February.
The compulsory conference ended in failure on 13 February. The WWF organised a vote at stop
work meetings on 19 February. The vote at 28 ports saw 7624 for and 5376 against, but
this comfortable majority was not reflected in all ports. Sydney and the Port Phillip Stevedores
voted to continue but since all the others lift it the Arbitration Case proceeded.

The Sydney and Stevedores' meetings were both heated. In Sydney those favouring a return
to work pointed to loss of income while the two-thirds against it insisted on the principle of "the
importance, risk, and responsibility of the wharf labourers' vocation and insisted on an increase."
At the Stevedores meeting (attended by 600 to 700) the socialist Wilson was jeered for his support
for lifting the ban, but he maintained that the PPSA was obliged to support WWF decisions as it was affiliated, although he personally opposed to arbitration. The vote was lost by a "large majority." At the Melbourne meeting (attended by 1500) Morris supported the lifting of the ban, as did the regular gangs whose income fell without overtime. Other speakers argued for its continuation until an Award was handed down by the Court. Although hotly disputed the MWLU voted to lift the ban.

The experience of an overtime ban demonstrated the effects on workers and earnings. To maximise the cargo shifted during the day, paid at ordinary rates, the employers took on as many workers as possible and worked cargo both sides – to the wharf and onto lighters. Work was thus more equally distributed amongst all, a point used in support of continuing the ban at the Stevedores meeting. But regular or preference workers, worked more overtime to keep their hours up. They were accustomed to 20 or 30 percent of their work time on overtime rates, thus they suffered a fall in earnings of more than 5s. for a 30 hour week or more for longer hours.

Higgins was clearly anxious to begin the case, but wanted a secret ballot. He was due to take twelve months leave on completion of his first seven year term as President of the Arbitration Court. The vote taken on 27 February was similar to the earlier one, but this time Sydney and the Stevedores voted to resume. But militants in the Stevedores refused and defied the vote. They demanded a full plebiscite. Higgins refused to begin the case until the Stevedores fell into line. A week later, on 5 March, they finally voted to resume work and the case began four days later.

Higgins instructed a meeting of the parties to clarify key differences in the October 1913 Log of Claims. The case proceeded on the basis that the Court would initially consider wages, leaving working conditions to the parties to negotiate an agreement. Meetings in late March were unable to reach agreement on most issues, and on key demands on the labour process negotiations never began. For example, the employers refused to consider the limitation of sling loads. The case was heard in Melbourne and Sydney over more than 23 days. Higgins produced a draft on the 16 April and again instructed the parties to negotiate on clauses covered in the draft in the "spirit of give and take." No agreement emerged. The award handed down on 1 May 1914 was largely restricted to wages. Higgins commented that the stalemate appeared to be designed "to throw the whole responsibility for any increased cost of working the vessels on this Court, with the view to justify the respondents before the public in increasing fares and freights." With no agreement on conditions from the direct negotiations, Higgins was forced to incorporate the provisions of existing agreements into the award. The twenty-six existing port agreements, formed the bulk of the award. The boards of conciliation in these agreements were however supplemented by provision for appointed Boards of Reference under the federal legislation. The award was to operate for a period of five years.

Higgins addressed the issues of the appropriate basic minimum rate for the industry, noting that all parties argued for a national standard rate, with only minor exceptions. He set the minimum standard rate at 1s.9d. an hour and 2s.7 1/2d. for overtime, with higher rates applicable for climatic conditions in north Queensland ports, but not Strahan. Special cargoes were paid at a standard rate of an additional 3d. an hour. In setting this rate Higgins criticised the lack of systematic and accurate earnings data in the industry, and the employers' misleading claims that men earned 'up to' £4 or £5 a week. Based on the basic wage of 52s.6d. a week Higgins applied two fundamental
principles in wage determination in arriving at an hourly rate. First, although overtime was an inherent part of stevedoring work, he discounted this extra rate and others (for special cargoes, holidays, driving a donkey-engine, and for assistant foreman) in the calculation of the hourly rate. Second, that like other casual industries, the actual average working week was less than the standard 48 hours due to inherent contingencies. He argued the evidence suggested average employment of waterside workers was 27 to 28 hours a week. With minor allowances he followed the NSW Industrial Arbitration Court and adopted the 30 hour divisor.

Higgins also commented on other areas of the industry. He condemned the evils of casual work with its bouts of idleness and "excessive toil", attendant health and social problems and the "tremendous waste of potential human energy involved." Yet he accepted the principle that waterside workers served their employers and the public in physical exertion and "waiting in readiness for ships to come," both of which were the employers financial responsibility. To balance this obligation he accepted that the 'fringe' should be disregarded, as they were not exclusively attached to the industry. In other words, the Court accepted the union's claim of employer obligations for all labour requirements but implicitly established a limiting boundary - continuous labour market attachment on the extent of the labour force and so the employers' responsibility.

To rationalise labour requirements the Court urged the parties to develop a scheme of constant employment. While preference of employment provided a measure of protection for workers, the union was required to keep its books open to competent and sober men who made application. Although the use of non-union labour was common it was limited. The employers remained wedded to their January offer - a limited number of men employed for 48 hours at 52s.6d. a week plus overtime. This was unacceptable to the Federation. In a novel idea, Higgins suggested that closing union books may be either subject to employer agreement or open to negotiation through a Board of Reference. This opened to negotiation the idea of port labour quotas, that took a further thirty years to emerge. He also commented that a planned provision for accident compensation could not be included in the award as this issue was subject to High Court challenge.

Higgins was also concerned over the organisational capacities of the WWF, especially the practice of port unions adopting rules independently of the Federation. He conceded that such rules may appear "arbitrary and unreasonable" at first sight but were usually aimed at securing better work distribution or other worker protection. He nevertheless instructed the Federation to secure control over the branches by appropriate rule changes and made this a condition for the determination of the award. Amendments were duly made to sustentation and entrance fees, which were accepted and passed by the Court on 24 April. Further rule changes, approved unanimously in late April, gave the Federation power to veto in branch rule changes. His decision noted that the "handsome increase" in wages was premised on the Federation revising its rules so that the existing "loose nexus of the branches [be] replaced by some organic unity." When the award was handed down Higgins continued to press Hughes for further rule changes so that the WWF could assume specific control over all working conditions.

In sum, the employer policy of turning to the federal Conciliation and Arbitration Court for labour regulation had mixed results. The wage rise granted by the Court was greater than anticipated and greater than a rate determined by collective bargaining. On the other hand, only minor changes in conditions were granted when the existing port agreements where absorbed into
the Award. Similarly the outcome was mixed for the WWF. The suspicion of Arbitration of several officials was abated by the significant wage increase. And despite few gains in working conditions, the Federation believed that its position had been "materially improved". Higgins emphasised that the award was provisional and that working conditions were open to variation, and would deal with them the following year. Finally, the financial burden on the Federation of the case was significant – so much so that many key organisational tasks were no doubt delayed.\textsuperscript{161}

In general terms the transition to formalised industrial relations was cushioned by the framework of arbitration. The stone-walling tactics of employers, forced the Arbitration Court to determine the issue of wages and also stalled any changes on conditions. The intervention by the federal Court was achieved at low industrial cost to both parties. The overtime ban, reported as a "lazy strike" in the press, indicated the developing nature of tactics in a formalised industrial relations system.

The Court pushed the parties towards greater organisation. In terms of the argument here – the employers' inability to present any accurate wage and earnings data resulted from the industry structure of employment and the absence of comprehensive control–systems. The employers policy of port/sectional agreements maintained the industrial relations dynamic at the port level. As I will show, local interpretation and then leverage from the award became central. Only Port Adelaide remained outside award coverage, entering a local agreement on 9 July.\textsuperscript{162} Not surprising since the employers thought they had received, "better service from that Union [PAWA] because they were one of the old fashioned benefit Unions."\textsuperscript{163} This was truly a nostalgic view.

3. Federal Arbitration in Operation

The federal award gave shipowners access to labour discipline but also diminished control over the terms of employment. To be sure the employers followed their policy of enforcement of industrial regulation through the Court but the adverse wartime conditions and legal decisions limited its effects. This section and the next examine these developments. The war saw demands by employers on workers in many industries which precipitated the 1917 strike. Like 1890, and to a more limited extent 1910 and 1912 before it, waterside workers were again drawn into industrial conflict with little organisational preparation or few resources. Like 1890 the employers in the large ports again seized control of the labour market, established a centralised labour bureau and thereby systematically structured the labour market.

1 Defining Boundaries

The retrospective introduction of the wage rate increase was expected by the companies. The size was not. The AUSNCo, operating predominantly in east coast ports, faced a pay out of £5,194 in ten ports to cover more than two months back pay. This is despite requiring waterside workers to present evidence in order to claim the back pay. Disputes over overtime, travelling and waiting time were still not resolved by July 1914 in many ports.\textsuperscript{164} A. Fenwick, branch secretary in Brisbane, the port at which the AUSNCo had its largest operation, reported that members were "very much dissatisfied at the present way of working under the new award, as some of the shipping companies ... [were] paying one thing and some another." Indeed the men were on the verge of "commencing a lazy strike" in order to get something done.\textsuperscript{165} He complained that Brisbane had not received material setting out the terms of the award that was promised in the WWF circular of 4 May. He also sought information from Ed Cremer of the MWLU about the rates paid in
Melbourne. On receipt of information from Morris on the award Fenwick immediately replied that "there seems to be a great deal of difference between the Shipowner interpretation of the Award and the books you sent us up" and so he requested a copy of the Higgins judgment. This experience was repeated in many ports around the country.

Attempts were made by some port unions to the gain conditions not granted by the Federal Arbitration Court, through the state systems. Although initially these were unsuccessful industrial agitation in many Queensland ports saw the Queensland Arbitration Court handle many issues. I will discuss this later in the chapter.

The Federation had anticipated a measure of confusion in the interpretation of the award. But it signalled to the branches that it was unwilling to accept any responsibility for breaches of the award or industrial action over the way it was implemented. It resolved that any fines incurred through unauthorised action was to be paid for by the members involved. However in the case of fines from COM approved action, a general levy would be struck. The financial position of the Federation was weak after the federal award case. Furthermore the COM pressed ahead with the rule changes required under the award. Hughes undertook to draft new rules. Accepted by the COM in late September 1914, they were forwarded to the branches. Further, a union conference in November on rules recommended additional changes that were subsequently dealt with by the federal union. In general the amended rules gave the Federation increased control over industrial matters and the affairs of branches. But the voting power of the large branches was limited, and the COM was required to provide more information to the branches and checks on financial matters were strengthened. The national vote on the altered Federation constitution, held in early 1915 was accepted by all ports.

In a matter of weeks after the federal award came into effect the employers applied for an Order to compel award compliance by the Melbourne coalworkers. Another application for penalties in respect of the Melbourne overseas workers refusal to work with less than six men in the hold was heard by the Court. These were only isolated actions over the year, but they did demonstrate to the employers that the award – on wages with the adoption of existing agreements on conditions – limited their ability to press workers into additional changes in the labour process. This was primarily based on the distinction between the Award and its subordinate agreements. Although the latter were adopted by the Court in the regulation of employment, the Court had no direct authority over the provisions they contained.

Thus the Melbourne coalworkers could not be compelled to work on the first night of arrival, or Saturday afternoons as this was an existing practice at the date of the Award. Moreover, the Court was unwilling to vary such conditions of the award. Unlike other ports the work in Melbourne was done under contract and the use of relieving gangs would decrease the workers' income. Moreover the men would be unable to assess the stability of the cargo in the dark creating a safety problem.

The application in regard to the overseas workers was dismissed by the Court on several grounds germane to the coverage of the award. The Board of Reference, convened to settle a manning dispute, exceeded its authority under the terms of the Award. Thus refusal to comply did not attract penalties. Second, the Award did not adopt existing practices, only agreements, and failure to follow such practices was not subject to penalties. Third, since the overseas agreement
had no specific provision for manning in the hold, the operation of clause 9 of the award would require that the interstate provisions would apply where such provisions were made. In other words, the interstate agreements have more general coverage in the regulation of work, subject only to the specific provisions of overseas agreements where they exist. Nevertheless, Justice Powers pointed out that workers were not entitled to cease work on the basis of their own interpretation of the award. This is the task of the Court.173

Thus in the first application the effect on workers underpinned the Court's refusal to vary. In the case of Saturday work a variation was granted but only under certain conditions since the change was of material benefit to employers without adversely affecting workers. It was confined to vessels that would sail on Saturday evening and overtime rates were paid at time and a half from noon to 5pm and time and three-quarters after 5pm.174 In the second case the Court quickly demonstrated the breadth of coverage of the interstate components of the Award. The shipowners attempt to exclude additional branches of the Federation from the award also failed in a decision of the Court in May 1915.175 From the employers point of view continued cooperation in framing award provisions and demands was vital. In stark contrast, the small Tasmanian company of William Holyman and Sons Ltd joined the WWF in applying to the Court to have the company made respondent to the Award. Holyman waived any objections that Powers offered to remain outside it.176

The anomalies created in the implementation of the award placed pressure on the WWF from the branches to address the problems. Thus WWF applications to the Court far outweighed those of the employers. Applications were made in 1914 in respect of the ports of Mackay (travelling and waiting time), Sydney (covering special cargoes, waiting time, travelling time, rates of pay), Lismore and other small ports (overtime rates), Brisbane (travelling and waiting time, meal hours) and Melbourne (manning in holds).177 The Mackay and Brisbane cases are relevant here.178 Both concerned key issues for the Federation – the meaning of time of duty and the employment of sailor labour. The COM was particularly keen to use the preference clause against the use of seamen,179 particularly in the volatile Queensland ports.

In Mackay both issues centred on work at Flat Top, a open tidal site more than an hour by launch from Mackay.180 WWF evidence on Flat Top starkly showed that its members may be travelling to or waiting for work for 25, 30 or 35 hours to gain only 5 to 10 hours actual work. The Court refused to accept that travelling and waiting time to Flat Top should attract the full ordinary rate – but they were adjusted from just 8d. to 1s.4d. per hour to correspond with the ratio of the 1911 agreement.181 As I have shown above the issue of sailor labour can be traced to the 1870s. The Federation argued that award preference amounted to an exclusion of other workers and logically seamen should only be employed on the same basis as other non-union labour. That is, only after waterside workers were absorbed could they be used and then at the same rates of pay.182 This would effectively eliminate seamen from the industry. However Justice Powers refused to make a determination on this issue for three reasons; the lack of adequate evidence, the industry repercussions of the decision and the fact that it may be dealt with under new regulations of the Navigation Act.183

The Brisbane case included two applications one of which covered seven issues. The second focused again on anomalies in the operation of the award by incorporating the existing agreement.
The Federation asserted that this was an effect of differences in the ordinary hourly rate granted and other rates in the agreements absorbed into the award. In most cases Brisbane workers were paid rates up to 8 1/2d. an hour less than Melbourne or Sydney. The employers argued that this reflected differences in the cost of living. Key variations to the latter centred on travelling time and sailor labour. The Court again refused to pay full rates for travelling time, although set at 1s.6d. an hour, the new ratio in Brisbane was considerably higher than for Mackay. Second, and critically, Powers prohibited the employment of seamen except on the basis and under the conditions of non-union labour. Although restricted to the port of Brisbane this decision of the Federal Arbitration Court further set the occupational boundaries of the industry. The Federation pursued the issue with federal Minister of Customs Tudor to have seamen prohibited from performing waterside work. He undertook to review the issue after discussions with the seamen. But it was the Arbitration case on working conditions that turned to issues such as this.

2. Working Conditions – Award Case 1915

The outbreak of WWI in 1914 was set to have deeper effects on Australia shipping and the waterfront. It initially precipitated several incidents of racist agitation where waterside workers with Germanic names, not merely those from a German background, were subject to abuse and violent attack by their fellow workers. Several branches resolved not to work with aliens or even, those who were naturalised. The diversion of Australian interstate shipping to government war service saw the tonnage on the Australian coast drop dramatically from 1915. The volume of stevedoring work fell dramatically as the general level of unemployment climbed to a peak of 12 percent in early 1915 (see Table 9.1). The wage rate increase in the federal award compensated for the effects of inflation in previous years. But this wore thin. Although unemployment fell later in 1915 as men entered the armed forces, rising prices affected those who stayed.

For employers the policy of moving to arbitration was not as successful as anticipated. Wage and other costs continued to rise. And although keen to increase freight charges in mid-1915, some felt this was unwise as several cases were pending in the Arbitration Court. Justice Higgins had to deal with cases involving the MSG, Marine Stewards and the WWF. It was felt that only if unfavourable decisions resulted should shipowners attempt to raise freights. They would be entitled to do so as costs increased and employees performed "less work for higher pay."

Justice Higgins returned from overseas in mid-1915. Before his return preparations on the WWF working conditions case had begun in April. With the application filed on 28 May, the hearings began on 28 July 1915. Higgins immediately turned to the waterside workers case. To cover the costs of the case the WWF had to levy its members. Indeed the initial recommended amount more than doubled. Moreover the national conference for scheduled for 1915 was cancelled due to the costs of the case.

The revised Log of Claims served on employers included 147 paragraphs over 37 pages, covering more than 150 employers. The federal WWF office expanded its capacities to conduct national negotiations. Claims in respect of work organisation, safety and trade unionism were only expanded on minor issues over the 1913 Log. Some provisions, such as those on managerial discretion in Fremantle were deleted. Key issues of the new claims concerned the definition of work, engagement, uniformity, and dispute settlement. For the purposes of preference, the definition of waterside work was extended to include,
all the work of wharflabouring, stevedoring, coaling, and the whole of the work appertaining or relating to the handling, loading or discharging of vessels etc. [sic], the receiving or delivery of cargo on the wharves or piers shall be done by the members of the Waterside Workers' Federation and that no sailors be employed at such work.

In addition, in a claim for special wage rates for the work of skilled riggers (not the men employed to rigging cargo gear as they were already seen as waterside workers), the Federation claimed that these men were to be employed on "like conditions of employment." Second, the union claimed that engagement take place in union rooms and be limited to a morning and afternoon pickup – 7:30–10 am and 3–4 pm. In other words, the regulation of stage 3 of the employment relation was to be strengthened. Third, the Melbourne and Sydney interstate and overseas agreements to be harmonised with many of the provisions deleted in favour of standardised conditions. Finally, in view of the months of delays in arbitrated cases the Federation wanted a system of local Boards of Conciliation established. The latter would consist of three representatives from each side and would meet within 12 hours of a dispute. If no resolution was found within 24 hours the dispute would be referred to a similar committee in Melbourne. If there was no resolution in a further 24 hours the dispute would be referred to the Registrar who was to act as an arbitrator. Only then would the dispute be referred to the Court. However, since these claims lay beyond the ambit of the original Log of Claims for the dispute and were therefore not formally addressed.

The employers submitted that the Court had no jurisdiction over the claims as no dispute existed, that the claims were not included in the Log on which the award was based and third that more than twenty claims were not industrial issues within the meaning of the Act. In the event that the Court accepted the validity of the union log, the counter-log attempted to limit the scope of regulation of employment in three ways. First, through granting employers discretion over all aspects of the labour process. All manning decisions, times and places of employment, the employment of constant hands, seamen and relief gangs should all be at the discretion of the employer. Second, flowing from this the hours of work claimed, special cargoes (limited to only explosives and refrigerated cargo), travelling and waiting time, the overtime rate (limited to time and a third), holidays were all limited, or restricted to current practice. The employers were willing to only accept the limitation on bagged weights carried (max. 200 pounds) and rejected other weight limitations in the labour process – trucking, trolley and sling loads. Sling loads were to "determined by the capacity of the winch and the ship's gear." Finally, by excluding all joint or external decision-making arrangements the shipowners wanted to confine all regulation of employment to the (minimal) award. Boards of Reference were to be abolished, all existing decisions and orders of the Court, Boards, Registrar and agreements be rescinded, all WWF rules past and future to be abolished for "the Award shall define in itself the whole of the working conditions of the employee."

Hearings began in late July and Higgins delivered the completed award in December 1915. Higgins stressed that the industry did not permit uniformity of conditions. In his view the use of separate port agreements was "substantially right" and therefore advised that it be continued. Existing agreements should be updated and port agreements be concluded to cover ports without them. These agreements thus supplemented award provisions, where the latter standardised certain conditions of employment and work but refrained from regulating the core of existing
practice in the labour process. In other words, the agreements directly provided labour regulation that was more sensitive to local conditions. But, indirectly, they hardened the industry boundaries through the mere fact of formalisation.

In regard to the conditions of non-ordinary hours, Higgins generally established a standard at the best existing practice. Overtime at time and a half, ordinary holidays at double time, Sunday work and extraordinary holidays at 5s. an hour, Saturday afternoon work paid at double time (previously only in the Sydney interstate agreement) and double time for working during meals and smokos. Similarly, special cargoes were restricted to those specified in existing agreements, with the exception of wheat and case-oil as they resulted from improper and unwritten 'agreements' in Sydney.206

A key principle underpinned the award. Higgins argued that industrial peace was endangered if workers were subject to "undue pressure on human life." This principle had two dimensions, the social and physical. The social rules associated with religious observance, weekend work, irregular hours which precluded workers from "enjoying the advantages of a regular life," and the Australian standard working week all were given effect in the wage rates for ordinary and non-ordinary work just set out.207 An additional principle of 'freedom of refusal' was established, where workers were not considered on strike if they refused to work a particular cargo at the current rate. They were free to refuse the work or attempt to bargain a higher rate. It was "all a matter for contract."208

The second dimension focused on the protection of the physical abilities of individual workers - against undue strain. This was evident in several provisions of the award. High rates paid for working during meal times was vital because workers needed rest given that the work involved "heavy and continuous effort". Moreover the lack, or delay, of a meal "must often cause or conduce ... physical injury." Similarly the smoko break was important for it broke six hours of "continuous physical strain, with little or no sense of artistic achievement to lighten it." Although only night smokos were granted. In general for Higgins the absence of a break in heavy work was "hardly suitable for the human machine." On numerous occasions Higgins stressed that "the protection as to weights to be carried" and "other humane conditions" were critical in the award. This moral view was confirmed by Higgins' reference to the "late[st] ...interesting investigations into human fatigue from an economic stand-point." The "surprising results" of this work indicated that output increased when work breaks limited the period of continuous working to three or four hours. Whereas output decreased when periods of continuous work were longer. Finally, according to the experience of the Master Spinners' Association in Britain, fatigue was, by far, the most important cause of industrial accidents.210

It was on this basis that Higgins limited weights in the labour process. Bagged ore was limited to 112 pounds, two-wheeled trucks to 5 cwt or single package of 6 cwt, two man trolleys to 15 cwt and the number of bags to be trucked was set according to the type of cargo, adopted from Seale's Award in the Sydney interstate trade, of September 1913. In the case of freezer work, the 15 degree F. minimum was rejected as this could not compatible with the good working of the industry despite its "injurious [effects] to the constitution". In addition he secured a private agreement between the parties to limit shifts to 12 hours, although this could not be included in the award.211

The issues of sling loads and special cargoes were different. No limitation was prescribed for the former for three reasons. Higgins was not persuaded by the union's argument that weight in
excess of 1 ton, though less than the winch capacity, was a direct threat to workers. Nor was he convinced that limiting the weight was effective in halting any work 'speed up' particularly if the weights to be carried and trucked away were limited by the award. Finally, Higgins was reluctant to inhibit "the discretion of the employer or his expert agents as to management and the use of appliances." The same reluctance applied to the issue of manning. However, on this issue the employers could not demonstrate that the "undue strain" that was alleged for holders could be averted in any other manner other than increased manning. The minimum number of men in the hold was set at 6 men, but the award provided a procedure to set a lower number if required. For manning on the wharf Higgins rejected the claim because under existing it was not regulated – only Seale's Award set it at minimum of 6 men. In regard to special cargoes, the 'undue strain' test for any (and all) cargoes was variable and indeterminate for each worker. Thus it was impossible to set a uniform premium rate for such cargoes and the current practice was adopted.

Finally in terms of the labour market and engagement, the award was mixed. The Court was unable to regulate constant work, but "in the interests of peace" the award did not require members of the Federation to work alongside non-members. More importantly the use of sailor labour in stevedoring was finally prohibited. Indeed clause 8 was specifically worded to override the 'present practice' rule. The Court however excluded the work of skilled riggers. All travelling and waiting time was deemed to be time of duty, and the minimum engagement of 2 hours was designed to compensate workers for attending work (once engaged for a particular time) although none may be available. Although the limitation of engagement hours and places was a growing issue in several ports – reflected in the change from the 1913 Log cl.50 to the 1915 Log para.22 mentioned earlier – the Court still left it to local practice. Higgins remarked that the Court was "obviously incompetent" to determine arrangements for every port, yet he believed that a "proper system for engaging labour" was the key to solving other problems. He speculatively suggested that "a kind of registry of the men seeking work from hour to hour, and available for employment on short notice" may be required. Within two years the major ports the employers introduced a system like this although not in the manner that Higgins no doubt had in mind.

In sum, the completion of federal award in December 1915 established the first standard set of wages and industrial conditions in the Australian stevedoring industry. Although many variations still existed, and continued to do so under the system of local agreements in the award, a core set of industrial arrangements regulated the industry on a national basis. Indeed the Court on later applications refused to maintain existing relativities or remove certain local practices.

These award provisions established critical external and internal boundaries for the industry. The occupational territory of waterside work was set out that included all work in handling cargo from the preparation for discharging/loading to the wharf gate. Although not all such work was then in the hands of the Federation. The internal boundaries focused on the integrity of the individual, as both a social agent and physical being (or "human machine"). As a social agent the worker was subject to social norms and community standards in terms of autonomy as well as appropriate working standards. So when norms or standards were adversely affected by economic and trade circumstances, compensation was due. The human machine was subject to the laws of physical tolerances. The test of 'undue strain' was a moral category, but was also subject to scientific investigation and discovery.
For employers this represented mere limitations on the labour process and did not curb perceived union power. In contrast, for the union, the federal award was a vehicle through which union policy could be advanced. Nevertheless, while arbitration secured gains for employees it failed to provide an adequate mechanism for the organisation of industrial authority in the context of the stevedoring industry. Indeed, it was increasingly cast as a manager of discontent under Court directives for rule changes. In consequence it came under pressure, despite its now central role in regulation of industrial matters. Its control over industrial action did not match its institutional role. This was a critical issue for the next decade, discussed in the remainder of this chapter.

4. Wartime Unrest: Political Ideology and Industrial Relations

The period from 1916 to 1920 was characterised by increasing turmoil on the waterfront. Nationally, union density passed 50 percent in 1915. Maritime unionism had grown to over 45,000 (with 65 unions/branches) members in 1916. The WWF was part of this growth—with approximately 17,000 members in 1915—from which it fell to 12,308 near the end of 1919. The loss of the 1917 strike was in part responsible for this outcome, but it was not the only factor. Table 10.3 reports published statistics of industrial conflict during WWI. After an upsurge in conflict on the waterfront when the parties moved into the federal arbitration system, there was a short lived period of relative peace in the first years of the war. As I will show the tensions of wartime industry resulted in a significant rise in conflict in the latter years of the war.

Table: 10.3 Industrial Disputes CBCS Industry Group XI (shipping, wharf labour, etc) Australia, 1913–1918

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Number of Disputes</th>
<th>Workers Directly</th>
<th>Workers Indirectly</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>WDL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1913</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>2,035</td>
<td>243</td>
<td>2,278</td>
<td>37,108</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1914</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>565</td>
<td>117</td>
<td>682</td>
<td>8,783</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1915</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>2,226</td>
<td>119</td>
<td>2,345</td>
<td>13,550</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1916</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>3,168</td>
<td>917</td>
<td>4,085</td>
<td>29,851</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1917</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>24,600</td>
<td>322</td>
<td>24,922</td>
<td>1,274,874</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1918</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>4,066</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>4,102</td>
<td>26,504</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Commonwealth of Australia, *Labour Reports*, Nos 8–25 (1918–1933)

The wartime conditions of inflation, rising costs, fall in commercial cargoes, fall in labour demand, army service and conscription issue created a turbulent context for employers and workers. Fred Bamford, WWF Vice President, had expressed support for conscription as early as mid–1915. When Hughes became Prime Minister in November 1915, his position became clear the following year. When he lost the Caucus vote for conscription in November 1916, he walked out of the Labor Party with his supporters (including Senators DeLargie, a WWF official, and Guthrie, a Seamen Union leader) and formed the National Labor Party government with the support of the conservatives. Hughes, Hugh DeLargie and Fred Bamford before him, were all expelled from the WWF. Sydney's Jack Woods was elected WWF President in January 1917. Thus within two years after the Federation gained its first national award, it lost three of its most experienced leaders. The WWF had commended Hughes several times for services to the union, and had voted a testimonial for him only nine months earlier.

The union was now lead by working waterside workers. But the influence of political ideology grew through the war. The IWW in particular increased its influence. The numbers at meetings in Sydney grew as did the circulation of *Direct Action* as the conscription issue
The IWW supported a radical organisation on the Sydney waterfront opposed to the 'bull' system, and agreements in favour of direct action and sabotage. IWW membership records listed 42 waterside workers (and 56 seamen) in September 1916. The mobility of the labour force, more than 30 ports, seasonal and cyclical labour demand, and associated labour markets all combined to allow the influence of their industrial-political ideas. Recall that Hughes had condemned the 'irreconcilables' in the SWLU more than five years earlier. Conservative seamen's leader Senator Guthrie was in no doubt about the influence of the IWW in the FSUA. Although in the large ports, the waterfront was more influenced. The string of Queensland ports adopted a militant policy, and IWW support was strong there. Beattie estimates that at its height the IWW had more than fifty thousand members.

The attraction of their ideas was their simplicity; worker organisation along industry lines and direct control of work and life by workers. Bedford notes that in contrast to the US, this presented some problems in Australia. In waterside work, mining, shearing and other areas of large numbers of unskilled labour, union organisation was already along quasi–industry lines, which the IWW supported. But the existence of an established mass unionism, arbitration and Labor governments left little scope for IWW agitation. It could only turn to direct action in these circumstances. These ideas were readily grafted onto the traditional solidaristic direct action seen in Sydney for years prior to 1910. It now took on a political hue shaped by syndicalist ideas.

A key aspect of IWW ideology was the rejection of the traditional moralism of informalism. The slogan, 'a fair day's work for a fair days pay' was condemned as a masked wage labour, which itself had to be rejected. As wharf work entailed heavy manual labour, workers' control quite literally meant control over the effort bargain. The contingencies of the labour process continuously generated the conditions for the go-slow and direct action. Thus the link between working less through shorter hours and go-slow, which was central to the IWW's alternative moral code, showed definite resonance in waterfront industrial relations.

AUSNCb, for example, reported that it was "very much harassed by this class [waterside workers] at the various northern ports [in Qld], notably Mackay". Neither the company, nor the WWF could curtail the action of the rank and file workers in their demands on a wide range of issues. "The men are quite out of hand, the General secretary [Morris] in Melbourne, being quite unable to control them", reported the company general manager of the Queensland situation. Industrial demands grew in the latter half of 1915. The Sydney Coalworkers, traditionally paid a higher hourly rate than watersider workers, pressed for a wage increase after the watersiders increase. They sought an increase to 2s. an hour and went on strike in October 1915. They were granted a rise to match the WWF, 1s.9d. an hour, but their rate of handling had declined from a pre-war rate of 10 tons an hour to 7.5 tons.

The CSOA complained to restriction of hours in several Queensland ports in 1915. Pressure on employers costs increased the pressure on workers, notwithstanding the introduction of the federal award. Employers complained of arbitrary union rules, but Higgins conceded that many were introduced for protection. In a protest to the CSOA, the WWF Council wanted the employers' "practice of working men to they were 'physically unfit'" stopped illustrates one issue.

Under these circumstances, and in light of Higgins' comments regarding rates for special cargoes as "a matter of contract", branches all over the country pursued direct action to secure
higher rates on special cargoes. On the day after the full federal award came into effect the Port Phillip Stevedores demanded special rates for wheat. Although Hughes defended the men, by citing the Court decision, he was keen to curb this type of action. The stevedoring companies and government agents agreed to an additional 3d. an hour. Hughes applied to the Arbitration Court for a conference on the matter, when the dispute flared again over overtime rates. The Victorian Minister of Agriculture threatened to organise farmers to load the wheat at the ordinary hourly rate. A conference was held on 14 January 1916. Higgins granted the additional rates for overtime (ie 2s.10 1/2d.) and holiday rates (3s.9d.). However he added that the rate was not a general one applicable to all ports. He also observed that although the action of the men was not a strike – it involved individual "refusal to take a job" – it was made possible as a result of labour market conditions. This was only the beginning of a long period of intensified direct action over industrial and political issues.

The shipowners soon recognised the effect of the freedom of refusal argument of the Arbitration Court. In early 1916 the ASOF attempted to cut off wage increases and changes in working conditions. It resolved that no alterations be made without ASOF approval, only five days after the Stevedores demands on wheat. Such demands continued. In early February demands were made in Sydney for bagged coke, blistered copper and for wheat in Brisbane. In April, the Melbourne men demanded a smoko for bagged coke, others demanded special rates to work pig iron, and so on. According to one company there were some 68 stoppages over demands for increased rates before the middle of the year.

Applications to the Arbitration Court for injunctions were made by shipowners on several of these actions. In the subsequent judgments in early May, the issue of the distinction between the Award and its subordinate agreements reappeared. Higgins found that in some cases there were breaches of agreements; in effect breaches of specific or implied terms of the contract of service, but these did not imply breaches of the award. First, the award could deal only with issues in so far as they were in dispute – that is, the log. Other matters, such as ceasing work, although part of an agreement, could not be dealt with by the Court. Second, refusal to deal with a particular cargo at the ordinary rate, did not constitute a strike, particularly when work continued. A CSOA High Court challenge of the minimum rates ruling was lost. The High Court determined that the Arbitration Court had acted correctly as it only had the power to set minimum rates and not maxima and that it could not compel workers to work at a particular rate, nor prohibit bargaining over any additional rate. By this stage the WWF leadership was also displeased with the decisions of the Court which made its task more difficult.

Higgins made several observations regarding the industry in Sydney. In his view disputes were the result of labour shortages, a poorly worded and unsatisfactory Sydney agreement and the non-disclosure of cargo to be handled in each job. Higgins suggested that a system of notification, listing vessel, cargo, and hourly rate, would give workers full information in their contract of service. Employers saw this as an invitation for workers to bid up rates even more. Higgins also suggested, as he had done in handing down the completed award the previous December, that the port agreements be updated.

Several branches of the Federation found this difficult. In Brisbane, for example, a new draft agreement based on the several 1911 provisions and December award decisions was refused by the
employers in 1916. Key claims by the Brisbane men were centred on long shifts. Ostensibly shipowners had agreed to a 12 hour maximum during the award hearings. But the Brisbane employers later rejected a ban on shifts of over 24 hours, arguing that with labour shortages and business brisk such a ban "would hamper employers". The employers also refused to accept all the supplemental regulations.243

Ports pursued their own agenda and direct action continued through 1916. Claims were made over many issues; Mackay and Sydney over sugar as a special cargo, Melbourne over travelling time, Brisbane over engagement, Rockhampton over labour supply and so on. All were dealt with by the ASOF.244 The Sydney sugar dispute uncovered an additional aspect of the freedom of refusal principle. Intervention by the Court saw Higgins direct the Federation to gain assurances from the branches that Mackay cargo would be handled and they comply with arbitral decisions. The COM, chaired by Bamford, considered these directives on 29 August 1916. It considered a directive over Mackay cargo would be "utterly useless", and felt powerless to alter union rules to submit to the award "in face of the fact that individual action is possible and be resorted to."245 Negotiations in Sydney between the SWLU and shipowners were pressed by the federal government. An agreement set a special cargo general rate of 2s. for ordinary time and 3s. for overtime, included continuity of work and board of conciliation provisions,246 as well as agreement to obey certain rules.247 The employers considered that these concessions on sugar in Sydney by the federal government lead to the escalation of demands for special rates in Queensland in 1916-1917.248

The Brisbane men also pursued a key labour market demand of port wide regulation of engagement times and places at the 'mustering place,' through the year. It had only been raised spasmodically in the past. Generally engagement took place at the wharf gates or by the ship, except where employer controlled bureaus existed. Only the Port Phillip Stevedores secured hiring from union rooms from the nineteenth century. The Brisbane men claimed that the time and cost of transport between wharves to get a job called for a central pick-up and set times to be introduced. The time and cost were necessary to the industry it amounted to unpaid service to employers. That is these labour market costs (stage 2 of the employment relation) and travelling time to the job (stage 4) should be minimised by the regulation of the pick-up (stage 3). A domestic rule set the pick-up at the 'Fig Tree', Charlotte Street, to begin 4 September 1916.249 CSOA action in the Arbitration Court resulted in a new award (as this was not within the original dispute) establishing a central pick-up for overseas men but not inter- or intra-state men. Pick up times were set at 8-10am Monday to Saturday and 2-4pm Monday to Friday.250 The issue continued to simmer until a negotiated agreement was finalised for all workers in September 1917 in which the employers agreed to provide a shelter shed at the pick-up.251

As I mentioned earlier the influence of political issues grew during the war. Issues emerged from the rank and file – they refused to load flour and butter bound for Singapore at the end of 1915 in protest against high bread prices in Victoria. The employers' application to cancel the award was dismissed in February as the Court ruled no breach of the award had taken place, although the contract of service was broken. Higgins gained assurances from the union and the men that the action would not be repeated, since it been an unofficial action. Higgins warned of award changes
if the action was repeated were soon ignored as further action over food took place through the year.

Later in 1916 the conscription issue came to a head. Strong opposition by the IWW to conscription provoked a federal government crackdown through the year that culminated in the trial of the 'Sydney twelve' at the end of the year. Sentiment amongst the rank and file waterside workers was also opposed to conscription. The Hughes' led leadership ignored this sentiment and the COM firmly endorsed ALP policy in December 1915, and 'disapproved' of the TLC resolution not to fill in recruiting cards. A different position existed in the port unions. The Melbourne leadership couldn't halt stoppages over food prices. The Sydney position was more acute, even though Hughes was a member and office holder of this branch.

The moderate Sydney leadership succeeded in skirting the issue until September 1916. Hughes' support by the members appeared solid in late August, even though the membership was divided. Several close votes for donations to, or attendance at Anti-Conscription League functions took place in August and early September. But the leadership had dampened the issue and attendance at meetings was small. When a large meeting was held on 14 September at the Town Hall, the vote against conscription was overwhelming. Hughes' strong advocacy of conscription resulted in his expulsion at a special meeting on 27 September 1916, in a vote of four to one against to a motion proposed by W. McNeill. Mitchell's view that the anti-conscription mood and antipathy to Hughes was "dramatic in the speed of its development" is misguided. Rather it was dramatic that the moderate SWLU leadership had been able to keep the issue off the union agenda for several months. Support for the militant position, such as the IWW who opposed the war from its beginning, was stronger than anticipated. Thus Hughes' association with the union came to end. Less than two months later Hughes walked out of the Labor Party.

It was also a critical point in union organisation. Not more than five weeks before his expulsion from the Sydney union, Hughes as President of the WWF, Bamford as Vice-President and DeLargie as Treasurer had been confirmed in their respective positions. This senior leadership was lost overnight. In the wake of this, a WWF conference in Hobart condemned conscription and passed the Rule 25 resolution - that the union executive and conference delegates had to be working members or branch officials.

In the second half of 1916 political and industrial agitation continued despite provision in port agreements and the award that prohibited the implementation of domestic rules in conflict with those agreements. The Melbourne men restricted the weight on trolleys to 15 cwt despite the award provision for an extra man for each additional 6 cwt. The union also closed its membership books. In a long running dispute the Brisbane union unilaterally restricted the hours of engagement and set one picked up place as from 4 September 1916. Labour shortages and the WWF leadership vacuum permitted branches to press their industrial advantage over local issues. The Hobart conference also considered the issue of wheat handling in light of the award decision of December 1915 and the subsequent experience during 1916. The union was not only opposed to bulk handling of wheat but resolved that all handling of wheat "near the wharf" was Federation work where possible, including ancillary tasks such as receiving and stacking. The WWF had already advised the Melbourne branch that Williamstown wheat stacking was Federation work.
This provoked protests from the AWU that had members who handled wheat in many ports. The AWU retur

The ASOF faced intensified waterside action in early 1917. The Hobart conference had considered a revised log, although it was not actively pursued through late 1916. In January the SWLU passed a resolution for a wage increase of over 40 percent, or 9d. per hour more, taking the ordinary rate to 2s.6d. and overtime to 3s.9d., plus additional rates for special cargoes. But COM legal advice on the application for the 9d. rise indicated the Court could not grant more than 3d. since the 1914 award was based on a 2s. per hour ambit and was effective for five years. Any increase that may be granted would be based on cost of living, provided detailed earnings figures collected from all members was presented to the Court. The union initially opted to pursue the claim by a direct approach to shipowners, while in April the Log was approved by the COM and sent to branches.

Some branches decided to take their own action. The Melbourne timber stackers and Fremantle lumpers struck in support of a wage increase to 2s. per hour in April. The Rockhampton men pursued a claim for travelling time through arbitration. Like the Mackay case eighteen months earlier, the Rockhampton men had to travel some distance to Port Alma on the coast to work vessels. They demanded full rates for travel (which was granted), half rates for meals (not in the Award), payment for sleeping time for overnight stays and other payments. Some payment had previously been made by local agents without the knowledge of shipping companies. But when most demands were refused, the men then demanded the award entitlement of travel back to Rockhampton for meals. This would take six hours out of an 8 hour day. The employers' offer of a flat payment was rejected. The employers' appeal to the Court for an injunction and penalties was rejected by Higgins who invoked the principle of freedom of refusal.

The constant flow of disruption and disputes prompted the employers to take action. Appeals to the Court or the WWF leadership were largely ineffective, for as Higgins remarked in the Rockhampton case, "the federation ...[had] shown itself so weak in the control of its branches". Employers' costs continued to rise. The AUSNCo reported that in 1916 and 1917 industrial action created "additional expenditure in all directions" which materially affected earnings. In November 1916 the ASOF resolved to collate all demands outside the award conceded by employers "under pressure, protest or compulsion" in preparation for more concerted action to oppose future claims. Some employers in large ports were employing non-union labour and the COM had occasion to remind a Melbourne manager Harrison of his obligation to employ WWF men.

The wage demands seen in April and May 1917 only stiffened the employers' resolve. The WWF Log of Claims served in May was seen as "outrageous," where the 9d. claim would add a minimum of £475,000 to the interstate companies' annual wage bill. A conference with the union was held on 23 May "as [was] customary ... to hear what views are put forward in support of the new demands." A further conference on 13 July. Both failed to achieve any agreement. On each occasion the COM considered submitting the claim to arbitration, resolving in July to seek a compulsory conference. Meanwhile the ASOF and OSRA had already agreed to cooperate if the union went to the Court. Even the Returned Soldiers' Association, lobbied the Defence
Department in July to form a Lumpers' Battalion in Melbourne to work vessels held up by waterfront industrial action.

Thus before mid–1917 the employers' strategy of relying on arbitration for the control on labour failed to deliver anticipated benefits. Two contradictory forces contributed to this – while the possibility of legal enforcement of the employment contract increased, the arbitration system also raised the level of formalisation and secured certain labour rights. The employers lacked adequate managerial and organisational capacities to deal with the formalisation in the short term. Operational systems and supervision, continued to rely on informal methods on the wharf, as shown chapter eight. Not only was this a liability under arbitration, but workers exploited favourable labour market conditions to expand solidarist action that was increasingly shaped by political ideology. The events after mid–1917 gave employers an opportunity to alter their policy.

IV. 1917 Strike and Employer Strategy

The NSW miners, rail workers and general strike allowed shipowners to take concerted action against watersiders. In mid–1917 the mood of shipowners was clear. In Queensland, Macdonald of AUSNCo supported a conference of the National Council of Employers, as he felt that something had to be done to resist "the Socialistic tendencies" of the state Labor government.

By early August shipowners anticipated the involvement of other unions if the miners strike remained unresolved. On 3 August the Melbourne watersiders banned the handling of onions for export, again citing high domestic prices. The rail workshop workers in Sydney went out on 4 August over the "card" system. On 9 August the Sydney watersiders went out in support of the miners and rail workers, joined by seamen on 11 August, ignoring the opposition of the union leadership, and Melbourne watersiders on 13 August, despite opposition from many members.

At least five other ports engaged in some form of action to support or in sympathy with the NSW strikers. They banned handling sugar, foodstuffs, and later coal. In early August PM Hughes threw his support behind the shipowners' over the waterfront. At a meeting of the government's Interstate Shipping Control Board, Hughes spoke of forming an interstate pool in view of the situation, to the surprise of employer Macdonald. He reported that Hughes was "now fully alive to the 'go slow' tactics of the Wharf Labourers, whose work is not within 50% of the work they ought to do."

By the middle of the month more than 100,000 workers were on strike in NSW alone, covering dozens of trades around the state and interstate. The NSW Fuller government rejected any proposals for a settlement from the union Defence committee, offering only a three month probation period for the card system, pending an inquiry. When this was rejected by unions the government moved quickly to recruit volunteer labour and settle them in camps at the Sydney cricket ground and other places. Fuller and Hughes vehemently attacked the IWW, and Fuller promised assistance to any union of volunteer men to gain industrial registration. Volunteers worked on the wharves in Sydney, Newcastle, Melbourne, Fremantle and other ports. The Federal government offered shipowners substantial support in the form of more than 100 free labourers, only days after the MWLU resolved to support the NSW strikers. The offer was referred to the ASOF in Melbourne.
Chapter Ten

Employers' Plans and Conduct

Over several days on and after 15 August 1917 shipowners developed a comprehensive industrial, political and organisational strategy, that went beyond a response to the strike. First, the ASOF unanimously accepted the Federal offer - the use of free labour "under Government protection", where ASOF Chairman, David Syme and Capt. Webb of the OSRA would "act in unison with the Government."²⁹¹ The free labour initially organised through the National Service Bureau, included students, returned service men and women. The "loyalists" worked in a number of trades in place of the strikers, including on the waterfront.

Second, future working arrangements were foreshadowed because, at the 15 August meeting, the shipowners concluded that "no vessel should be re-commissioned under pre-strike working conditions". Each company would draw up a list of "principal wharf labor troubles which ... [were] hampering work and which it ... [was] desirable should be satisfactorily adjusted before a resumption of work takes place."²⁹² Once a strategy was formulated the Prime Minister would be informed. Third, barriers would be erected at the wharves, under the War Precautions Act Regulations, to prevent or curtail demonstrations and jeering by strikers at volunteers working vessels.²⁹³ Fourth, decisions over the use of vessels had to be centrally approved by the ASOF. Fifth, amendments to the Arbitration Act, particularly over strikes would be sought.²⁹⁴ ASOF Chairman, David Syme, would attend a National Employers Union conference on the federal arbitration act.²⁹⁵ Sixth and last, the shipowners would seek the cancellation of WWF preference. An application for this was lodged in the federal Arbitration Court on 18 August.²⁹⁶ PM Hughes had agreed to this although he thought it "not politic" to do the same against seamen.²⁹⁷ Deregistration proceedings were raised a few days later but not implemented until September. Four weeks into the strike the owners reassessed their strategy and pressed ahead with arrangements that saw as having lasting effect.

To co-ordinate action the ASOF called for a joint conference between interstate owners, the overseas representatives and the coastal companies. At this conference key industrial issues, the cancellation of preference and the award, union deregistration, and the refusal to employ unionists were to be discussed. The conference was not held until 19 September.

To implement the policy of obtaining volunteer labour the shipowners quickly developed a nucleus of procedures. They co-ordinated the use of National Service Bureau (NSB) labour. These Bureaus were set up under the War Precautions Act and began operations on 24 August, although in NSW volunteers commenced a week earlier. ASOF industrial officer Herbert Adams was appointed liaison officer and a central sub-committee of shipowners obtained and allocated labour on a daily basis. The overseas companies obtained labour directly from the Bureau, a practice the Interstate owners wanted to stop. The sub-committee met soon after and about 200 men were required on 20 August and 250 on 21 August in Melbourne.²⁹⁸ On 23 August the procedure of ordering labour before 10am was adopted. Moreover police protection was immediately arranged, along with the cooperation of the Melbourne Harbour Trust.²⁹⁹ To assist police a system of identification cards was soon adopted. Finally, the ASOF strengthened its relations with Federal and state governments. G. Haldane, Director-General of the NSB invited representation from the ASOF on a federal government strike committee. It had been set up to coordinate responses to the strike with state governments. The membership included PM Hughes,
Joseph Cook and W. Watt, Minister for Works and Railways. A week later the ASOF set up a five man liaison committee for contact with the government over strike issues.

In regard to the application for the cancellation of preference, Higgins adjourned for a week on 24 August to enable the COM to get a return to work in Sydney and Melbourne. If it failed, preference would be cancelled. Morris pointed out at the hearing that nothing in the award compelled men to work, and the Federation was not responsible for the unauthorised industrial action taken by the men. Later in the day COM hurriedly and unanimously recommended that Sydney return to work and notified the Seamen's Union of the decision. There were some 1400 volunteers and shipping company staff working on the Sydney waterfront by this time. Speaking at the NSW Labor Council A. J. Pearce from Melbourne said that some 8000 men had stopped work in Melbourne. He also noted that having lived in America, "he knew something of the Taylor system, which was one of the most brutal forms of scientific speeding-up."

By the middle of the following week the Sydney men remained solidly behind the strike and Morris was unable to dissuade them, despite over 1000 National Service volunteers working on the wharves. Meanwhile PM Hughes, urged a secret ballot in reference to Melbourne. In his view union meetings only saw men vote under duress.

Political pressure on strikers and leaders increased over the first three weeks, as press and government agitation against those alleged to be fermenting and organising the industrial chaos grew. It was alleged that the "secret junta" was undermining the state and playing into the hands of Germany. On the night of 30 August, five members of the banned IWW were arrested in Sydney under the Unlawful Association Act, including a 27 year-old waterside worker Patrick Quinnan. Among others later arrested was 26 year-old waterside worker Fredrick Millward. Most were sentenced to six months imprisonment.

The week granted by Higgins for a resumption of work and the Court reconsidered union preference. The Federal Government intervened and submitted an application for the cancellation of the WWF federal registration on 30 August and 1 September. The application was granted on 6 September, effective from 30 August for Sydney, Melbourne, Fremantle and several north Queensland ports, to hear the case. Higgins conceded that the award per se did not include any preference clause (only the subordinate agreements did) so the Court could only strike out clause 8 with respect to the prohibition of sailor and non-Federation labour. It was up to the employers to issue notice of termination of the port agreements to cancel preference. Again Justice Higgins pointed to the lack of organisation of the WWF and stressed the need for strong centralised control over the branches. Despite some federal rule changes there had not been much change on this issue since the Hobart national conference almost a year earlier.

The deregistration case again afforded the COM an opportunity to get the men back to work. It stressed the "grave and serious nature" of the case to the Port Pirie men for example, who had black-banned coal. A week later, with no decision from the Court, the COM again wired all
ports to return to work and lift bans. The delay by Higgins frustrated the Federal Government and the Prime Minister. It seems Hughes' desire to see the WWF deregistered was particularly acute after his expulsion from the union in 1916.

Employers' efforts on legal action continued. The ASOF held discussions with other employer organisations over the Arbitration Act and the tried to secure amendments of the Victorian industrial legislation, particularly stiffening the definition of strikes and the enforcement provisions. The employers saw deregistration as the best course of action in early September and had decided to proceed in the middle of the month. Meanwhile PM Hughes indignation over the lack of progress in the Arbitration Court grew and the government issued regulations under the War Precautions Act to cancel those parts of the port agreements which afforded the union preference for ten ports, on 8 September.

The deregistration application was ostensibly based on the union non-compliance of a Court instruction to gain proper control over the branches. Higgins again suspended proceedings to allow the WWF to complete the necessary rule changes. These were completed and the Court finally dismissed the application on 10 December 1917. The decision also noted that the majority of members were at work, these men would be disadvantaged, and the COM recommended a return to work.

However, earlier, at the beginning of September 1917, rank and file agitation and support for the strike was at its height. Local action, violence against volunteers and meetings occurred daily. Union leadership at each port lacked the organisational capacity to guide events. More significant was the cancellation of agreements. The shipowners' legal advice indicated that termination of agreement notices should be served on the respective unions. This was in addition to the employers' action (over Clause 8) and government regulations in respect to preference. The CSOA prepared termination and served notices between 12-14 September.

The key goal of the employers' legal tactics was to limit the role of the award and subordinate agreements and thus the WWF in the labour market and labour process. The "satisfactory adjustment" of wharf troubles set out only days after waterside workers entered the strike in August then extended to a draft plan in mid-September that set out the conditions for resumption and continuation of work. The shipowners were keen to use the opportunity to roll back union influence. The cost in lost production from volunteers was insufficient for shipowners to seek a compromise.

By the middle of September the impetus of the strike had stalled significantly. The miners and rail workers had returned to work and the rail strike was officially over on 9 September. Several ports had already returned to work or indicated they intended to. The Mackay men began working sugar in stores and general cargo on 29 August, although not loading sugar or discharging coal. Port Adelaide resumed work by 10 September. At the same time a local conference with Chamber of Manufacturers and ASOF regarding the terms of resumption was in line with the Prime Minister's policy of allowing the loyalists remain on the waterfront. The Burnie men were reported back at work on 11 September. Many in Sydney were also keen to resume on 10 September. The vote to stay out was close and support for continuing was waning in key sections of the watersiders and coal lumpers. On 19 September the Sydney men voted to return to work the next day. All except three of the 2,609 Melbourne waterside workers were on strike on 6 September,
with more than 1500 volunteers registered,\textsuperscript{328} but by 20 September volunteers numbered 2,800.\textsuperscript{329} These developments did not stop the employers.

The shipowners plan in the second week of September included several key points; strict adherence to existing agreements, no 'domestic rules', no stoppages, weekly foremen barred from WWF membership and watersiders must work with volunteers. PM Hughes signalled his approval of the plan.\textsuperscript{330} ASOF owners were also keen to establish a jointly owned stevedoring company in Melbourne. A decision was postponed until the national conference,\textsuperscript{331} as they anticipated that this would prolong the strike. One employer reported that if they could sustain this course it would "bear good fruit ... [for] since 'preference' was granted the Unions have absolutely dominated the position."\textsuperscript{332} Shipowners were willing to accept the costs involved – lost revenue and inefficiency that came from the use of inexperienced volunteer labour.\textsuperscript{333}

The shipowner national conference foreshadowed days after maritime involvement was held in Melbourne on 19 September, attended by 33 shipowners representing 23 shipping companies, stevedores and association representatives that covered all major interests in Australia. The conference wanted to gain the support of those outside the ASOF group. Chairman Syme began by stressing that he did "not think Shipowners have ever had such a chance as this to have a thorough clean up and to begin again with a clean slate" – a sentiment shared by other representatives.\textsuperscript{334} The overseas companies favoured a two-tiered labour market – a number of permanent workers or "A" men who would perform the bulk of the work, supplemented by casual, or "B" men, to handle peak periods. Possibly 600 'A' men would be employed in Sydney, transferable between wharves and companies and not WWF members. The interstate and coastal companies however favoured a much smaller number of company based men – about 30 men for each of the seven interstate companies in Sydney, totalling 210, who would be transferable between wharves and jobs.

This strategy adopted elements of the older model of constant employment that afforded owners greater work control. As the award made no provision for constant employment or covered it, this was initially attractive. The employers could demand full rights over labour utilisation and working hours, whether ordinary and overtime. Moreover, in addition to the rejection of all union domestic rules, all employers would cease work if any black ban on a particular firm or cargo was imposed by the union. To implement the plan the employers would refuse to engage union labour until all of the above mechanisms were in place.\textsuperscript{335} The issue of unionisation of volunteer workers was raised and although not formally recorded, they undoubtedly decided to support government policy and encourage alternative unions. With this plan the NSW general strike was effectively transformed into a waterfront strike, with separate issues and dynamic.

The next day shipowners approved the formation of new stevedoring companies.\textsuperscript{336} The Yarra Stevedoring Company in Melbourne and Port Jackson Stevedoring Company in Sydney formally appeared on 26 and 28 September respectively.\textsuperscript{337} Two weeks later, shipowners in Newcastle registered 200 waterside workers and over 120 coaltrimmers for work. These numbers rose to 263 and 173 respectively over the next week.\textsuperscript{338} A week later a Labour Bureau was also opened in Fremantle.\textsuperscript{339} In short, the employers seized control of the labour market in the three main centres of WWF involvement in the 1917 strike.

There were key organisational differences and the Sydney company departed from the Melbourne plan. It was found to be impractical to ban foremen from membership of the same
union (so clause 5 of the plan) as the men and also the Sydney shipowners wanted to retain their existing foremen. The ASOF urged them to use the Yarra system where foremen were permanently employed by the Yarra Co. and allocated to their normal vessels where possible. The ASOF saw "the foreman question ...[as] on the of the principle benefits to be derived from the formation of the Company." The division between Melbourne and Sydney reflected the contradiction of the employers organisation of labour. Continued reliance on informalist control on the wharf, undercut moves to formalise the employment relation in a more integrated organisational control-system. The Sydney overseas stevedores, in practice, favoured informalist constant employment. In contrast, the Melbourne interstate owners favoured formalised employment for foremen but not for the men. The Melbourne position prevailed. Only 100 permanent men were employed in Sydney – one-sixth of the OSRA's original plan and half of the in-principle agreement of 19 September. Less than a week later the ASOF instructed the NSWISSOA in Sydney "to make it clear that the Interstate Companies are not committed to the ... schemes for the employment of permanent hands". In short, the interstate companies favoured casualism in which the authority of foremen was supplemented by substantial market discipline and widened the gulf between the company and men.

As noted earlier a mass meeting of the Sydney men on the night of 19 September in the Town Hall voted to return to work the next morning. The Newcastle men offered for work on 19 September, but only a few were engaged. On the morning of Wednesday 20 September the Sydney men offered but none were picked up and only loyalist's were employed. One employer reported that this "staggered the men", commenting that "[i]t is to be hoped that result will mean better discipline and better work in the future." Other employers anticipated trouble, the North Coast company locked and guarded its gates that night.

In sum, the 1917 NSW general strike afforded shipowners the enabling condition to seize control of the stevedoring labour process through control over the labour market. The shipowners' strategy crystallised over twelve months when it was recognised that such an extensive policy was required.

2 Labour Market Control

The following Tuesday, 25 September, the employers opened the Erskine Street Bureau for the Port Jackson company. The employers publicised their conditions for re-employment directly at the wharves over this week and refused to meet WWF officials. Compulsory registration for all casual workers required recommendations from two companies. In two days 613 men were registered from all trades and some existing waterside workers also registered for constant work. Each man was issued a numbered disc, ostensibly to equalise the distribution of work by engaging men in numerical order. However, it was an effective disciplinary device – confiscation of the disc meant exclusion from work in the industry. Work was not equalised because favoured men gained more work than others as a "competitive system" of engagement emerged. Volunteers, still accommodated at the Sydney Cricket Ground and other locations around inner Sydney, continued to work on the waterfront. These men were encouraged to form a loyalist union and would make up the backbone of the overseas Labour Bureau at Vinegar Lane. The State government also operated a bureau for returned servicemen at Millers Point and the interstate men were picked up at Erskine Street.
Approximately 3000 men registered at the Port Jackson company for permanent and casual work by mid-October. The first of these men, termed "early birds", were picked up first when the bureau settled into its operational pattern. Some 400 men were offered continual work, the majority in the overseas trade. The union remained opposed to registration although willing to work. When the men did register their position had been marginalised. Firstly those not able to gain support from two companies were denied registration. Secondly even those issued a bureau disc found themselves at the end of the list for work. The numbered disc, started at 5000 for WWF men, and thus these men were the last to be picked up. In practice foremen and wharfingers were "very glad to have back at work" the "best of the old [ie WWF] hands", which meant that the significant remainder of Federation men were denied work.

In Melbourne, the Yarra company took a week to be organised and from 28 September picked up volunteers from the NSB. These men were encouraged to enrol directly with the company. In contrast to Sydney, the Melbourne WWF reject the employers' conditions of work more strongly. They were also involved in an inter-union struggle with the Port Phillip Stevedores over wharf work in the overseas trade and remained out until 3 December in protest. The Stevedores returned on 25 October. Thus the Yarra company had a long period to enrol non-union workers. Table 10.4 lists these registrations over the first two months. By late November more than 2000 men had signed up, with fewer than 200 WWF men. But the actual labour demand at the time was only 1449 men. The Melbourne capitulation on 3 December added a further 1400 registrations and the Yarra's books were closed in March 1918, with 3497 names. Many Melbourne men had still refused, but in early 1919 the union successfully gained a reopening of the books for three months when another 355 registered. A total of over 3800 men in eighteen months to bid for about 1500 engagements a day. The Fremantle and Perth men held out to 25 November.

Table: 10.4 Total Registrations at Yarra Stevedoring Co 1917 (1/10/17–31/3/18)

<table>
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<th>Date</th>
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<tr>
<td>17 Oct</td>
<td>1003</td>
<td>31 Mar</td>
<td>**3497</td>
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* 34 applications for assistant foreman position  
# incl. approx. 185 WWF men [known as "white-wings"]  
** Dethridge Report [1920] p.690 does not include returned servicemen after that date

Source: compiled from ASOF, Minutes, 1 Oct–27 Nov, 1917, pp.207–256 ANU/NBA E217/5

Many Sydney men resisted registration for several weeks despite the vote for resumption. The Sydney's application for State registration to gain some protection was rejected on 1 December because of its participation in the strike. The drift to the Bureau was inevitable through October. The employers knew they were in a strong position because the men could not resist "considering the misery the strike has entailed on the wives and children of the workers." The "surrender" of the seamen in early October, where they had "to go back on our [employers'] terms", was seen as "a great triumph for the shipowners, and must have its effect on other unionists". The Melbourne men
rejected registration most vigorously — only 400–500 registered by the time the union decided to register in early December.360

Although the COM had called for resumption on 24 August the critical period came at the end of the month. For the volunteers began to form their own unions. In Fremantle, some 2000 volunteers were registered and those on the waterfront formed a union that applied for registration at the end of August.361 Two weeks later, in mid–September, volunteers in Launceston organised a union. One employer, James Harrison of Ellerker and Co. had distributed admission tickets for a meeting to set up the union.362 When the Launceston men voted to resume work only days later, they found only volunteers were employed.363 In early October, a week after the Yarra company commenced registration, the volunteers' union formed in September, the Australian Ship and Wharf Workers' Association (ASWWA) requested a conference with the ASOF. It was immediately agreed to.364 Melbourne wheat and flour firms, centred at the Williamstown wharves, used a country–based wheat contractor as the vehicle to sponsor the formation of the Grain and Flour Workers' Union. It was established in early September, with the assistance of a shipowners' solicitor who drew up the union rules and registered it under Victorian legislation. The union rules inter alia, proscribed affiliation with Trades Hall and required statutory declarations disclaiming membership of any other body. A subsequent agreement heavily favoured employers.365 The Timber Workers' Union grabbed the Sorters' work on the waterfront from the Melbourne WWF.366

In NSW the wake of the strike recast the industrial and union landscape in many industries. Twenty–two unions were deregistered by the NSW Court of Industrial Arbitration while eleven loyalist unions were registered.367 The Sydney Coalworkers Union was deregistered on 24 September to be replaced by the loyalist Port Jackson Coal Workers' Union.368 The WWF in Sydney escaped deregistration, but the loyalist Permanent and Casual Waterside Labourers and Stevedores Union applied for registration on 10 October which was granted on 4 December 1917.369 Organisations such as the Sydney Soldiers and Sailors' Wharf Union (which sought financial support from shipowners) and the Returned Soldiers and Sailors' Imperial League, Tally Clerks' Sub–section were spawned in 1918. The former gained registration in the state industrial court in early 1919.370 In South Australia, the Port Pirie men lost coal work to non–union men employed as constant labour in early 1918. These men formed the 'loyalist' Mechanical Transport Workers Union in 1919.371

In short, in the three main ports – Melbourne, Sydney and Fremantle – involved in the 1917 dispute, the WWF encountered rival unions before the end of September. Moreover, several branches had internal divisions between 'white-wingers' and 'early birds' (union men who returned early in Melbourne and Sydney), had to compete with a large number of preference non–union labour (loyalists) and returned servicemen. All were subject to the arbitrary authority of shipowners. The latter reconstructed industrial authority in the labour process through labour market control. From October 1917 to the closure of the Miller's Point overseas bureau in February 1925 a major part of WWF policy was the struggle over the labour market.

3 Unions and Courts

Before the formation of the stevedoring companies the Transport Industry unions sought negotiations with the ASOF over the resumption of work. The employers refused to negotiate on the cancellation of preference, but agreed to listen to union "views."372 Union requests made after
19 September encountered a harder response from the shipowners. Requests for negotiation were denied and the 11 October COM resolution "to resume work on pre-strike conditions under awards, agreements and domestic rules" was not considered by the ASOF.373 Despite the antipathy between the WWF and PM Hughes the COM decided to approach the federal government. Accordingly Morris and Woods were given full powers in negotiations with government ministers, including the Minister of the Navy. Little relief was found here, although some influence may have been exerted as the employers soon dropped the requirement that constant men sign statutory declarations that they were not union members.374

Only the federal Arbitration Court gave the Federation some avenue of action. Recall that the shipowners deregistration case was adjourned to allow the Federation to complete rule changes necessary for control over branches. Higgins instructed Morris on the type of changes required in mid–October. He warned that should any branch reject the changes the Federation faced deregistration.375 In addition, a week later, Higgins called a compulsory conference between the WWF and shipowners in response to a WWF application under section 16A. The Federation contended that a separate dispute existed as a result of the employers refusal to pick-up WWF men. The COM believed this would enable the union to retrieve its pre–August conditions. The conference on 1 November was abortive.376 A further application and conference over pick-ups later in November brought no agreement.377

The employers actions prompted Higgins to express some disquiet over the treatment of preference, under clause 8 of the award, the cancellation of agreements, and the pick-ups established for the two new stevedoring companies.378 In turn, the ASOF was concerned at these comments and immediately sought legal advice.379 This led to a High Court challenge, supported by other associations, on the handing down of the deregistration case on 10 December 1917.380 Their appeal challenged the jurisdiction of the Arbitration Court over the key issues covered in the November conferences, specifically, preference and mustering (ie pick–up) place(s). At the same time, shipowners pressed the government for amendments to the federal Conciliation and Arbitration Act. A draft of changes was discussed in early November 1917 and the owners met with PM Hughes in March of the following year.381

In the main ports, many WWF men were still excluded from work. In Sydney only half of the 3000 registered worked on any one day. In mid–October the shipowners reported that of the more than 1600 men working 1233 were employed through the bureau and 400 had accepted constant employment.382 Such statements were designed to pressure the WWF, by showing its members only had a quarter of the available work. Some watersiders had registered with the company. But overall the union men probably received only a third of the work. Constant men were paid 61s.6d. for a 46 1/2 hour week – under 1s.4d. an hour for ordinary hours. While the SWLU protested the employers stressed that it was more than the basic wage for the week and overtime was payable at the casual rate that could boost their earnings further.383

Employers pressed home their advantage in the labour process as labour intensification grew. Applications by the WWF to the Arbitration Court now proved to be little assistance. The Commonwealth pressed Port Pirie watersiders to lower manning, allow more flexible transfer of gangs in handling coal and lead. Mindful of public opinion and the importance of lead exports to Britain, the COM hastily passed a resolution which threatened to expel any members failing to
handle "necessary" cargoes. Furthermore the union took part in a multi-union conference with BHP in mid-September 1917 to discuss lead supplies. The WWF endorsed the resulting agreement for lead to be handled by union labour.384

The unresolved coal issue saw the Port Pirie men go on strike. They had ignored COM directions and leaders Turley and O'Malley who opposed the strike.385 The Commonwealth Shipping Board eventually employed permanent men, not covered by the award, to handle coal.386 And these men then formed the scab union mentioned earlier. Action in the Arbitration Court by the WWF was unsuccessful since it was not an interstate dispute.387 Employers took the opportunity to eliminate one winchman in the larger ports – this forced one man to handle two winches operating the fall and slew. Higgins commented that this was common practice in America, but not adopted in Australia "until very lately." He dismissed the 'unfair strain' application without prejudice, leaving the way open for further action based on better evidence.388

The employers High Court appeal from December was unsuccessful. The Court ruled that the issues were not ultra vires.389 Thus the Arbitration case went ahead in early April 1918. The Court found that the WWF, "through its general committee or in its corporate capacity" did not refuse to supply labour, condone the strike or the conduct of its members. Nevertheless, in light of the men's participation in the strike and the employers' commitment to loyalists (of preference) Higgins declined to reinstate WWF preference. He however made an exception of the Melbourne wheat trade, where the public interest was better served by a "a genuine representative union" and restored WWF preference subject to the commitment to loyalists. The wheat companies' maintained support for the loyalist Grain and Flour Workers' Union and refused not to discriminate against Federation members. Again the Court sought to draw a limit against a clearly employer-sponsored organisation.

The new pick-up places and procedures established for the volunteers were not altered by the Court, but certain conditions were applied. Employers could exercise preference to loyalists but not otherwise discriminate against WWF men. Loyalists were defined as only men employed during the actual duration of the strike. Registration at the various employers' bureaus was open to WWF men subject to Board of Reference determination in the event of dispute and the bureau books could be closed with agreement, again subject to a BOR. The WWF was required to post a bond of £500 to the Industrial Registrar and the union would forfeit £50 for stoppages, strike or action in support of any demand, of two or more men.390

The use of volunteer labour by employers represented a significant cost, and as noted earlier, the shipowners were reluctant to make comparative labour efficiency statistics public. Two problems emerged for shipowners; the heavy manual work made it difficult to retain free labour. Second, operational management and foremen continued to rely on informal relations in the workplace and they often dispensed with the volunteers in favour of reliable WWF men. Efficiency and continuity of labour market attachment were the key considerations.

In both Sydney and Melbourne the problem of retaining volunteers was most evident in coal loading. The NSW government had to retain the coal battalion to load coal in Sydney. The Victorian Fuller government solidly supported the new unions in the coal trade and on the wharves.391 It guaranteed £3 (60s.) for a 48 hour week plus overtime and a tonnage bonus. This masked the inability of volunteers to work at a sufficient rate to earn enough at the contract rate.
The Melbourne volunteer coalworkers were "discontented at their small earnings at the contract rates" by mid-October and sought a guaranteed 1s.9d. an hour from employers.392 The shipowners decided to approach the Victorian government for the same support as in NSW, even though there were only enough volunteers left to work one vessel. While shipowners advertised for more volunteers at a guaranteed £3 a week,393 they still seized the opportunity to employ regular men when the Melbourne WWF coalworkers decided to work with volunteers. Another solution Brisbane shipowners tried after the strike was to use experienced men – in this case seamen – on the winches to speed up the work. Despite their weak position the Brisbane watersiders refused to work with sailors and forced the employers to withdraw them.394

The second problem – the dependence on informalist relations – came to light over the longer term. In the heat of the strike, concern over efficiency was secondary since obtaining and protecting labour was the first priority.395 But some employers soon took a longer view – a Burnie manager reported that he did not exclude WWF men entirely as many were "good steady men" and the loss of rural labour would mean future labour shortages.396 The Victorian Stevedoring Co. under the experienced Capt. Ogilvie entered an agreement397 with the Pt Phillip Stevedores in December 1917 to supply labour for wharf work which the PPSA had taken over. Also Justice Higgins commented that foremen appeared to prefer the old system in which they knew their men, the strengths, weaknesses and preferences.398 Through 1918 the loyalist ASWWA secretary Baker complained that the preference pledge of shipowners "was not strictly fulfilled and that the loyalists were dwindling in consequence". Indeed one Melbourne company manager, J. Harrison, attended a ASWWA union meeting in January 1919 over the men's complaints. He reaffirmed the owners commitment to them and that the companies would direct superintendents to comply with this.399 In other words, supervisors and managers on the wharf continued to exploit informal relations wherever they stood to gain benefits in the labour process.

The final irony of this period was delivered by the High Court in September 1918. The WWF brought an action against J. Alexander Ltd for breach of the award and sought penalties against the company. The question of the Court's authority to impose penalties was raised by the employers' counsel, Starke. Higgins submitted three questions to the High Court in regard to the award-making and enforcement powers of the Arbitration Court. The High Court ruled in the affirmative for the former and the negative for the latter.400 In short, the employers strategy of 1913–14 to rely on federal Arbitration for enforcement of wages and working conditions ultimately had no legal basis at the time.

In sum, the employers' labour bureau, run by jointly–owned stevedoring companies in the two main ports allocated the bulk of the work in the ports. One employer reported at the end of 1917 that the Yarra Stevedoring Co. should be of "great benefit in dealing with labour."401 The employers plan led to the stratification of the labour market and even competition between unions. The WWF had to battle against the preference accorded volunteers, whether as the ASWWA in Melbourne, the PCWL in Sydney, or other scab organisations, or non–union labour. The war ended six weeks after the High Court decision on the powers of the Arbitration Court.

V. Summary and Conclusion

This chapter has examined the stevedoring industry from the collapse of the national collective bargaining to the end of the first world war. National level collective bargaining was
abandoned by employers in the immediate war pre-war period in response to the collapse of the relative market stability in place for a decade or more before 1911. Inflation drove up input costs, wage and other industrial demands raised wages and extended worker authority, and adverse public opinion and political conditions all put employers on the defensive. In turning to federal arbitration in late 1913 and early 1914 they hoped to limit worker demands and enforce compliance to agreements. This policy produced unintended consequences, not directly generated in the industrial relations arena. First, the wage rise granted by the Court was larger than anticipated, but the Court did maintain existing conditions and refused to limit sling loads – a key component of the labour process. Second, the war brought additional economic and industrial instability, which made the search to maintain profits harder for shipowners. With no technological change, labour intensification was the only avenue. But the traditional reliance on informal workplace relations saw this strategy take on a 'personal' character centred foremen and workplace management.

Workers were subject to rising prices and aggressive employers. The arbitration system restrained labour intensification by fixing some labour rights and conditions, but the processes of formalisation clashed with union domestic rules and the use of direct action. Formalisation is informed by universalist rules and procedures in contrast to the 'customary standard' of the informalism. But the war provided the labour market conditions for workers to press their demands and favourable conditions for the spread of radical ideology, suffused by the IWW, syndicalist and socialist ideas. Thus WWF direct action was an admixture of traditional solidarism and a growing politicisation. It resulted in an industrial opportunism that was effective at the workplace level, but lacked an effective or integrated industrial strategy. Moreover, formalisation intensified the tensions between the leadership and rank and file. This dynamic was in place and the fate of the watersiders in 1917 was set in train before the news of the Bolshevik revolution in Russia.

The federal union leadership of politicians became detached from members. The Committee of Management dealt with the Arbitration Court and the ASOF but was at the mercy of decisions made at the port level. The federal leadership of politicians came to an abrupt end on the political issue of conscription. Even at the port union level, tensions emerged between the leadership and rank and file. The WWF was unable to harness members' actions and lacked the capacity to integrate policy. This soon became apparent when employers opportunism (in using the 1917 general strike) rolled back union influence in the labour process. They gained authority over the labour market by the reintroduction of central employer controlled hiring. Organisationally WWF membership declined from approximately 17,000 members at the end of 1915 to 14,500 at the end of 1917, although much of this was due to the decline in shipping traffic. Union density declined sharply in four ports, Sydney, Melbourne, Fremantle and Newcastle.

Shipowners succeeded in pushing industrial relations framework closer to the 1890s structure. While 1890 and 1917 are analogous, the next chapter will show distinct differences.

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1 No separate figures for stevedoring unions. State branches were counted separately sub-branches were not; Number of Unions and Members, 1912, CBCS, Labour and Industrial Branch Report No 2, Trade Unionism, Unemployment, Wages, Prices and the Cost of Living in Australia, 1891–1912, (Melbourne, April 1913) p.10,11 and Report No 6 (Melbourne, April 1916), p.11
2 WWF, COM, Minutes, 10, 19 Nov 1909, pp.98–100,101–102, ANU/NBA T62/1/1
3 Sydney Morning Herald, 17 Jan 1910
4 eg other companies such as Orient, Norddeutscher Lloyd, Blue Funnel. The strikes affected several vessels, such as the "Jason", the "Palermo", the "Mooltan", and the "Quito", Sydney Morning Herald, 8,10,11,17,20–22,28 Jan 1910
5 Sydney Morning Herald, 13 Jan 1910 [emphasis added]
6 Sydney Morning Herald, 14 Jan 1910
7 Sydney Morning Herald, 17 Jan 1910
8 Sydney Morning Herald, 24 Jan 1910
9 Sydney Morning Herald, 30 Jan 1910
10 Sydney Morning Herald, 27 Jan 1910
11 Burgman, Revolutionary Industrial Unionism, pp. 67-68 indicates that in 1911 the Sydney Local listed 5 waterside workers, 7 seamans and one painter and docker, but the IWW influence on the wharves was wider. See also idem, "Racism, Socialism, and the Labour Movement, 1887-1917", Labour History, No 47 Nov, 1984, pp. 48-49, 51-54
12 The leaders convicted were Bowring, Butler, Hutton and O'Connor who faced 12 months gaol, Sydney Morning Herald, 14 Jan, 11 Feb 1910
13 Sydney Morning Herald, 6 July 1911
15 Sydney Morning Herald, 8 Feb 1910
16 Sydney Morning Herald, 24, 26 Jan, 11 Feb 1910, quote from 26 Jan, [emphasis added].
17 Sydney Morning Herald, 3, 10, 11 Feb 1910
18 eg. ASOF, Minutes, Dec 1909 and Jan 1910, pp. 25-29, ANU/NBA E217/4
19 While the vessel considered was an AUSNCo vessel the "Paloona" was a Union vessel affected earlier as were other vessels, ASOF, Minutes, 2 Feb 1910, p. 29, ANU/NBA E217/4
20 Posters were removed, the receipt book was stolen, there were scuffles at the office and the Police had to be called in order to keep the peace, Sydney Morning Herald, 8 Feb 1910
21 Sydney Morning Herald, 8, 10 Feb 1910
22 ASOF, Minutes, 24 Feb 1910, p. 33, ANU/NBA E217/4
23 Report by Director of the Labour, Mr Schey, for December 1909; the coalworkers were all out of work, trolley and draymen had a "large number" out of work and so on, Sydney Morning Herald, 14 Jan 1910
24 NSW Industrial Arbitration Reports, Vol 9, 1910, pp. 433-436
25 ASOF, Minutes, 24 Feb 1910, p. 33, ANU/NBA E217/4
26 10 Nov 1910, NSW Industrial Arbitration Reports, Vol 9, 1910, pp. 99f; NSW Government Gazette, No 172, 9 Nov 1910
27 Cl 1: Definition of Work. Loading - handling all cargo "after it has been once dumped, pressed, branded, stacked, sorted, market ready for shipment" also from the time the cargo is either delivered to the wharf labourer shed or store on the wharf or from a punt or lighter. Discharging - from the hold to the wharf, placing the cargo on part of the wharf or "near the shed or store, as may be directed by the stevedores representative; or if such cargo is intended for transhipment, until it is loaded on to the lighter or punt. Cl 5: Constant Hand.
29 Healy, Brief History of the Australian Waterfront, p. 15; Lockwood, Ship to Shore, p. 115
30 ASOF, Minutes, 1 July 1910, p. 62, ANU/NBA E217/4
31 WWF, COM, Minutes, 10 Nov 1910, p. 107, ANU/NBA T62/1/1 Membership numbers are estimated.
32 WWF, COM, Minutes, 23 Nov 1910, p. 108, ANU/NBA T62/1/1
33 WWF, COM, Minutes, 23 Dec 1910, p. 109, ANU/NBA T62/1/1
34 Lockwood, Ship to Shore, pp. 116-117. This account does not, however, place the dispute in the context of the continuing WWF negotiations with the ASOF.
35 ASOF, Minutes, 23 Mar 1911, p. 124, ANU/NBA E217/4. The cement issue saw men refuse to work the cargo in Sydney in March as well.
36 WWF, COM, Minutes, 13 Feb 1911, pp. 111-112, ANU/NBA T62/1/1
37 ASOF, Minutes, 23 Mar 1911, p. 124, ANU/NBA E217/4
38 I. Macdonald to Mackay, 23 June 1911, AUSNCo Correspondence, 1886-1961, Letter Book No 6 McKellar Collection ML MSS 4568/Box 130
39 Sydney Morning Herald, 3, 6 July 1911
40 WWF, COM, Minutes, 14 July 1911, p. 115-116, ANU/NBA T62/1/1; the ports involved were Maryborough, Cairns, Mackay, Townsville, Gladstone, Bundaberg and Cooktown, Sydney Morning Herald, 21 July 1911.
41 Sydney Morning Herald, 20 July 1911; WWF, COM, Minutes, 14, 21 July 1911, p. 115-116, ANU/NBA T62/1/1
42 eg Sydney Morning Herald, 25, 27, 31 July, 11, 13, 14 Aug 1911
43 4 free labourers sent to Mackay by the employers joined the strike and another 9 in Townsville, Sydney Morning Herald, 31 July 1911
44 eg Sydney Morning Herald, 7 Aug, 25 July 1911. Indeed Hughes was very critical of a speech by Appleton (ASOF Chairman) regarding fair pay, as well as the past maritime strike.
45 Sydney Morning Herald, 31 July 1911
46 This was rejected on a technicality, Northcoast, Precis of Proceedings, Meeting of Shipping Representatives, 14 Jan 1914, p. 8, copy from AEWL, federal office, Sydney [since deposited ANU/NBA].
47 The employers thought they were caught "between the devil and the deep sea", and the union welcomed a way out, Sydney Morning Herald, 10, 14, 15, 18 Aug 1911
48 Conference between the three largest companies in Brisbane, AUSNCo, ASSCo, Howard Smith and the WWF over free labourers who had been given three month contracts during the sugar strike stoppages, Sydney Morning Herald, 17, 22 Aug 1911
49 Sydney Morning Herald, 21 July 1911
50 Comments at the occasion of the presentation of a plate to Hughes for his services to the union, WWF, COM, Minutes, 21 Feb 1911, p. 113, ANU/NBA T62/1/1
51 Sydney Morning Herald, 21 July 1911
52 SWL3, General Minutes, 16 Aug 1911, ANU/NBA Z248/Box 97
53 The ports were Sydney, all QLD ports, Hobart, Launceston, Devonport, Strahan and Albany, Industrial Agreement, CSOA and WWFA, 6 Oct 1911, copy of 13 from AEWL, federal office, Sydney. Strahan 1911 agreement, WWF, Federal Office ANU/NBA Z55/Box 52
54 Industrial Agreements, CSOA and WWFA, 6 Oct 1911, clauses 16, 19 (same for all of the 18 ports), copy from AEWL, federal office, Sydney.
55 Industrial Agreement, CSOA and WWFA, 6 Oct 1911, clauses 17, 18 (same for all of the 18 ports), [emphasis added], copy from AEWL, federal office, Sydney.
The merchants offered to pay the 3rd. difference to the Union SSCo in order to discharge fruit from the "Paloona", ASOF, Minutes, 20 Oct 1911 (later in the day), p.153, ANU/NBA E217/4.

The conference was planned for 30 Oct, WWF, COM, Minutes, 21 July, 27 Sept 1912, p.125, ANU/NBA E217/4.

The conference was planned for 30 Oct, WWF, COM, Minutes, 21 July, 27 Sept 1912, p.125, ANU/NBA E217/4.
Assuming a 45 hr week for preference men, including 15 hrs overtime, earnings would decrease by approximately 18%.
Sydney Morning Herald, 28 Feb, 3 Mar 1914

The vote was eventually about 500 to 100 in favour of lifting the ban, WWF, COM, Minutes, 15 Feb, 3,6 Mar 1914, pp.160,163-164,165, ANU/NBA T62/1/1. Note also that on 4 May 1914 the overseas companies notified the Court that they were in dispute with the WWF. Since the interstate (No 1 of 1914) and the overseas (No 14 of 1914) disputes were out in the same they were heard as one, CAR, Vol 8, 1914, pp.52-53.

Notes on conference WWF and CSOA, 24,28 March 1914, WWF Federal Office, Arbitration Case Vol 3, 1914 Award, ANU/NBA T62/52/4; on the union side issues such as manning in the hold were non-negotiable, "Six men in the hold and [ie plus] on Deck of vessels no giving away in this matter under any consideration", and other similar negotiating positions, WWF, COM, Minutes, 17 April 1914, p.170, ANU/NBA T62/1/1.

There were technically two awards No 1 of 1914 for the interstate and intrastate trades and No 14 of 1914 for overseas trades, Arbitration Case Vol 3, 1914 Award, pp.1570-1607, ANU/NBA T62/52/4; CAR, Vol 8, 1914, pp.53-93.

CAR, Vol 8, 1914, p.79.

Comencing from 9 February to 5 March (depending on the branch and trade) Agreements incorporated in cl.9, Boards of Reference, cl.8, period of operations cl.10, CAR, Vol 8, 1914, pp.85-88,82-85,89.


CAR, Vol 8, 1914, pp.68-70.

CAR, Vol 8, 1914, pp.70-71 52s 6d for 30 hours sets the hourly rate at 1s. 9d.

CAR, Vol 8, 1914, pp.72-75,69.

The new initiation fee was 30£, an increase of 50% (5£ to the COM) and the capitation fee of not less than 3y. per year, WWF, COM, Minutes, 23,24,27 April, pp.172-173,177-178, ANU/NBA T62/1/1.

CAR, Vol 8, 1914, pp.75-76.

Circular to WWF Members, 4 May 1914, copy in WWF, COM, Minutes, 4 May 1914, pp.180-183; CAR, Vol 8, 1914, p.169 ANU/NBA T62/1/1; indeed Higgins stated that the Court would allow the Federation 4 months to secure the necessary changes (Federation rules required 3 months notice of rule changes) or the award may be withdrawn for the offending ports or the union as a whole, (p.1589), CCAC, Nos 1,14 of 1914, Transcript, 1 May 1914, pp.1582-1594, Arbitration Case Vol 3, 1914 Award, ANU/NBA T62/52/4. There is no mention of this in the printed award. On the issue of rules see e.g. Transcript, 22 April, pp.1415 27 April pp.1435.

Hughes estimated that the total cost would be in the order of £1,800. A levy of 3e. per member was struck and witnesses were paid 12.; a day when they lost work time plus relevant travel costs and so on. WWF, COM, Minutes, 6 March 1914, pp.165-166, ANU/NBA T62/1/1.

Memorandum FO Agreement between Employers of Maritime Employers in South Australia and PAWA, 15 July 1914, WWF Federal Office ANU/NBA T62/43.

The employers did not agree to Hughes' stipulation that a national agreement should cover all ports. They argue it should cover all branches of the Federation, and at that stage the PAWA was outside the union, McComas and Northcote, Press of Proceedings, meeting of Shipping Reps, 14 Jan 1914, p.4.

For most ports the date of the wage increase was from 19 Feb from the date on which the Award came into effect, 4 May. Brisbane had payments over £2,000, Sydney and Melbourne of over £1,000. Disputes were reported in Townsville, Pt. Adelaide, Mackay, Fremantle and other ports, I. Macdonald to Incape, 3 July 1914, AUSNoC, Correspondence, 1886-1961, Letter Book, No 8, p.26, McKellar Collection ML MSS 4548/Box 131.

I. Fenwick to Hughes, 21 May 1914, WWF Federal Office, Brisbane Correspondence, ANU/NBA T62/8/1/1.


EEg the Sydney branch was referred, in August 1914, to the Sydney Wharf Labourers Board to seek a variation of the state award – to increase overtime rates. The P. & O. company opposed the application. Judge Heydon rejected the application. He stated that since the union was a branch of the WWF, it had requested the federal Arbitration Court to consider in detail wages and conditions in the port. This it had done and therefore the union could not return to the state tribunal if it was not granted all demands, NSW Industrial Arbitration Reports, Vol 13, 1914, p.223.


WWF, COM, Minutes, 29 Sept 1914, p.189, ANU/NBA T62/1/1.

WWF, COM, Minutes, 17,18 Nov 1914, p.190-192 ANU/NBA T62/1/1.

Only changes to 2 clauses wanted by Melbourne, of the 30 ports reported, WWF COM, Minutes, 20 April 1915, pp.196-197, ANU/NBA T62/1/1.

The application was made in June and hearings began in July. The application was in two parts; first to compel compliance to the award, second in to vary conditions or work organisation, WWF, COM, Minutes 26 June 1914, p.187, ANU/NBA T62/1/1; CAR, Vol 8, 1914, pp.287-293,293-298; No 29 of 1914, Transcript, June 1914, AIRC, Australian Archives B207/ST1/16/X62.


The Perth WLU was formally admitted on 26 June 1914, and in the following year McIvorraith McEacharn and Co. refused to recognise the union as the company claimed it was outside the award. The Federation took the matter to Court in June, WWF, COM, Minutes, 26 June 1914, 12 Feb 1915, pp.187,194, ANU/NBA T62/1/1. Higgins found the "respondent company committed, in [...] opinion, a wilful breach of the award by not paying the award rate", and was thus fined 4£. CAR, Vol 9, 1915, pp.121-124; WWF, COM, Minutes, 15 June 1915, p.198, ANU/NBA T62/1/1.

There were two companies involved, William Holyman and Sons Ltd and Holymans Ltd, which were not listed in any of the documentation in reference to Nos 1 or 14 of 1914, CAR, Vol 8, 1914, pp.183-184.

CAR, Vol 8, 1914, pp.293L298ff, 30.8L303,303L304L305f,309f, 316L324.

In some cases the employers made the necessary payments before the case was heard. The Lismore and other small NSW river ports where omitted from consideration in the Award case and certain rates were not specified. These examples were the overtime rate was less than time and a half. The Court initially rejected any change. It later adjusted the rates but refused to alter the existing lower overtime rate, CAR, Vol 8, 1914, pp.304,328-329.

WWF, COM, Minutes, 24 July 1914, p.188, ANU/NBA T62/1/1.

It was an open roadstead port, where vessels anchor at sea and thus are open to sea tides and other elements. It presented a danger to workers and therefore attracted the highest hourly rate in the country under the award – 2s.4d. an hour ordinary time.


The rate was the lower if travelling by lighter or tender and 1s.8d. if travelling by motor launch.

No 33 of 1914, Transcript, June 1914, pp.2ff, see affidavit of James Hogan 28 Oct 1914, Mackay Employment of Seamen, AIRC Australian Archives B207/ST1/16/X62.

The Federation also pursued other issues, such as the limitation of the weight of bags entering the country via Navigation Act regulations, WWF, COM, Minutes, 12 Mar, 20 April, 20 July 1915, pp.195,196,200, ANU/NBA T62/1/1.

Lockwood relates several incidents in Melbourne soon after the outbreak of the war in 1914, Lockwood, Ship to Shore, chs.14,15, pp.125-135.


Indeed SWLU had to admit men in 1915 as union membership fell faster than the demand for labour, SWLU, General Minutes, 7 July 1915, ANU/NBA T248/Box 98.

Higgins named 15 ports without agreements, although some of these had been party to agreements in the past, CAR, Vol 9, 1915, p.286-297,313-314.

Higgins named 15 ports without agreements, although some of these had been party to agreements in the past, CAR, Vol 9, 1915, p.296-297,312,313-314.

Indeed, Higgins wrote that "the waterside workers have succeeded in investing the Sabbath and the most sacred days of Christendom with more sanctity than any other union which had come before me", CAR, Vol 9, 1915, pp.296-297,312,313-314.

By this time this weight was subject to government regulation and thus did not require specific industrial regulation.

The OSRA and CSOA submissions were almost identical. Preamble and paras. 9, 13, 22, 24, 25, 28. OSRA, CSOA, Objections and Answers, 30 July 1915, paras. 1-5, 7-8, 11-12, 14-21, 26, pp.3-7. Documents No 5, No 11 of 1915, AIRC.

The former concerned an application by the WWF to restore the traditional higher hourly rates in Fremantle; sailor and other labour set at 2s. and at higher levels for Saturday afternoons and holidays, CAR, Vol 8, 1914, pp.312,316.

The latter, the second application, for compliance by the employers, was dismissed. See, No 35 of 1914, Transcript, 12,13 Nov 1914, pp.4-34,35-60, including Comparison of Claims and Current Rates Brisbane and Melbourne (prepared by employers) 12 Nov 1914 in the file, AIRC.

The first application, for compliance by the employers, was dismissed. See, No 35 of 1914, Transcript, 12,13 Nov 1914, pp.4-34,35-60, including Comparison of Claims and Current Rates Brisbane and Melbourne (prepared by employers) 12 Nov 1914 in the file, AIRC.
Chapter Ten

224. Mitchell argues that the IWW had little or no influence on the WWF. This is doubtful, for although most members were family men a significant proportion followed work at different ports and in the bush. If the IWW ideology was consistent with "the point of view of the bush worker" then a significant minority could have had a strong influence. The role of ideas of direct action did take root, see Mitchell, Wharf Labourers, pp.43–44. Quote from Bedford, "The Industrial Workers of the World in Australia", p.45; Burgmann, Revolutionary Industrial Unionism, p.127.


226. Thus he argues that the Australian IWW was probably the first revolutionary association "who saw their main enemy as state paternalism" and favoured "initiative and worker's control". Although an exaggerated view, it does nevertheless spotlight the trajectory of, and difficulties in, syndicalist criticism of the labour movement, Bedford, "The Industrial Workers of the World in Australia" p.45.


228. Burgmann, Revolutionary Industrial Unionism, p.134, and Ch.9

229. Macdonald to Inchcape, 28 May 1915, AUSNCo, Correspondence, 1886–1961, Letter Book, No 8, p.332, McKellar Collection ML MSS 4548/Box 131

230. Macdonald to Inchcape, 12 Nov 1915, AUSNCo, Correspondence, 1886–1961, Letter Book, No 8, McKellar Collection ML MSS 4548/Box 131

231. Adams (CSOA) to Morris, 1 Mar, 30 April 1915, WWF, COM, Minutes, pp.195, ANU/NBA T62/6/1

232. ARSO. Agreement gained on the standardisation of hours consistent with the award, proposed Brisbane Interstate Agreement n.d. (some time in 1916). Macdonald to Inchcape, 12 May 1916, Correspondence, 1886–1961.

233. Macdonald to Inchcape, 12 May 1916, Correspondence, 1886–1961, Letter Book, No 9, McKellar Collection ML MSS 4548/Box 131

234. Minutes, pp.138–141. This of course is a ban on handling specific cargo.


237. Macdonald to Inchcape, 12 May 1916, Correspondence, 1886–1961, Letter Book, No 9, McKellar Collection ML MSS 4548/Box 131

238. Agreement gained on the standardisation of hours consistent with the award, proposed Brisbane Interstate Agreement n.d. (some time in 1916). WWF, Queensland Agreements 1911–1918, ANU/NBA T62/43/3


240. WWF, COM, Minutes, 29 Aug 1916, pp.219–220, ANU/NBA T62/1/1

241. SWLU, General Minutes, 23 Aug 1916, ANU/NBA C224/Box 98

242. Noted by the COM. Rules 42–45,51, WWF, COM, Minutes, 13 Sept 1916, p.221, ANU/NBA T62/1/1

243. The Commonwealth Line of Steamers paid the additional rate and so shipowners were forced to follow, evidence of Herbert Adams, CSOA industrial officer, No.682 of 1920, Waterside Workers – State Award, Transcript, p.39, Queensland Industrial Commission

244. Fenwick of the Brisbane branch noted that the employers agreed to the pick-up times but not the central place; issue outlined in I. Fenwick (Bris. sec) to Morris 12 Sept 1916, WWF Federal Office, Brisbane Correspondence, ANU/NBA T62/8/1


246. At the corner of Adelaide and Boundary Streets. Variation of the 1916 Award on 4 Dec 1917, telegs Fenwick to Morris 6 Mar, 3,4 Dec 1917, Minutes, T62/10/1

247. Mitchell argues that the IWW had little or no influence on the WWF. This is doubtful, for although most members were family men a significant minority could have had a strong influence. The role of ideas of direct action did take root, see Mitchell, Wharf Labourers, their Union and Leadership, pp.43–44. Quote from Bedford, "The Industrial Workers of the World in Australia", p.45; Burgmann, Revolutionary Industrial Unionism, p.127.


249. WWF, COM, Minutes, 23 Dec 1915, p.208, ANU/NBA T62/1/1

250. The votes to donate £5 to the League, then not to rescind this, and the vote (6 Sept) for a stop-work meeting were all at meetings of about 200 or less attendance. The 14 Sept meeting saw the Town Hall overflowing indicating that the support for the anti—consumption cause was much stronger amongst the rank and file, SWLU, General Minutes, 30 Aug, 6,14 Sept 1916, ANU/NBA Z248/Box 98

251. SWLU, General Minutes, 27 Sept 1916, ANU/NBA Z248/Box 98; Beasley, Wharfies, p.42 identifies McNeill as an IWW supporter

252. Mitchell, Wharf Labourers, their Union and Leadership, p.448. Mitchell's reliance on only the institutional sources with little appreciation of the centrality of the labour process in generating support for militant politics and direct action outside the leadership did not permit a tenable analysis of this critical period in the development of labour organisation in the industry.


254. Minutes of the First Annual Conference, Hobart 20 Oct–3 Nov 1916, WWF Sydney Branch, ANU/NBA Z248/Box 53; it was very quickly implemented, WWF, COM, Minutes, 14 November 1916, ANU/NBA T62/1/1. With only rare exceptions this policy has been followed for all paid representative and industrial positions of the union ever since.

255. J. M. Underwood (Vic. Stevedoring & GCCo) to Morris, 10 Aug 1916. The COM reaffirmed the award position that additional managing was permissible under the award, J. Morris to Underwood (VSGCco) 20 Sept 1916, WWF Federal Office, Correspondence, Melbourne Branch 1915–1940, ANU/NBA T62/10/1

256. WWF, COM, Minutes, 19 Sept 1915, pp.22–23, ANU/NBA T62/1/1; WWF, Correspondence, 5,12 Sept 1916, ANU/NBA T62/8/1

257. Minutes of the First Annual Conference, Hobart 20 Oct–3 Nov 1916, WWF Sydney Branch, ANU/NBA Z248/Box 53; WWF, COM, Minutes, 20 Dec 1916, pp.228–229, ANU/NBA T62/1/1. The issues of ancilliary work was left to Morris to handle. WWF, COM, Minutes, 30 Dec 1916, pp.228–229, ANU/NBA T62/1/1

258. J. Morris to J. Williams (see MLWLU) 13 Dec 1916, WWF Federal Office, Correspondence, Melbourne Branch 1915–1940, ANU/NBA T62/10/1

259. WWF, COM, Minutes, 16 Dec 1916, ANU/NBA T62/1/1

260. See ASOF, Minutes, for meetings 1 Feb to 6 July 1917, pp.113–148, ANU/NBA E217/5

261. SWLU, General Minutes, 10 Jan 1917, ANU/NBA Z248/Box 98; WWF, COM, Minutes, 16 Jan 1917, p.230, ANU/NBA T62/1/1

262. The legal opinion also warned that if the cost of living figures decreased then the union case would have problems, J. George Farlow (Farlow, Barker and others) to WWF, 16 Feb 1917, WWF, Solicitors Files, ANU/NBA T62/17

263. With the instruction that any agreement or award of the Court would have to be carried out by the branches, WWF, COM, Minutes, 24 April 1917, p.235, ANU/NBA T62/1/1
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Notes on Waterside Workers' Federation, n.d. p.4, WWF, Federal Office, ANU/NBA E211/43

The Industrial Freight Committee considered that work in the port was too expensive and thus it refused to send steamers to the port. Macdonald considered that Hughes ruled was behind the problem. 

"the men cannot be forced to work, and this is the primary cause of all the trouble", Macdonald to Inapha, 30 Mar 1917, teleg. Cox (Potts manager) to Macdonald 27 Mar 1917, teleg Macdonald to Cox

28 Mar 1917, AUSNCo, Correspondence, 1886-1961, Letter Book, No 10, pp.13-45, McKellar Collection ML MSS 4548/Box 131

278 CAR, Vol 1, 1917, pp.125-126

279 CAR, Vol 1, 1917, p.126

280 ASOF, Minutes, 25 May, 12-16 July 1917, pp.238,240,242, ANU/NBA T62/2/1

281 ASOF, Minutes, 6 July 1917, p.148, ANU/NBA E217/5

282 Lockwood, Ship to Shore, p.153

283 "Coward prefers Childe's term of a 'great' strike, but its scope and breath of involvement makes the descriptor 'general' more appropriate,

284 Reports of meetings in the Domain attended by 100,000 or more are found in the press, eg Sydney Morning Herald, 7 Sept 1917


287 Macdonald to Inapha, 3 Aug 1917, AUSNCo, Correspondence, 1886-1961, Letter Book, No 10, pp.207-208, McKellar Collection ML MSS 4548/Box 131

288 Reports of meetings in the Domain attended by 100,000 or more are found in the press, eg Sydney Morning Herald, 27 Aug 1917

289 Lockwood provides a vivid account of the politicians attack on the IWW and the left, Ship to Shore, pp.145-149

290 Sydney Morning Herald, 3.6.7,9,10,15-17 Aug 1917

291 ASOF, Minutes, 15 Aug 1917, p.158, ANU/NBA E217/5

292 ASOF, Minutes, 15 Aug 1917, p.158, emphasis added ANU/NBA E217/5

293 ASOF, Minutes, 15 Aug 1917, p.158, ANU/NBA E217/5. Regulations under the War Precautions Act isolated the wharves, persons boarding vessels required military permits, vessels were guarded, people were open to arrest by military, Harbour, Customs personnel or police without a warrant and could be searched at any time.

294 ASOF, Minutes, 16 Aug 1917, p.159, ANU/NBA E217/5

295 ASOF, Minutes, 24 Aug 1917, p.167, ANU/NBA E217/5


297 ASOF, Minutes, 20 Aug 1917, p.161, ANU/NBA E217/5

298 ASOF, Minutes, 20.21 Aug 1917, pp.161,164, ANU/NBA E217/5

299 ASOF, Minutes, 21.23 Aug 1917, pp.164,166, ANU/NBA E217/5

300 ASOF, Minutes, 24,27 Aug 1917, pp.167,169, ANU/NBA E217/5. Note that Watt was prominent in attacking the IWW. He had painted IWW members as criminals who had been driven out of the US only to begin agitation in Australia, see Sydney Morning Herald, 24 Aug 1917

301 ASOF, Minutes, 6 Sept 1917, p.177, ANU/NBA E217/5

302 Reported in Sydney Morning Herald, 25 Aug 1917

303 Since the COM included Caddens and Cremers they notified the MWLU, WWF, COM, Minutes, 24 Aug 1917, p.244, ANU/NBA T62/2/1

304 Sydney Morning Herald, 22 Aug 1917

305 Although it was reported the next day that only about 100 National Labour Bureau men worked on the waterfront Sydney Morning Herald, 24 Aug 1917

306 Sydney Morning Herald 17 Aug 1927

307 Sydney Morning Herald, 17 Aug 1927

308 Sydney Morning Herald, 25 Aug 1917

309 The ports were Bowen, Mackay and Townsville, CAR, Vol 11, 1917, p.587; preference was later cancelled for Wollongong and Port Kembla by federal government regulation, Sydney Morning Herald, 14 Sept 1917

310 WWF, COM Minutes, 31 Aug 1917, pp.246-247, ANU/NBA T62/2/1

311 WWF, COM Minutes, 8 Sept 1917, pp.248, ANU/NBA T62/2/1

312 For a description of the urgency of, and the lengths to which Hughes went in order to secure deregistration see Lockwood, Ship to Shore, pp.164-166

313 ASOF, Minutes, 27,29 Aug 1917, pp.169,171, ANU/NBA E217/5

314 ASOF, Minutes, 4 Sept 1917, p.176, ANU/NBA E217/5

315 ASOF, Minutes, 14,17 Sept 1917, pp.186-187, ANU/NBA E217/5

316 Bowen, Mackay, Brisbane, Newcastle Sydney, Melbourne, Fremantle, Burnie, Devonport and Launceston, Commonwealth Gazette, No 151, 8 September 1917, p.2411; CAR, Vol 11, 1917, p.759. Hughes also hinted that Higgins may have been removed from the Court, Commonwealth of Australia, Parliamentary Debates, Vol 83, 1917, p.2735
Several requests by the Victorian Chief Inspector of Factories for figures on the comparative costs of waterside worker and volunteer labour in early Sept. Although it took four weeks to finalise the conditions under which the companies would accept resumption the WWF were rejected by the shipowners, as they were undoubtedly unfavourable. A superintendent was to be employed at an annual salary of up to 500/-.

A sub-committee of Fullarton, Little, Bull and Hughes (of Unions SSCo) were appointed as a sub-committee to set it up, see ASOF, Minutes, 20 Sept 1917, p.211, ANU/NBA E217/5.

A description of actions, with little analysis, is found in Lockwood, *Ship to Shore*, pp.160–163.

A record of coal trimmers was variously reported as 194 and 127 (none of whom were unionists), and waterside workers as 164 and 200 – the Union SSCo of NZ. Of course, men were hired before these dates to work vessels. The number of coal trimmers was variously reported as 194 and 127 (none of whom were unionists), and waterside workers as 164 and 200 – including 70 unionists

A description of actions, with little analysis, is found in Lockwood, *Ship to Shore*, pp.160–163.

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The hearings covered some thirty days, CAR, Vol 12, 1918, p.282–298; union decided to pay the bond in May, WWF, COM, Minutes, 20 May 1918, p.276, ANU/NBA T62/1/1.

The High Court found that the constitution of the Arbitration Court by Parliament in respect to arbitral powers was constitutional and that the 7 year tenure of the President did not invalidate awards. However, it was beyond the powers of Parliament to grant the Court enforcement powers and thus it could not enforce any award it determines. CLR, Vol 25 1918, pp.434ff; Alexander Case for Penalties, CLR, 7 year tenure of the President did not invalidate awards. However, it was beyond the powers of Parliament to grant the Court enforcement powers and thus it could not enforce any award it determines.

The organisation contacted the shipowners, L SSAWU to ASOF 5 July 1919, reported in ASOF, Minutes, 14 Aug 1919, p.32; Tally Clerks' referred to 10 Dec 1919, p.48, both ANU/NBA E217/7; Nelson, The Hungry Mile, p.68.

One of several return servicemen's unions spawned from the Returned Soldiers' Employment Act. The organisations contacted the shipowners, 1. SSAWU to ASOF 5 July 1919, reported in ASOF, Minutes, 14 Aug 1919, p.32; Tally Clerks' referred to 10 Dec 1919, p.48, both ANU/NBA E217/7; Nelson, The Hungry Mile, p.68.

A resolution regarding expulsion was immediately wired to Port Pirie. Conference between BHP and Australian Workers' Union, Morning Herald, Sydney Morning Herald.

Legal advice was not to challenge the Court in November, ASOF, Minutes, 16 Nov, 11, Dec 1917, pp.252,256, ANU/NBA E217/5. The expenses for the case were shared as follows. 44% to both overseas and interstate companies and 12% to coastal companies.

The agreement created further tensions between the two Melbourne WWF unions, WWF, COM, Minutes, 8,17 Sept 1917, pp.248,249, ANU/NBA T62/1/1; see Table 9.2 for 1917

The loyalist union was registered 30 Nov 1917, NSW Industrial Arbitration Reports, Vol 16, 1917, p.38.

They struck in Jan 1918 and lost the work in the following month. Is. Qarkson to O'Malley, 17 Jan 1918, Morris to Cremer, 11 Feb 1918, Uncertain Frontiers, p.61.

The employers had been advised by counsel not to attend, but decided this was impolitic. Nevertheless, they had little interest in arriving at any agreement, ASOF, Minutes, 26 Oct 1917, p.235, ANU/NBA E217/5.

This occurred when the WWF would not accept the manning scale for new coal ganties installed by the Federal government in Nov 1917. They struck in Jan 1918 and lost the work in the following month, Is. Clarkson to O'Malley, 17 Jan 1918, Morris to Cremer, 11 Feb 1918, teleg. to O'Malley, 1 Mar 1918, WWF Federal Office, Port Adelaide Correspondence, ASOF, Minutes, 24 Sept, 4-9, 12, 19 Oct 1917, pp.196,211-218,222,228, ANU/NBA E217/5; WWF, Minutes, 2,11,15 Oct 1917, pp.252,253,257, ANU/NBA T62/1/1; Sydney Morning Herald, 11 Oct 1917.

Resolution regarding expulsion was immediately wired to Port Pirie. Conference between BHP and Australian Workers’ Union, UNCERTAIN FRONTIERS, p.93,118.

Resolution regarding expulsion was immediately wired to Port Pirie. Conference between BHP and Australian Workers’ Union, UNCERTAIN FRONTIERS, p.94–95,119.

Federated Bricklayers Union and Federated Ironworkers Association, WWF, COM, Minutes, 8,17 Sept 1917, pp.248,249, ANU/NBA T62/1/1.

Initiatively Brisbane was instructed to insist on the sailor labour, bringing in non-union labour if necessary. This was quickly reversed, ASOF, Minutes, 26,27 Oct 1917, pp.235,237, ANU/NBA E217/5.

Hence the quick action of the NSW, Victorian and Federal governments in mobilising volunteer labour. Use of the War Precautions Act and police protection was deployed as necessary. E.g. men from the ASWWA complained to shipowners of lack of protection and police and Labour Bureau head, Haldane were contacted, ASOF, Minutes, 24 Oct 1917, p.232, ANU/NBA E217/5.

Use of the War Precautions Act and police protection was deployed as necessary. E.g. men from the ASWWA complained to shipowners of lack of protection and police and Labour Bureau head, Haldane were contacted, ASOF, Minutes, 24 Oct 1917, p.232, ANU/NBA E217/5.

Initiatively Brisbane was instructed to insist on the sailor labour, bringing in non-union labour if necessary. This was quickly reversed, ASOF, Minutes, 26,27 Oct 1917, pp.235,237, ANU/NBA E217/5.

The employers had been advised by counsel not to attend, but decided this was impolitic. Nevertheless, they had little interest in arriving at any agreement, ASOF, Minutes, 26 Oct 1917, p.235, ANU/NBA E217/5.

The agreement created further tensions between the two Melbourne WWF unions, WWF, COM, Minutes, 17 Dec 1917, p.266, ANU/NBA T62/1/1.

The employers had been advised by counsel not to attend, but decided this was impolitic. Nevertheless, they had little interest in arriving at any agreement, ASOF, Minutes, 26 Oct 1917, p.235, ANU/NBA E217/5.
Chapter 11

Direct Action, Politics and Federal Arbitration In Stevedoring, 1918–1928

I. Introduction

Between the end of WWI and 1928 local demands for work control and port autonomy gained new impetus, despite Federation attempts to combine regional representation with greater integration. In contrast to the 1890s, the framework of Federal arbitration gave the union stronger organisational continuity after 1917. It retained all ports although its authority was weaker in some major ports. Arbitration encouraged centralisation consistent with formalisation, but the centrifugal pressures of local demands remained a consistent feature of the union through the 1920s. Yet the WWF abandoned its single national award policy when it allowed the Queensland branches to pursue a State award in 1921. This was symptomatic of the local demands that were a central dynamic of the industry's labour relations, and condemned a repeat of 1890 and 1917 in 1928.

This chapter begins, in Section II, with an examination of the continuing efforts of the WWF to integrate its member port unions into a unified body. It examines the pressures on national union organisation in the early 1920s, which had their roots in tensions that emerged through WWI. Section III focuses on the position of the labour bureau in the conduct of waterfront industrial relations. Section IV turns to the influence of radicalism, in particular the experience of Queensland under the state award, on waterfront industrial relations. Section V discusses the 1928 strike. The final section will conclude the chapter.

II. Union Structure and Politics in Industrial Organisation

The transition to a formalised system of industrial relations brought a number of concurrent changes. First, tighter occupational boundaries and thus union demarcation in the workplace. Second, the need for union integration to develop and implement coherent union policies. Third, demands for inter-union cooperation and coordination. The One Big Union movement reached its high point at the beginning of the 1920s, only to collapse. I will discuss these tendencies in turn.

1. Job Territory and Amalgamations

Formalisation strengthened the boundaries of workers' occupational territory. Where Society organisation focused on informal workgroup control, industrial unionism claimed a wider occupational territory. In contrast to the organic link between skilled work and society organisation the fluidity of unskilled work allowed a high level of substitutability and low social recognition. Yet wharf labourers still turned to society organisation. Formalisation of industrial relations brought with it an occupational unionism centred on defined job boundaries, particularly under the Australian arbitration system (which delimited the job territory by industry, trade, craft, process,
business, factory, calling, and occupation). Union preference served to reinforce such boundaries by constructing union membership as a claim to an occupation. Therefore both union coverage and demarcation issues emerged as central issues for unions in formalised systems.

For stevedoring, the two key areas were, on board ship – with seamen – and at the wharf gate or shed door – with carriers, drivers, storemen and others. Not surprisingly, federal arbitration soon addressed question of sailor labour as I have shown. It was effectively banished from the waterfront in 1915. Shed and shore work was more difficult to identify. Securing coverage of all wharf labourer port unions was a priority, but by the end of WWI this had been accomplished. In 1915 the COM was concerned that the AWU members doing waterside work in Darwin join the WWF. In the same year, members of the small Victorian Timber Sorters and Stackers Union (VTSSU) who sorted timber on the Melbourne waterfront, applied to join the Federation, but they had to join as individuals. The VTSSU was unhappy and entered inconclusive negotiations with the Federation. Later, as a result of the 1917 strike, timber work was lost to the Federation. The issue dragged on for years with only partial success for the Federation, since the Court determined that the work was outside the WWF job territory, notwithstanding agreements with employers. Approaches were made to the Sydney Coal Workers Union to join the WWF, new Federation branches were organised in the Gippsland ports (Bairnsdale and Sale with 17 men in total), men from Port Kembla and Wollongong, Busselton in WA and later Port Lincoln in SA were admitted to the WWF. These experiences uncovered two dimensions of the issue – amalgamations with unions or other unionists who covered waterfront work and second, arrangements with unions only peripherally involved with the waterfront.

Coalworkers were directly involved in loading and bunkering vessels. Therefore they were clear targets for amalgamation. Coal was already loaded by WWF men in Melbourne, Hobart, Fremantle, Albany, Townsville and other small ports as well as Pt Adelaide when it joined in 1915. In mid-1917 the Brisbane branch voted to re-admit coalworkers, who had broken away ten years earlier. But they refused to join. After the 1917 strike another approach was made to the Sydney Coal Workers but nothing developed. The Newcastle Coal Trimmers only became a branch of the Federation later. Yet Federation officials were still conceptually wedded to more traditional occupational unionism. In mid-1915, the COM rejected a request for amalgamation by the Queensland based Inland Transport Workers Union (men working the Brisbane and Bremer Rivers and land based carters upstream from Brisbane) suggesting they join the carters and drivers in Brisbane. They could then join the Transport Workers Federation and so be allied with the WWF at a later date. Similarly it rejected an request from Newcastle casual wharf clerks to join even as support for the One Big Union was growing. They were seen as potentially "disturbing" and the union did "not wish to encroach on the rights of any other organisation," in this instance the Australian Clerical Association.

The WWF leadership was more alert to work done on or near wharves. It noted the "aggressive action" of storemen and packers in Adelaide and were concerned over AWU men doing waterside work in Port Augusta. The clash with the AWU in late 1916 over Williamstown wheat work prompted the COM to claim all wheat work on the wharf and receiving and stacking where possible.
Chapter Eleven

Discord between several hundred storemen and packers—called wharf storemen—on the Brisbane waterfront, working under state award, and WWF pre-dated WWI. For this reason Brisbane WWF agreements contained more specific definitions than other ports since demarcation disputes was a recurring issue. In 1917 the union urged the WWF to change the definition of waterside work to include all work inside the wharf. In an attempt to settle demarcation with the storemen and packers on wool work, the Brisbane WWF negotiated an agreement with the FSPU two years later in 1920. It detailed the boundary of WWF work for each company. The work covered taking wool away from the presses and stacking in sheds and all other work in wharf sheds and yards, unless the WWF requested storemen to do the work when short of labour. The WWF conceded direct dumping on the wharves (at Birt's No.1 & 4 berths) but gained all the wharf shed work, even when ships were not berthed. This was potentially months of work for a large gang. Moreover the companies would support the WWF as their hourly rate was 1s.9d. against 1s.11d. for the FSPU men. In the 1930s state award application the issue of wharf storemen's work arose again.

Wheat work in South Australia and Western Australia was a continuing source of dispute between the AWU and the Federation. Work done by the AWU at Kadina and Wallaroo caused concern to the COM in late 1918. The Wallaroo branch gladly accepted an offer of preference on wheat work at Kadina by the South Australian Stevedoring Co. in September. Some 200 AWU men soon joined the Federation. But Kadina was ten kilometres inland and the SASCo action was clearly designed to weaken the AWU. This union went to state Industrial Court and the Federation lost its coverage. In Maryborough, the WWF gained work on vessels handling timber from the local saw mills from the AWU in 1920. The employers objected to the transfer of work to the Federation at Louisa Creek, 48 kilometres from Mackay. In this case the State Court found against the WWF based on existing custom and practice. In Townsville the state arbitration court determined the line of demarcation between the WWF and the AWU in 1926.

To overcome this stream of demarcation problems the WWF entered negotiations with the FSPU and the AWU over the next year. It resulted in framework agreement where the WWF agreed not to poach members or do AWU work beyond half a mile from the high water mark. Storemen and packers had to do their "usual" work which was to be negotiated at the local level. The Wallaroo claim had dragged on for two years. Court action in 1920 continued since the branch was unhappy over the initial unfavourable decision. When the local branch sought assistance from the federal body it was informed the cost was disproportionate to the chances of success.

The key point is that, by the early 1920s, the policy of securing work associated with the waterfront was active and largely successful. Legal advice to the union emphasised that the Rules should not specify that the WWF would not do the work of any other union. Thus when opportunities arose it could gain additional tasks and functions as the industry developed. While the traditional sectionalism of the waterfront was not yet defunct, union policy recognised the dynamic nature of the labour process and so the need for tactical industrial organisation.

2 The Question of Union Integration

The second area of organisation is related to union capacities to respond to changes in the labour process. I argued earlier (chapter seven) that technical and organisational change in the
stevedoring labour process was slow from the 1890 to the 1930s. The pattern of local port agreements (or schedules in the federal award) up to the 1920s, regulated the extensive growth of the labour process (over hours, working times, weights and so on). Here direct action over working conditions was relatively effective. Where the WWF focused on industrial issues the port unions worked for the same goals, although with clear local differences. The greatest setbacks for waterside workers were triggered by issues of inter-union solidarity and politics (particularly 1890 and 1917) not work issues as such.

The federal Arbitration Court from 1914 continually urged greater union integration and effective central leadership with appropriate disciplinary powers. The 1917 rule changes ordered by the Arbitration Court, specifically limited the authority of port branches to make, or introduce, rules inconsistent with federal rules, any Award or order of the Court. Moreover, Rule 37 required that branch rules had to be specifically approved in writing by the COM. The COM assumed authority over any industrial action and the formulation and prosecution of demands over wages, hours and working conditions. Finally the COM assumed full powers to veto, fine, suspend or expel branches or individuals.

The impetus to reform union rules was reinforced by the lack of policy focus and organisational integration clearly apparent through the 1917 strike. The COM was simply unable to command authority over port unions. The lack of formal union control-systems, addressed in the rule changes just mentioned, was only part of the problem. The individual ports remained tied to an industrial relations dynamic centred on the local labour process and representative organisation.

I have argued above that the role of politicians on the COM served to distance the Federation from local unions. The departure of Hughes, Bamford, DeLargie and the others removed this personnel problem and Rule 25 (allowing only working watersiders as COM members) adopted after the Hobart conference ensured that it was not repeated. The rule was enforced in Townsville in July 1917. It was strengthened in October by an eligibility requirement of twelve months for membership for official positions. Many saw the need for closer integration of the separate unions. In September 1916 the MWLU submitted to the COM a petition advocating a one port one branch policy. The COM was concerned in January 1917 that nothing had been done to further amalgamation of the two unions. Any prospect of this was severely dampened by a decision, in October 1917, of the Stevedores to do wharf work. The COM intervened, set up negotiations which saw the PPSA withdraw in November. But recall that the Stevedores subsequently entered a separate agreement with the overseas owners in December that gave them coverage of much of this work.

The most significant change to the structure of the Federation came at the union national conference held in Adelaide in mid-1918. In order to foster union integration, and stabilise the national COM, an intermediary State Executive level was established between the COM and the branches. Each state branch was entitled to one delegate for each 500 members, and in turn each state executive elected one delegate to sit on the COM. Moreover monthly meetings of the COM were replaced by quarterly meetings which ran over several days. Described as a "radical alteration" of the union constitution, it was adopted by twenty branches by November 1918. But key rule changes were rejected by the COM – such as provision for the direct election of the
general secretary. It was seen as too expensive, but also the COM saw the Annual Conference as sufficiently representative of the union as a whole to elect the general secretary. It also rejected the appointment of external professional auditors. These changes had the effect if reducing the power of the large NSW and Victorian unions (SWLU, MWLU and PPSA) in favour of the branches in the smaller states. At the same time it increased the role of the general secretary, who was still the only full-time official of the union. The claim of adequate representation at the annual conference was tenuous, since only 24 delegates, representing only 12 ports, attended the Adelaide conference in July. The demands for direct elections of officials from several branches, were ignored or delayed for extended periods. Moreover the conference was changed to a triennial format, further weakening the claim to representativeness. Although COM meetings ran over weeks, they were only quarterly which gave General Secretary Joe Morris significant executive authority, more than from 1910 to 1919 when he first became a full-time official. Moreover the decision not to directly elect the general secretary deprived the union rank and file of a leadership focus. Thus the COM remained a distant administrative organ standing over the ports, rather than as an integrated part of a national Federation. This was true even when the direct election of the general secretary was successful later in the 1920s. As one COM member remarked in the midst of the 1919 seamen's strike,

it is about time this Federation had control of the branches instead of the branches acting independently and taking action without consulting the Federation, that actions had been taken by Sydney and Melbourne and that other Branches of the Federation knew nothing of the matter until after the action had been taken, this was causing dissatisfaction in other States and that it did not help to solidify our Federation. On the contrary, such actions if continued would break up the Federation...

Serious concern also arose over the union's finances by the beginning of 1919. The levy stuck to fund Arbitration cases to the latter half 1916 left the union with only a few pounds in the bank. Then the 1917 strike, further cases and High Court appeals and the loss of the Court bond – that is, a bevy of legal costs – saw it almost £5,000 in debt. The post-war recession of 1919–1921 made action by the Federation difficult and its finances did not improve. In fact the national conference could not be funded and many branches were in arrears. The Queensland branches lobbied for a 50 percent reduction in the sustenation fees when they moved to the state arbitration system in 1921. Morris objected to this on the grounds that it was "very bad discipline" to have differential fee rates. In short, finances were a material constraint on union organisation and integration, largely from legal costs.

The three-tiered structure – COM (meeting quarterly), state executives and branch committee – remained in place through the 1920s and beyond. But the initial signs where not good – the Queensland state delegate wanted "control of affairs and finances" to be in the hands of the state bodies, the NSW delegate wanted control over their own affairs. Ports such as Fremantle and Adelaide demanded autonomy. In the case of the latter, the Port Adelaide TLC held more sway over the men than the WWF local or COM leadership. The role of the State body in regard to different types of issues was sharply debated by the COM.

3 False Dawn: the One Big Union

The third and final dimension of union organisation was inter-union cooperation and federation. Demarcation issues were addressed at the level of union organisation, but political
ideology influenced views on the general role and shape of unions. The spread of arbitration after 1900 encouraged the growth in the number of unions, that peaked in 1911. The rise in concern over co-operation and industry unionism, pushed by socialists and the IWW, after this saw a period of amalgamation. But interest on the waterfront was marginal. Even the Transport Workers Federation (TWF) sponsored by Hughes gained only sporadic support before WWI. In 1913 the largest waterfront union, the SWLU, was undecided on its attitude to another proposal for a Maritime Transport Workers Federation. The WWF as a whole endorsed proposals for unified action with the AWU, the Labor Federation and other transport unions the following year. Yet again no practical results emerged.

The experience of the war and its aftermath changed this. Between 1917 and 1921 the Australian union movement and the WWF faced the problem "closer organisation", or industrial unionism. In this period Australian unionism faced two sets of choices; on the one side between federation or amalgamation in regard to structure and between craft or industrial as its primary organising principle. It chose loose federation and a variant of the craft principle – occupational unionism. In this the WWF was typical. The discussion here is only concerned with the Federation.

The signs of 'closer organisation' were poor at the start of the war. From its initial suggestion in 1908 no material progress was made in realising a TWF. Yet the idea remained alive – largely through the influence of radicals. I mentioned earlier that the Inland Transport Workers wanted to join the WWF in 1915. The latter suggested they seek membership of the proposed Transport Workers Federation. At the end of 1916 the small craft-based Port Phillip Constructive and Shipwrights Association suggested to the WWF a larger federation encompassing the stevedores, seamen, dock chippers and painters, engineers and several other occupations. It was left in the hands of Morris. By April 1917 momentum in support of the TWF had grown in the COM and Morris was instructed to contact relevant unions. Interestingly the COM did not look favourably on the idea of a state based federation of maritime unions from the Melbourne Trades Hall. Indeed the COM cautioned all the Queensland branches not to take any action regarding the formation of a TWF in that state. The federal leaders were undoubtedly concerned lest the branches be influenced by radicalism, which was strong in areas of Queensland through the war and after.

By the end of May 1917, the FSUA, MSG, FCDU, and the FSPDU had all replied positively. So a conference was called for July and each union was represented by three delegates. WWF delegates, Woods, Morris and Cremer, were elected in June. The TWF conference in early July successfully drafted a constitution that then forwarded to all member unions. It was approved by waterside unions, except Port Adelaide. But the 1917 strike intervened. When the issue resurfaced in 1918 the WWF experience with its own politician leaders, saw the union call for a 'no politician' rule for TWF officials in April. The TWF was eventually formed in October 1918. But industry based federations were not the only current of 'closer organisation' flowing through the labour movement.

The momentum of the One Big Union (OBU) concept gained ground in the wake of the 1917 experience. Endorsed by major NSW industrial unions in 1916, its conception went beyond that of the TWF to embrace all workers and unions. Again the COM prohibited any branch entering local
negotiations regarding the OBU in August 1918. In the same month, the NSW Labor Council endorsed a national union conference on the issue. Not surprisingly Bowen in north Queensland expressed interest in the OBU.43

The ideological and political attraction of the OBU centred on several strands of radical thought that gained support for a variety of reasons as they flowed over the transport industry. One strand – that may be termed populist syndicalism – was attracted by the combination of industrial and political governance. Through a system based on an Industrial Parliament existing class-based parliaments would be abolished, as workers took control of industry through six industrial departments of the OBU, subdivided down to sections.44 Another strand – centred on an expanded AWU – was driven by the desire of this union for a far greater role for new unionism. The labourist strand in contrast, advocated a national federation of unions able deal with issues and disputes on a national scale. It was out of this strand that the Australian Council of Trade Unions resulted. The first model was adopted by the Sydney Labor Council and the Victorian unions in the form of the Workers' Industrial Union of Australia (WIUA) in August 1918. For transport unions the currents were pressed by various interests so that four options were available by the end of 1919.

The absence of the AWU at an All–Australian Trade Union conference in the following January was ominous. For while the WIUA was formally adopted at the Congress the hostility to the concept soon came to the surface. An open split between the syndicalist based model of the WIUA and the AWU model based on political action (within existing institutions) and arbitration had come in April 1919.45 By the end of 1921 two trajectories were set which not only affected the WWF but the Australian labour movement in general.

The Federation was left in a quandary during 1919 over the strategic direction to follow. It was a member of the TWF which had by this stage been by-passed by the OBU developments. For the TWF was directed primarily at preventing strikes in transport, which were common enough. The OBU was far more ambitious. Putting the latter aside, a key flaw in the plan was the issue of organisational authority and autonomy. The WWF supported the TWF in early 1919, because the COM believed that if the TWF was to gain federal registration, each union would be as branch and thus able to exercise authority over its own matters.46 But the appointment of a politician, Wallace, as President of the TWF quickly attracted protests – again from Queensland47 – and in July 1919, the COM voted to inform the sitting TWF conference at Melbourne Trades Hall, that the TWF "had no authority over the WWF". Nevertheless a general, if somewhat abstract, support for some grand federation persisted. The COM supported the spread of agreements that would be a "step toward the Internationalisation of all Transport Workers."48

By early 1920 Sydney's Jack Woods expressed criticism of the TWF and in so doing pointed to the second flaw of the scheme – its organisational capacity. He argued that it was not as effective as envisaged, in fact it "was only a figure head and that nothing had been done by them to improve the lot of workers."49 Woods' view was coloured by practical issues – the obstructive tactics of Walsh from the Seamen's union over support against the employers labour bureau, and the steadfast rejection by the shipowners of anything to do with the TWF. The ASOF refused to recognise it and ignored it.50 The result was that the union voted to cut links with the TWF, effective from December 1920.51
Yet the break with the TWF was not clear cut. Its association with the wide range of maritime unions made such a break difficult. Also there was still support in the union for the labourist policy adopted by the Federation. But the weight of opinion moved towards the OBU as time went by. Thus when the TWF looked to be moving to the AWU, Morris, mindful of the strength of feeling these issues could generate, suggested a ballot of the WWF rank and file. More complaints about the ineffectiveness of the TWF were heard, as rank and file support for the OBU became clear. In particular the Sydney vote on the question of Constitutional change to facilitate the TWF, in July 1921, tipped the balance. The WWF withdrew conclusively from the Federation the next day, citing its lack of effectiveness, its opposition to "bigger unionism and industrial organisation", and its support of a "glorified system of craft unionism." The radicals, from the IWW sympathisers onwards, viewed craft tenets with disdain.

Much of this can be accounted for by the growing influence of the popular syndicalism of the OBU. Sponsored by Jock Garden of the NSW Labor Council, the concept of the OBU spread quickly in 1918 and 1919, only to fall victim of the struggle between radicalism and reformism, through 1919 to 1921, when Garden and his followers walked out of the NSW Labor Party. I will chart its fate in respect to the WWF.

I mentioned above that the COM initially rejected the OBU in 1918. But the new State Executive system, which came into use in 1919, helped spread the idea. In September 1919, Jim Thompson, a Brisbane waterside worker and Queensland representative on the COM, was critical of the ban on contact with the OBU. Moreover he advised the union that a Transport Union was in the process of formation in Queensland. Morris had resisted this, explaining that the COM had thought it unwise to have a large union control an industry without any familiarity with it. Morris also opposed separate state unions as unnecessary, and perceptively argued that,

whilst the people of the big union say they will have a big union tomorrow, they won't – because you cannot get a mechanic to recognise the equality of labor and that a mechanic would find out that the laborer received more money than he did at his trade, therefore, he would keep away from his trade. On the other hand a laborer could not go to the trade so that the advantage would be all on the side of the tradesman .... if we grouped up the industries, they [tradesmen] would not be out of work for an hour.

In six months the influence of radicalism had deepened, in particular its emphasis on class in populist syndicalist ideology. In early 1920, the COM pressed for ownership and control over the industry by the WWF, and even suggested that the government purchase the industry for the union. And although still formally aligned with the TWF, the COM opted for a ballot as I mentioned earlier. The support for the concept in the April ballot surprised the COM. The Committee quickly offered post hoc reasons – some branches did not vote, some were in favour of some (undefined) linkage, and the number voting was low (it was less than 50 percent) – to reject the result. Moreover it was argued that confusion existed in the branches over what the vote was for, as four big union schemes were in existence, ranging from the TWF to the informal alliance of the Big Four. Turley (SA) and Mather (WA) argued that in their view the men voted for a single union and not the WIUA. The majority would be against the latter. A fresh ballot was ordered, specifically seeking a view on the WIUA. But again the vote supported the WIUA as reported at the mid-1921 meeting.
But the OBU question still remained confused. This was largely related to the political dimension. The radicals in support of the OBU had broken with the ALP in 1919 to form the Industrial Socialist Labor Party and Gardenites later formed the Socialist Party of Australia. The formation of the Communist Party in the following year, involving Garden, Walsh and Johansen of the seamen's union, may have diverted much of the radical element in the OBU, to which most union officials had objected. The COM viewed the Russian situation with suspicion. It declined an invitation from the Soviet Provisional Council to send a delegate to an international conference on war, poverty and unemployment. Yet the committee gained permission to attend an OBU conference to get information on likely effects on the WWF. There was also an accumulated frustration with the inability of the Arbitration system to satisfactorily deal with industrial issues. Apart from minor local agreements, the WWF was forced to depend on the federal Arbitration Court for wages and conditions in the face of the employers strategy of no concessions. But the processes of arbitration were slow as prices were rising, and a key issue, the Sydney labour bureau, remained unresolved.

The COM's view of the WIUA altered. Its initial acceptance of the WIUA constitution, with minor amendments, in early August 1917 was prompted by ALP support. Moreover and rank and file support for this form of syndicalism was clearly stronger than some officials believed. But the growing support for the radical position was viewed with disquiet. The Innisfail men called specifically for the release of the IWW men in NSW and "working class champions" in American gaols. The WWF leadership flatly refused to do anything. But the COM suspicion of the WIUA was also tempered by the desire to achieve some form of 'closer organisation'. In view of its reaction to the Innisfail demand the national leadership saw the OBU as an industrial and not political policy.

The failure of the TWF to materially assist the WWF campaign over the labour bureau issue from September to November 1920 pushed the COM into the OBU strategy. A positive report of the OBU conference from Woods in late October saw the COM resolve to be the Water Transportation Division of the Transport and Communication Department of the Workers' Industrial Union of Australia. Another ballot was called to secure national ratification. The vote was 2 to 1 in favour of joining the WIUA and Morris was elected to the Provisional Committee of the industrial union. A suggestion that the TWF could be the basis of a Transport Department of the OBU arose and Morris and Willis from the Miners Federation were elected to a committee to oversee this. This reflected a struggle of realignment of the OBU concept from February to its collapse in July 1921.

Morris was not present at the AWU conference in March, that decided to form the Australasian Workers' Union. At the TWF conference in late April 1921 the WWF delegates were given clear instructions to oppose any move to join the AWU. For they were bound by the rank and file ballot and the January OBU decision. Moreover they were to press the TWF on its intention to form the nucleus of the OBU transport and communication department. These unions formed the Transport Workers' Industrial Union of Australia (TWIUA), which then sought ratification from member unions. The Seamen postponed their vote indefinitely. But it was the waterside workers rejection of the TWIUA, that led to the emphatic WWF withdrawal from the TWF in July.
The political struggle between the radicals (and now the communists) and the labourists saw them clash at the All–Australian Union Conference held in Sydney in June 1921. Called to combat the white–anting of various unions it resulted, as Ed Cremer's stated, in "a good deal of antagonism shown". The agenda covered the OBU, the socialisation of industry the establishment of a labour daily newspaper. The labourists however did shift, and the socialisation objective was adopted. But it was watered down in later years. The syndicalist inspired Workers Industrial Union of Australia had in practice collapsed months before. Discussion centred on the AWU sponsored Australasian Workers Union, and even the radical Garden argued that it was irrelevant what it was called as long a big union was formed. This left the WWF leadership in a quandary again at its mid–year meeting. They had rejected the TWF, argued against the AWU, had several clear rank and file votes of support for the OBU (or the defunct WIUA) and also recognised the need for 'closer organisation'. After a lengthy debate the COM opted for the Transportation Department of the Australasian Workers Union. They had to support some 'closer organisation', given the general support for some type of OBU. But only two transport unions remained in the Australasian group and it put the WWF back with the Miners, Railwaymen, the AWU and a number of smaller unions. Apart from the increase in fees and minor differences it appeared to be like the old WIUA. They decided to recommend support for Australasian proposal. But the AWU's labourist politics and support for arbitration made it a different creature than the populist syndicalism of the earlier scheme and what the communists had in mind. Despite some disagreement, again Morris and others were not prepared to act without a further ballot and mandate from the members. Although the ballot again supported the proposal, and a Provisional Committee was formed at a conference in early 1922, but no results materialised thereafter. Ironically a major stumbling block was the refusal of the Arbitration Court to register the new organisation. The reason was that the organisation exceeded the occupational coverage of its member unions. The idea collapsed. What support remained for the OBU was largely symbolic at the national level, as only Queensland retained some active enthusiasm for the concept. This reflected the fate of the OBU in the Australian union movement in general.

4 Summary and Conclusion

In sum between 1917 and the early 1920s the arbitration system carved out more precise boundaries of union organisation by providing the mechanism for inter–union agreement or demarcation decisions. For unskilled workers, such as waterside workers, this institutional mechanism provided a new support for union security given the high level of labour substitutability. WWF policy was to extend and maintain authority over all ship and shore work in stevedoring. This was an outcome of deepening formalisation. The latter also demanded internal organisational control and discipline. Accordingly the federal Arbitration Court pursued a logical policy of goading the Federation into developing such capacities. Federation rule and organisation changes signalled a broader recognition of internal inter–branch organisation and centralised control. As I will show below its efforts in practice were less than successful. Finally the Australian labour movement in general and the WWF in particular between 1917 and 1922 faced the issue of industrial unionism. This was inextricably linked to the ideological currents of labour politics.
In regard to industrial unionism, Morris' assessment of 1920 proved correct, although it did not go far enough. Craft exclusivism proved stronger than the universalism inherent in the OBU. In addition, by 1922 it was clear that even the occupational sectionalism of non-craft workers was also stronger than the attraction of the OBU. Autonomy and occupational identity where central to union organisation as it emerged from the exclusivism of the societies. For example, Boyland complained about domination by seamen before the 1922 conference.73 Combined with arbitration and the labourist ideology of the leadership, the claim for autonomy was stronger than the attractions of industrial unionism. While support for some 'closer organisation' was evident in general ballots, it was not surprising that when specific constitutional changes were presented to rank and file workers (the Transport Workers Federation ballot of April 1921) they were rejected by most branches.

In regard to political ideology, the ill-defined and populist syndicalism of the post-IWW period had attraction for many of the rank and file of the WWF. This was essentially built on the solidarism of informalism – spontaneous, anti-parliamentarian, egalitarian and a *gemeinschaft* mutuality – although nominally socialist. But it lacked a broad theoretical unity. Yet post-war politics was recast, and the crystallisation of political strands and ideology saw syndicalism give way to a radical action. The communists were more inspired by the populism of the OBU and IWW strands than Marxism. Labourism remained wedded to an institutional pragmatism.

At the macro-level the pattern of union organisation and representation favoured by Morris "a Federation of Federations," rather than "half a dozen men having control of all industries" proved to be the model eventually adopted in Australia. This was represented in the Australian Council of Trade Unions, formed five years after the OBU schemes faded. For waterside workers the contingencies of the labour process and market continued nourish syndicalism. But the solidarism and direct action, born in informalism, was increasingly shaped by the language of communism.

### III. Industrial Relations and Labour Market Regulation

The organisational and political situation after the 1917 strike and in the 1920s were key conditions that underpinned industrial relations over these years. Direct action retained it characteristic local spontaneity but now gained a keen edge of class theory. This section examines the central dynamic of industrial relations on the waterfront.

The aftermath of the 1917 strike left the union battling the employers in two areas; the control over the labour market in several ports and the maintenance of award conditions for the industry as a whole. Labour market control covered the labour bureau and the issue of loyalist labour. Consequently union action in regard to the award was suspended over the period of the strike and into early 1918.

The majority of branches were not affected by scab unions or loyalist labour. Thus pressure for wage increases and changes in working conditions re-emerged after the strike. The Federation filed a Log of Claims in early February 1918. The union sought a new hourly wage rate of 2s.6d., a general list of special cargoes (72 cargoes) for all ports where the additional 3d. an hour would be paid to all men (including deckmen) and holidays standardised as those gazetted by the Commonwealth and the relevant State. In regard to working conditions the union continued its
claim for minimum engagement of four hours (two hours if had to present after a meal), day smokos, minimum manning of 6 holders and truckers and restrictions on the sling and trolley loads. In addition key claims were made in respect to the labour market; the reinstatement of the ban on sailor and non–WWF labour, that is, preference of employment, and much greater regulation of pick-up times and places based on the Brisbane decision of September 1916.78

However the award case was not heard until the middle of 1919. The first award was not due to expire until May 1919. In the meantime WWF Court action was directed at issues arising out of the strike. All were unsuccessful.79 By the middle of 1918 local industrial action by branches and men reappeared. The Sydney men were demanding 3d. extra for handling Vacuum Oil Co drums, the Port Phillip Stevedores passed domestic rules to limit sling loads, double shifts and set manning on trolleys. Timber work in Melbourne, travelling time in Williamstown and other issues were subject to agitation. Even the COM itself resolved that 6 men be the minimum manning in the hold.80 While local action reappeared in several ports, the key issue for the major branches, Sydney and Melbourne, was the existence of the labour bureaus. Access to them, discrimination against WWF members and the role of loyalist unions were central issues.

As I mentioned earlier that the Permanent and Casual Wharf Labourers in Sydney registered in the State Arbitration system in early December 1917. On 21 December the state Court handed down an award for Port Jackson on application by the state government Minister of Labour and Industry. However the union floundered, with only the coastal companies showing interest. The NSW Coastal Steamship Owners Association were party to awards made in 1918, 1920, and 1925, which covered about 80 permanent men at the NHRSSCo in Sydney, Newcastle and Morpeth.81 The PCWLU later registered in the federal Arbitration Court just before the 1928 strike. On this basis their state award was not renewed after 1936. The fate of the loyalist Port Jackson Coal Workers' Union was similar. The Port Pirie based Mechanical Transport Workers failed to gain registration under South Australian industrial legislation.

In contrast the Melbourne Interstate owners provided strong informal sponsorship for the loyalist Australian Ship and Wharf Workers. As I have shown the ASOF was not only willing to address loyalist complaints, but the employer Harrison, a strong supporter of non-union labour, assisted the ASWWA. Shipowners supported its attempt to register in the federal Arbitration Court in 1918. The application was opposed by the WWF and rejected by the Registrar in December under the 'conveniently belong' rule. An appeal was rejected by Higgins on the grounds that the antagonism between the men did not override the public interest and industrial peace of having one union. Moreover the members still gained the benefit of the award.82 It appears that most of the small loyalist unions faded out of existence. Thus by 1920 the WWF, within the framework of federal arbitration, was able to block the volunteer labour unions which were encouraged by employers and various governments. Only in NSW were these unions successful in gaining effective recognition and awards. But they were limited to a small number of men in waterside and coal work.

The problem of labour market discrimination through the labour bureaus in Sydney and Melbourne was of greater concern to the Federation. Recall that the Sydney interstate association was far less supportive of permanent employment than overseas companies when the Port Jackson
Co. started operations. In particular the employers depended more on the pivotal role of foremen; reflected in the comments by Higgins in dismissing the WWF application to reinstate the old pick-up method. Thus the centralised pick-up through the shipowners Bureau was less attractive. The physical growth of the port from the 1890s undermined the control dimension of the labour bureau by the cost in time and travelling to each job. Short jobs, quick turnaround, labour intensive methods, more overtime, all worked against constant employment. Moreover the Bureau operated at a loss in early years, in part due to the inefficient labour. The interstate employers therefore entered into negotiations in September and November 1918 over the issue. The interstate owners discontinued absolute preference for loyalists and engaged WWF men and loyalists in rotation.

Recall also that the overseas stevedores were more supportive of the centralised pick-up and permanent employment. Longer jobs, less overtime, less pressure on quick turnaround time, the need for developed stowage skills and less dispersed wharves all made constant employment more attractive to the employers. Therefore the Millers Point bureau operated for the overseas trade from 1919. The employment of constant men fluctuated around 400 men. Actual employment was about 350–360 a day, with the remainder on accident and sickness leave or absent. The bureau was self-funding after the inefficient workers were "weeded out". With the ability to monitor absence, and sickness claims certified by a Bureau doctor (outside certificates were soon discontinued) the Bureau was able to "eliminate physically undesirable types." Running costs were financed from charging casual rates to users but paying workers the weekly rate of £3 1s. 6d. (in 1919). Working time over the five years averaged 36 hours 18 minutes a week (idle time of 5 hrs 41 mins) – which provided the Bureau an income. It was about £3,000 at the 1919 casual rate of 1s. 9d. an hour.

In Melbourne the interstate owners dominated the Bureau through the Yarra Stevedoring Co. and were more diligent in supporting the loyalists. Witness their support of the ASWWA. Moreover there were still several hundred hardcore Melbourne waterside workers who refused to register at the Bureau by the end of March 1918. In an attempt to end the labour market discrimination the Melbourne branch forced the reopening of the Yarra registration through a BOR decision. A further 355 waterside workers registered between 2 January and 31 March 1919. This brought the total registrations from September 1917 to March 1919 to 3,852* – almost twice the labour requirement of the trade. Even at the March 1918 labour strength, the number of men actually employed was 2400. Of these only 317 received £3 a week – less than the basic wage indexed figure of £3 5s. 6d. In other words, the employers flooded the labour market as a mechanism of control and keeping wages down. The overseas trade in Melbourne, handled by the PPSA, was conducted under an agreement with the overseas companies. This agreement blocked attempts at amalgamation. The COM urged better cooperation between the two branches in early 1919.

Thus more than eighteen months after the beginning of the 1917 strike the Federation was still faced with several employer controlled labour bureaus around the country. Only the Sydney interstate men were back to the pre-existing pick-up, but loyalists and returned servicemen still retained (equal) preference. The first year after the end of the war also saw industrial disputes rise rapidly. The Melbourne waterside workers took action against the Bureau and the seamen engaged a strike in the middle of the year.
The determination of the state to press its advantage after the strike resulted in the passage of the Returned Soldiers and Sailors' Employment Act in NSW by the Fuller government in 1919, and amendment to the federal Arbitration Act by the Hughes government giving returned servicemen right of employment. This legislation gave absolute preference to returned servicemen or barred any preference against them. This was in part a response to the agitation of returned servicemen themselves for jobs. As early as December 1918, employers recognised the possible benefits of this agitation, as did the government. One employer reported, "I trust it [the agitation] will be a means of our getting the work of discharging and shipping done more expeditiously than we have experienced for some time past, and it may be at a reduction of wages."  

The Award case took place at the beginning of the recession. The latter further weakened the position of the union. Membership was down to about 12,000 – about 30 percent lower than in 1916. Several branches were critical of the handling of the case in 1918 and into 1919. Brisbane complained bitterly of the delays and the lack of information, and in frustration applied for a state award in 1918. This was opposed by Morris and the employers because Brisbane was listed in the Federal application. It was denied. Queensland State Executive delegate Jim Thompson questioned the delay in the award and the five year duration of it. The Melbourne grew impatient over wages, preference and the bureau and went out in early 1919. This held up the case. They were resumed on the promise of a Royal Commission on the wharf situation. The Pt Adelaide branch wavered through 1918 and early 1919 on continuing its membership of the Federation and award coverage. Its local agreement expired in 1917. It retained the local agreement, but was included in the 1919 federal award. The long period between the lodging the claims and the hearings contributed to the internal pressures on the leadership and tensions in the Federation.

The award hearings began in the midst of the seamen's strike in June – a major reason why the Federation did not wish to be drawn into the dispute. A draft was handed down in late September and the award on 13 October. The Court raised wages to 2s.3d. an hour (ordinary time) based on the 30-hour divisor for an average worker and rises in the cost of living from 1914. The shipowners argued that average hours would be higher (therefore the hourly rate should be lower) if the labour market was not oversupplied. But as I argued above the employer policy supported this oversupply – particularly in Melbourne. Other rates remained proportionate to the existing practice. However overtime from midnight to 6am was awarded double time, based on the Pt Adelaide experience, where double time was paid from 10pm and resulted in a decline in the volume of night work. Higgins reasoned that the "regularity of habits" of waterside workers would thereby improve, which was "good for themselves and for the community." In general the Court noted that working hours still varied by port, and so was best left to local agreement.

Claims for gazetted holidays, minimum engagement times, and day smokos were rejected as were claims for minimum Manning on the wharf and sheds and an array of special cargo rates. Although the latter two were now subject to agreement by the VO and foreman in the workplace, or a BOR. The Judge was particularly critical of the "false foundation of the whole system [of special rates]", and recognised his attempt to limit them by local agreement in the December 1915 decision was a failure. Since most had been cancelled when local agreements were terminated from September 1917, he refused to regulate them and left the "whole matter to free contract and
demand and supply.” Yet he granted the timber sorters an additional 3d. an hour for skill. Moreover his examples of ‘fair’ claims suggested that it was not the cargo in itself that could be the basis of a claim, but rather contingent changes to its normal state. The ability of workers to bargain over this issue was however checked by the rejection of the key demands for preference and the pre-August 1917 pick-up places.

To achieve some consistency over the special cargoes Higgins ordered negotiations over special cargoes and working times. There was a national agreement on times and holidays signed before the final award was delivered. But negotiations on special cargoes, smokos and other issues stretched over the next six months. They were interrupted by further Federal government action over the Sydney overseas bureau.

The interstate employers were keen to use special cargoes as a bargaining tool to gain union guarantees of no extra claims and other concessions. This was particularly so in light of the government’s action in Melbourne. For their part, some WWF branches attempted to gain 4d. an hour special rate, which was strongly rejected by shipowners. In the course of the negotiations, differences between overseas and interstate owners came to light. The overseas companies opposed special rates and the trade-off role proposed by the ASOF and OSRA suggested that no arrangements be adopted without consultation. ASOF pointed out that Sydney permanent men’s wages and some special cargoes had been unilaterally increased. As I mentioned in a previous chapter, a national joint council of the employers was proposed over this special cargoes issue, but differences over other issues, particularly the implementation of the Navigation Act, halted the proposals.

1 The End of the Labour Bureau

To address the Bureau problem the COM appealed in January 1919 to federal government minister Alex Pynton, a former WWF office-holder, for action on the Sydney overseas labour bureau. It was rejected. Representations were made to Higgins and the Prime Minister, the latter through the Victorian THC Disputes Committee in April and May. In all cases nothing was done. But the COM couldn’t afford industrial action. It tried to restrain the Melbourne men—by banning independent branch action—from limiting sling loads to half a ton for some cargoes and then walking out. This action was however overshadowed by the seamens’ strike of May to July. Despite the loss of some of the arbitration court bond because of unofficial industrial action by waterside workers, the Federation was not drawn into this dispute. Negotiations with the FSUA allowed steam (to operate winches) to be provided for stevedoring work so that the union could protect the award case in mid-year. In response to a Trades Hall call for support for the seamen, the Federation felt it lacked the resources “for a full strike” and the COM formally voted, “not to participate in any strike.”

Only in Fremantle did significant action take place at this time. A WWF agreement over working the vessel “Dimboola” was broken in May 1919 when volunteers—called ‘nationals’—began to work it. The lumpers picketed the ship and resolved not to work with volunteers in the future. Indeed Lumper President Bill Renton advocated violence against the scabs, a blockade of shipowners’ homes and other methods of solidarist action. Police took over the wharf, but protests and violence against the volunteers escalated to shots being fired and the reading of the Riot Act.
Lumber Tom Edwards was shot and died three days later on 7 May. Attacks on the scabs continued as support came from other unions. To settle the port, the volunteers dating from 1917 were withdrawn from the waterfront with compensation paid by the State government.112

As noted, the Melbourne agitation did precipitate the appointment of a federal government inquiry, under Judge George Dethridge. His report was completed on 30 June 1919. It repeated many of the criticisms made by Higgins in the Arbitration Court. The Yarra Co. Bureau had the significant power to deregister workers, which effectively excluded them from the industry. Dethridge wrote, "[t]hat power has already been extended, in my opinion, unwisely, and probably with an undue harshness ... Obviously, even without recourse to de-registration, the bureau is a very convenient instrument for the victimisation of marked men". He also accepted the WWF argument that without the Bureau the employers could not effectively maintain the pledge of continued work for the loyalists. However, the Judge also remarked that there was little doubt that too many 'loyalists' were registered than necessary. The strike had been effectively over at the end of October 1917, but registrations continued for a further five or six weeks until 3 December. The result was insufficient work to provide a living wage for all those registered. This situation deteriorated markedly in the first four months of 1919 as a downturn hit the port. Thus wages paid by the Bureau over this period declined 30 percent in comparison with the same period in 1918. Preference to the loyalists (all registered before 3 December) and the lack of work were identified as the primary causes of the Melbourne waterfront agitation. Dethridge concluded that he could not find evidence of any discrimination, notwithstanding the absolute preference to loyalists. The report was discretely withheld by the government.

But less than two months later, in August 1919, the Federal Government announced a reversion to the pre-strike pick-up system. This action was made possible since technically the government controlled most of the interstate fleet under wartime chartering. The protection of loyalists through the Yarra Co Bureau was effectively abolished. The action surprised employers, who naturally opposed it. Yet there were attempts by the Controller of Shipping to improve waterfront operations for months. A shift system was trialed earlier in the year. The ASWWA immediately sought assurance from shipowners of continued work – but I can find no indication whether it was given. After the 1919 Award was finalised in mid-October, the Melbourne WWF resumed their agitation and refused to work or be picked up with loyalists. Shipowners lost no time in informing the Prime Minister and Admiral Clarkson of these actions.

A federal government announcement in early 1920 in regard to the Sydney waterfront again surprised employers and the WWF. In February the government announced the establishment of a tribunal to inquire into waterside work in Sydney with a view to settlement of matters in dispute. The proposed tribunal was to have one representative each from the WWF and employers, with an independent chairman. This proposal provoked considerable controversy. The overseas employers strenuously objected and to appease them the government appointed representatives from both ASOF and OSRA. But the ASOF nominee, Blair, resigned and the parties could not even agree on a chairman. Moreover, Judge Higgins was scathing in his attack upon the government and the proposed Tribunal labelling the tribunal unconstitutional, illegal, and a danger to industrial peace. Higgins tried to get an undertaking from Morris that the WWF would not deal with the tribunal, but
Morris refused. Particularly since the Sydney branch was expecting to regain preference because the Court limited its 1918 decision to the end of 1921. To overcome legal problems, the federal government passed the Industrial Peace Act later in the year that gave such Tribunals the power to override the Arbitration Court. Higgins resigned from the Arbitration Court in protest two weeks after it became law in September 1920. The proposed stevedoring industry tribunal was never implemented.

But pressure on the COM from the Sydney branch for the abolition of the Bureau and loyalist labour was constant. The COM supported a vote of branches for a conference over the issue in January 1920, when the Melbourne bureau still existed. But progress stalled, for although supported by other unions they were all were short of funds. The closure of the Melbourne bureau in August gave the issue impetus. Late that month, the COM approved an overtime ban in support of the abolition of the Sydney bureau and the restoration of WWF preference. The interstate owners soon agreed to pick-up all their labour at the wharves, and the ban was lifted on interstate vessels. Although the ban on overseas vessels continued it was difficult to sustain over the next two months. Some ports, Sydney, Port Adelaide and others, continued to enforce it, but some branches such as the Port Phillip Stevedores (who handled only overseas vessels in Melbourne) refused. While at a TWF conference later in the month, Morris attempted to broaden the issue by roping in other transport unions to implement a similar ban from 28 September. An amendment by Walsh of the Seamen's Union, (with the WWF lack of support to the FSU in 1919 in mind) put the issue to a ballot by all member unions. It effectively blocked the WWF and the issue then drifted with little clear direction from the Federation leadership.

Negotiations with the shipowners also proved fruitless. They refused to abandon the bureau and could only offer a proposal for joint management. But the proposed committee (loyalist, returned soldiers, WWF and employer representatives) did not offer any prospect of real change and was rejected. With the closure of the Newcastle labour bureau in October 1920, support for the issue continued to wane. As Brisbane secretary Chas Dawson explained, the branch had little information about the dispute and the division between the interstate and overseas men in Brisbane led to a loss of a ballot on the issue. Walsh's action at the TWF effectively ended the overtime ban, and indeed the TWF. The COM was forced to lift the ban on 2 November, and at the same time it censured the TWF and recommended WWF withdrawal. In turn the Sydney branch censured the COM. And although the COM wanted the bureau abolished, it refused support for a suggestion by NSW representative Renton, for a ‘go-slow’ campaign, the "reduction of 50 percent in [the] quantity of work", to force its closure. Appeals to OSRA for equal access to the bureau and to the NSW government to abolish it were all rejected.

The Sydney branch then suggested that the government take over the bureau. In response the COM decided to approach the government to press a claim for the tribunal, announced almost twelve months earlier. Negotiations with employers broke down after 7 December.

For at this point the bureau issue was absorbed in the award renewal process. The 1919 award was due for renewal at the end of 1920. The Federation served a Log of Claims on the employers in mid-December. But a month earlier they suggested an interim increase of 6d. a hour, already paid to loyalists in Sydney. The ASOF refused. Indeed, the shipowners saw the Log of Claims as "extraordinary" and again refused to negotiate, suggesting the Federation go to the
Chapter Eleven

The shipowners, however reconsidered their position in light of an interim 6d an hour rise in state award in Queensland. It was attractive to employers because the 6d. rise applied across the board, for all wage rates, with no proportionate adjustments for overtime or other rates. The shipowners met Federation representatives in mid–January 1921 and offered to match the Qld increase, in exchange for a decrease in the overtime rate. The WWF rejected the offer and intimidated that they would seek a special tribunal, proposed a year earlier by the government. But, at a meeting with the Prime Minister, this idea was dashed. The government now rejected any suggestion of a tribunal, since the WWF was covered by an award and it saw no reason to interfere.

The union then had a difficult choice – accept the employers offer of an ordinary rate rise, retrospective from 1 January, with a penalty rate cut, or wait months for an uncertain arbitration decision. Further negotiations in early February brought no change in the employers' position. Over the following weeks the COM and branches decided to accept the hourly rate increase – clearly a 22 percent immediate increase outweighed the cut in penalty rates at the time. Overtime ranged from time and a half to double time and thus fell to time and a third and time and two-thirds for normal and extra–ordinary overtime respectively. Various holiday and Sunday rates only increased by a flat 6d. an hour. It was retrospective to 1 January 1921. Moreover the employers agreed that the settlement was on a no prejudice basis in regard to future Arbitration Court applications, and the Federation make no retrospective claims. In addition, ASOF chairman Appleton informally suggested that the Federation submit a proposal for a joint tribunal to the shipowners, when Morris inquired about the issue. The COM viewed the proposal as an alternative bargaining mechanism to arbitration. They approved the idea in which all seven COM members would be members. Like previous proposals it lapsed.

The February wage settlement remained the basis of payment until the hand-ing down of the 1922 Award more than a year later. But the wage settlement effectively defused the impetus of bureau issue, which was already struggling for national support. It was therefore forced back into the Arbitration Court. This was despite the call for conference of maritime unions in mid–1922 and growing industrial action in 1924.

Again delays and legal barriers arose in Arbitration Court proceedings. Preference was claimed on numerous occasions by the Federation over the next three years. It was refused by the new President of the Court, Justice Powers, in the October 1922 Award decision. He did, however, comment that the existing arrangements were not conducive to industrial peace stating that there "must be a limit to loss [to the WWF Sydney branch] to be suffered for any act in a British community." He urged the parties to come to some agreement regarding equal access to employment. The Federation again requested preference in December, specifically in respect to Risdon Electrolytic Zinc Co. in Tasmania, the Sydney Bureau and certain interstate employers. The ensuing conference on 9 February 1923 failed, as did a Court ordered compulsory conference in March. The issue was then referred to the Court. In an interim statement in June 1923, Powers dismissed the Risdon case, found unfair discrimination in Melbourne and only a trivial case of discrimination at the Sydney Bureau. He therefore rejected the preference application, consistent with the promises to (genuine) loyalists and the obligations of the legislation in respect to returned
servicemen. However he insisted that the employers strictly adhere to the original conditions of the arrangements. At the same time he again urged the parties to arrive at a settlement.\textsuperscript{144}

No agreement emerged over the following six months. But the shipowners refusal to accept the conditions set out in June gave the Court a critical opportunity to break any moral obligation it had to continue to bolster the shipowners' commitment to the loyalists. In his final judgment in December 1923 Powers reinstated the equal position of the WWF with other labour after a examination of the legal position of the loyalists. The exception was the position of returned servicemen. The decision was effective from 1 February 1924 in all ports.\textsuperscript{145} In an interpretation decision soon after the order came into effect, the Court stressed that all returned servicemen were placed on an equal footing for all work and the employers' had no right to discriminate against Federation members, but stopped short of preference for Federation men.\textsuperscript{146} In short the Arbitration Court removed the basis of the Labour Bureau, but did not grant absolute preference. WWF direct action was required for the abolition of the Bureau.

In the course of the 1923 case, the employers asserted that the issue was beyond the Court's jurisdiction and therefore requested that the question be submitted to the High Court. While Powers rejected this, the issue was subsequently referred to the High Court by the union using test case breaches of the December decision. In August 1924 the High Court upheld the Arbitration Court's interpretation of the section 81A of the Act and the validity of the Court's decision.\textsuperscript{147} In response the Sydney OSRA merely replaced loyalists registered at the Bureau, with non--WWF returned servicemen. The union's legal advice indicated that the employers could not now discriminate between union and non-union returned servicemen nor non--returned workers. It was suggested that prosecutions could be launched if employers continued to do so.\textsuperscript{148}

But the employers action provoked industrial action. At stopwork meetings, the WWF imposed a national overtime ban on all shipping effective from 1 November 1924 in support of a campaign against the Sydney bureau and constant employment in all ports.\textsuperscript{149} Only Melbourne and the Port Phillip Stevedores rejected the call, but the refusal of seamen to supply steam drew these branches into the dispute anyway.\textsuperscript{150} Compulsory conferences on 12 and 13 November failed and the issue was referred to the Court. Following the threat by Justice Powers, on 14 November, to cancel the award and deregister the union, the ban was lifted, as from Monday 17 November. Powers pointed out none of the Federation's claims had actually been submitted to the Court, and intimated that they had some validity.\textsuperscript{151} A few days later waterside workers refused to work overseas vessels worked by the Sydney Labour Bureau in other ports of call. The Stevedores refused to work the "Maloja" in Melbourne. A further unsuccessful compulsory conference was held on 22 November.\textsuperscript{152}

By this stage Powers was exasperated on two counts; first the overseas employers had shown no intention of negotiating on the issue. They merely sought a return to work order from the Court. Second, the insistence on registration of returned servicemen at "their private bureau" amounted to the insertion of an additional condition for employment of returned WWF men. This was not part of the NSW Act or the federal award. Moreover since WWF rules barred constant employment, it was not possible for WWF men to accept anything more than an occasional job. Third, returned soldiers from outside the industry were registered. All these factors did not comply with the award.\textsuperscript{153} The employers' practices gave "those ... registered at the bureau preference over other
returned soldier members of the union contrary to the award”. While this was a sharp rebuke for employers, Powers again reproached the union for direct action. In short both parties were in breach of the award.

In December the Court again considered the labour bureau and constant work. On 5 December the parties were instructed to submit settlement terms. Both rejected the other parties' terms. Powers then indicated that he would discontinue the requirement for bureau registration to gain employment, and that only WWF returned servicemen would be employed in the Holyman bureau. On the constant issue he noted that it was not within the power of the Court to specify the use of only casual labour. The overseas employers began proceedings in the High Court to test this intervention by the Arbitration Court.

The government intervened a week later. Prime Minister Bruce convened a conference for 13 December at which a settlement was concluded and industrial action ceased on 15 December. The Federation undertook to absorb all Labour Bureau men into its Sydney branch and cease all industrial action. In turn the employers agreed to abolish the bureau by 28 February 1925, dismiss the permanent men by 6 January (but they could then be hired as casuals) and withdraw the injunction proceedings in the High Court. The critical agreement was of course the closure of the Bureau. From 7 January all men were to picked up at the wharf gates or six designated points. PM Bruce had appealed to P&O head, Lord Inchape, to arrive at a settlement of the issue. But there is little doubt however, that the continued WWF campaign in Court and by direct action, resulted in abolition of the bureau. Yet the December settlement was not the end of the issue.

In a rearguard action, the NSW government sought to enforce its returned servicemen's employment legislation. It opened a bureau in January 1925 and compelled shipowners to apply for labour through it. However, the interstate owner continued to pick-up labour as before, despite the £100 penalty. In order to comply with the arbitration act (and its own law) the pick-up procedures were very cumbersome. Legal action taken against a small independent company for breach of the Act failed. Action by the WWF resulted in most of the remaining non-union returned servicemen to join the Federation. Moreover the Sydney Soldiers and Sailors' Wharf Union was deregistered in the state system and was never registered under the federal act. The government soon had little choice but to close the bureau. Although this initiative failed a small number of volunteer unionists remained.

A good proportion of the estimated one thousand returned servicemen on the waterfront (of 5000 in total) were already WWF members. The government bureau had about 700, as more than 300 men joined the Sydney WWF as part of the settlement. There were 480 Bureau men, thus about 250 outside returned servicemen were employed. This meant that the anti-union thrust of the government's bureau was minimal, although substantial in the overseas trade. The Sydney membership soared to 5039 in early 1925 from 3844. However some P&C men covered by a state award were outside the agreement – of about 50 constant employed in Sydney in local trade to Newcastle. A small number of men also refused to join the Sydney WWF.

In sum the labour market control afforded by the labour bureau in the context of arbitration and union organisation was not attractive to most employers by the early 1920s. The interstate shipowners abolished the system because of inefficiency, the preference of supervisors and
government pressure. The port of Melbourne reverted to the open pick. In the interstate trade (top-end men) waterside workers again followed various foremen and formed gangs ("buddy" gangs) based on kinship, friendship or other normative ties.\textsuperscript{163} It was only the bitterness of a small number of interstate employers that maintained it until 1919.

In contrast the overseas employers were able to absorb inefficiencies in their quest for continuity of operations. As I showed previously their vessels had multiport schedules in Australia which placed more pressure on port operations to keep to schedules. In Melbourne they secured an agreement with the Port Phillip Stevedores, and in Sydney established a bureau. Smaller ports could be by-passed in the case of trouble. Moreover the inefficiencies in Sydney were minimised through the systematic elimination of slow, sick or injured workers and experience training on longer jobs found in the overseas trade.

Finally, arbitration also acted as a mechanism to insert societal normative principles into the labour process. Thus as the concept of 'undue strain' established load limitations on workers, the notions of fair punishment in a 'British community' and equality of access to employment undermined the moral basis of the bureau. With these enabling conditions, industrial action by the WWF was able to secure the abolition of the bureau. However it was not the bureau itself that created "lasting damage to waterfront industrial relations" but the structure of industrial authority in an industry in transition.\textsuperscript{164}

\section*{IV. Industrial Relations, Work Control and Queensland}

As I argued above the political landscape of industrial labour was cast by the end of 1921. From that date communist politics increasingly shaped the left critique of capitalism. But populist syndicalism remained an important influence in industrial organisation and action despite the marginalisation of the OBU. In general the labour movement was driven by the pragmatic labourist politics of the Labor Party. On the waterfront, the influence of radicalism was sustained by the solidarism built on informalist labour organisation, which fed the vestiges of syndicalism and the nascent communism. Labourism too was not immune from the influences of socialism and communism on the one hand and a constitutionalism and social conservatism on the other. Demands for improved industrial conditions were more informed by class politics than the moralism of the pre-war period.

Waterfront unionism was thus washed by cross-currents of political ideology in the 1920s. This was reflected in rank and file demands for improvement at the workplace, and included greater demands for authority over the pick-up, allocation of work and the rate of work. These three dimensions of the labour process, were seen as 'job control' and were condemned by employers.

In the four years before the depression began in 1929 the level of disputes rose and involved more workers and had a wider effect on the shipping industry (see Table 11.1\textsuperscript{165}) than hitherto. The WDL in 1928 indicates the extent of the 1928 strike against the federal award – the Beeby Award. Moreover, as Table 11.2 indicates, unemployment was steady but rose sharply after 1927.

The 1921 wages agreement, discussed earlier was followed by a number of agreements signed through the year.\textsuperscript{166} The WWF filed for a new award in April 1921 which was not heard until mid-1922. The employers claimed that the falls in the cost of living required a 2d. cut to 2s.7d. an hour, whereas the union claimed 3s.6d. Accepting the 30 hour divisor, Justice Powers
maintained the existing rate of 2s.9d. based on inflation after March 1922, despite a fall for the year to April. The Court however refused to reinstate the overtime rate to time and a half and double time for nights. Powers argued that these were 'special' (or penalty) rates rather than overtime. And since other industries received only five or ten percent, 35 percent was adequate. He then linked it to the cost of living, arguing that the latter had fallen since the rate was settled by negotiated agreement more than a year earlier. The rates thus remained 3s.9d. for ordinary overtime and 4s.6d. after midnight. Finally the Court made provision for the quarterly adjustment of wages in line with the cost of living, that amendments to the Arbitration made possible.

Table 11.1 Industrial Disputation CBCS Industry Group XI (shipping, wharf labour, etc) Australia, 1918–1933

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Workers Involved</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>WDL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Directly</td>
<td>Indirectly</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1918</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>4,066</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>4,102</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1919</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>11,457</td>
<td>21,257</td>
<td>32,714</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1920</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>3,667</td>
<td>10,029</td>
<td>13,696</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1921</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>4,437</td>
<td>8,263</td>
<td>12,700</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1922</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>1,047</td>
<td>384</td>
<td>1,431</td>
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<tr>
<td>1923</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>791</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>878</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1924</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>1,762</td>
<td>471</td>
<td>2,233</td>
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<tr>
<td>1925</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>4,437</td>
<td>2,261</td>
<td>6,698</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1926</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>1,630</td>
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<td>1928</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>9,324</td>
<td>7,042</td>
<td>16,366</td>
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<tr>
<td>1929</td>
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<tr>
<td>1930</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1,582</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1,582</td>
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<tr>
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<td>8</td>
<td>536</td>
<td>352</td>
<td>888</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1932</td>
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<td>85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1933</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
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</table>

Source: Commonwealth of Australia, Labour Reports, Nos 8–25 (1918–1933)

Table 11.2 Rate of Unemployment, Australia, 1923–1931

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Rate (%)</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Rate (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1923</td>
<td>7.1</td>
<td>1928</td>
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<td>8.8</td>
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<td>27.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1927</td>
<td>7.0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Commonwealth of Australia, Labour Reports, Nos 15–23 (1923–1931)

Again the Court refused to grant fixed rates for the 55 special cargoes claimed, but left the issue for BOR determination. Manning, day smokos, and further weight limitations were all rejected by the Court. Based on 'unfair strain' additional minor provisions were granted for landing small cargoes and carrying coal, amongst other things. Finally, the employers were pleased that smokos did not have to be paid where work commenced an hour or less prior to the break.

The adoption of the quarterly wage adjustments saw the ordinary hourly rate rise to 2s.10 1/2d. an hour by the end of 1923 and then fall to 2s.10d. in the 1924 award. Again the Court refused to recognise ordinary or extraordinary overtime. It merely specified wage rates outside ordinary hours in the same proportion as the existing award viz, a little over time and third for work to midnight and over time and half after midnight. Few additional changes were made to the Federal award in 1924. The Court extended employer responsibility for meal payments, but
rejected any further weight limitations, minimum night engagements, day smokos and similar claims. Two issues in the case pointed to the concerns of the union and the employers.

The Federation argued for a redefinition of a job – that each day's engagement shall constitute a separate job. This stood in stark contrast to the existing definition of all work needed for each hold – that could range from a few hours to several weeks. This practice ensured both continuity of work for employers and protection against arbitrary dismissal in favour of 'bulls' or 'stars' for workers. The new claim would assist in the distribution of work to all workers because if each engagement was restricted to one day then more 'jobs' would be available. But the claim was rejected on the basis that the existing method of engagement would not justify the change.

The employers' concerns centred on the rise of direct action in the workplace, for both seamen and waterside workers. The latter were "guilty of frequent breaches of the award and it became necessary on several occasions to report these to the Arbitration Court." On this basis the CSOA pressed for a penalty clause in the award. It wanted a £50 penalty on the Federation for any action to enforce a claim against any employer or employers or in support of any other union, by a branch or combination of two or more men. The Court rejected the claim on the grounds that it was contrary to British practice to levy penalties on those not responsible for a particular act.

Much of this informal action by waterside workers from the early-1920s focused on stages three, four and five of the employment relation – the pick-up, dispatch and allocation of work. But it was the Queensland branches under a state award handed down in 1921 that provided the dynamic for these issues.

2 The Queensland Ports

In the 1922 Award judgment in October Justice Powers commented that the federal award had been observed and had regulated the industry "satisfactorily on the whole." The exception had "been trouble and some breaches of the award by militant sections in outside districts" referring to Queensland. The influence of radicalism in the Queensland branches during First World War resulted in direct action and moves away from federal arbitration. The fourteen Queensland branches made up about 40 percent of the Federation branches but less than 20 percent of the membership. Most were seasonal ports, where the in season (for meat, sugar or wool) months more than doubled the labour force. The core labour force was between about 50 to several hundred men, as outlined in Table 11.3. Thus two forces operated in these ports; the small labour force could maintain informalist social and work relations, yet the seasonal influx of mobile workers infused local informalism with wider demands.

1 Decentralisation and Localism in Industrial Relations

The loss of the 1917 strike saw the Maryborough WWF branch register in the state system in December 1917. As I mentioned earlier the Queensland application for state coverage the next year failed, as it was ruled that the branches were also named in the plaint to the federal Arbitration Court. Morris' reluctance to allow the Queensland branches to move to the state system was not repeated in 1920. The Queensland branches met in Rockhampton in July 1920 and resolved to apply for coverage by the state Arbitration and Conciliation Act. The 1919 federal award was due to expire at the end of November, and thus the employers could not use the same technical point that they did two years earlier to block the application.
The union registered in November 1920 and the state Arbitration Court handed down an interim decision in December — the 6d. increase in the hourly rate mentioned above. On this occasion the employers did not oppose the application of the Queensland waterside workers for a state award. The ASOF agreed to the request by the COM for the move, as both agreed it would smooth working relations and reduce the number of disputes. In addition local developments in each port, in particular the main ports involved in the 1917 strike, amounted to a *de facto* return to a more decentralised system for the management of industrial relations. The failure of federal arbitration to control Federation branches eventually weakened the efforts to resist the centrifugal forces in the industry.

**Table: 11.3 Membership Queensland Branches, 1920–1929**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Port</th>
<th>1920</th>
<th>1921</th>
<th>1922</th>
<th>1923</th>
<th>1924</th>
<th>1927</th>
<th>1928</th>
<th>1929</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Brisbane</td>
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<td>-</td>
<td>1266</td>
<td>1480</td>
<td>1478</td>
<td>1673</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>(*) 1650</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rockhampton</td>
<td>235</td>
<td>268</td>
<td>261</td>
<td>261</td>
<td>251</td>
<td>222</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gladstone</td>
<td>105</td>
<td>108</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>95</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maryborough</td>
<td>106</td>
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<td>-</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>49</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bundaberg</td>
<td>@ n.a.</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Townsville</td>
<td>657</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>#591</td>
<td>576</td>
<td>584</td>
<td>695</td>
<td>705</td>
<td>695</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cairns</td>
<td>170</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>320</td>
<td>308</td>
<td>310</td>
<td>412</td>
<td>453</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mackay</td>
<td>186</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>186</td>
<td>132</td>
<td>14/9</td>
<td>201</td>
<td>225</td>
<td>189</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thurs Is.</td>
<td>n.a.</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pt Douglas</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cooktown</td>
<td>n.a.</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lucinda Pt</td>
<td>n.a.</td>
<td>n.a.</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>130</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Innisfail</td>
<td>41   (@80)</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>91</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>101</td>
<td>104</td>
<td>184</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bowen</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>132</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* based on phone call by Registrar noted in file, Sec. Brown reports 268 financial and 1382 unfinancial members
@ not applicable as the port was not included in first application  # for several ports the 1922 figures were probably for 1921
@ see 1921 Award Judgment, Qld, *Government Gazette*, Vol CXVI, No 268, 9 June 1921, p.1803

Source: Collated from Returns to the Qld Registrar of Industrial Unions, *Registration Application*, No 82, 20 Oct 1920, Qld Industrial Registry

Industrial issues from 1917 had also stirred initiatives for closer organisation between OSRA and the ASOF. These, however, dissipated over the Navigation Act issue and desire of the interstate owners to distance themselves from the Sydney overseas bureau. The negotiated wage rise for waterside workers in early 1921 was followed by a series of negotiations with a dozen maritime unions over the next eighteen months. In light of the decrease in the cost of living over this period shipowners pressed for wage cuts. They were successful in the case of coal hulkmen and shore shipwrights in 1922. In the absence of agreement with others they then filed applications in the Arbitration Court. Here too they were successful in gaining wage reductions, though not for waterside workers. In short, the shipowners adopted a two stage labour management policy — initially negotiation was used to press for their preferred outcome. If this failed arbitration was used. This drift to decentralisation complemented the continuing role of local informalism in workplace relations.

Key union claims in the Queensland log centred on wages, preference, engagement and manning. Wages claimed were 3s.6d. an ordinary hour and the traditional overtime rates. In addition a claim was made to widen the range of special cargoes that paid a penalty rate of 1s. an
Chapter Eleven

hour. Clause 17 specifically claimed the 'rotary' system of engagement in the southern division based on a system of registration of workers. The basic gang manning claimed was 29 men; 8 in the hold (2 more than the federal award), 8 truckers (2 more), 6 stackers (2 more), in addition to the standard complement of deckmen and landers.182

Ironically the full award hearing was held up by protracted disputes at Innisfail and later Bowen.183 The Court required, and was furnished with, written guarantees that Innisfail and Cairns would abide by the award. At Bowen the union conceded the employers right of employment in a Memorandum of Agreement. But they were subject to an obligation to equalise work and a written explanation of why any registered worker was not employed.184

The award was handed down by Justice MacNaughton in May 1921. Using a 29 hour divisor, based on the Brisbane coalworkers state award, the Court granted an additional 2d. an hour to 2s.11d. ordinary time. Central and northern ports were awarded the conventional higher rates of between 2d. and 5d. per hour extra. The rate granted for ordinary and extraordinary overtime was 4s.1d. and 5s.2d. respectively - a slight advance on the federal award rates. Preference was granted subject to the normal requirements in regard to returned servicemen. It was however subject to cancellation on a port by port basis dependent upon the conduct of the union and the men.185 In light of the demands for control over the pick-up the award regulated engagement extensively. The critical provision lay in clause 14(1) that required employers to "make every effort to secure an equal distribution of work amongst the members of the Federation at each port."186 This clause had a significant impact on the Queensland waterfront over the next seven years.

A central concern of Judge MacNaughton was the internal control of the union in Queensland and the prevention of "sporadic disturbances". These concerns were addressed in two ways. First, union preference would provide a "steadying effect" on the calling. Second, the formation of the central committee for the Queensland branches of the Federation to manage the state's affairs. Members of this committee were directly elected by the rank and file, could negotiate with employers and report to the Court. A similar body was established for employers.187

Despite the hourly rate rise, preference, and the onus of equalisation employers were not displeased with the result.188 The Queensland men were surprised at the additional 2d. an hour and indeed the Queensland COM representative, James Thompson thought this would assist the union in the federal case. On the negative side, the case cost over £500 and a 5s. levy was struck on the branches in the state to fund it. In light of these costs, Thompson argued that Queensland should be exempted from the current federal levy and affiliation dues be halved. The COM rejected this. Both Woods and Morris argued that apart from the additional hourly rate, the award differed little from federal award. They doubted that the expense was worth it, since the federation had negotiated a 6d. rise which cost very little and the state award mirrored the federal in all the basic conditions. Therefore all branches and members were bound to pay for it.189 Nevertheless, later in the year the Queensland State Executive requested financial assistance. In October, the COM granted £100 to the state executive, with a further hundred on the payment of the federal levy.190

2 Rotary and the State Award

Notwithstanding this, the effect of clause 14 was significant over the following seven years. The demand for equal distribution of work was a longstanding one for waterside workers. It
underpinned the opposition to constant work in Sydney, for example. The influence of syndicalism during the war gave additional impetus to the issue, that continued into the 1920s. Moreover, demands for the limitation of engagement ran in tandem with the rotary issue. Times, length and places of the pick-up, and even the time and day of payment, became subject to demands. These developments emerged with greater strength as a politicised solidarism clashed with the formalisation of the employment relation.

The Queensland Arbitration Court had earlier approved a distribution scheme for the Brisbane coalworkers,\(^{191}\) and dealt with disputes in Innisfail and Bowen prior to handing down the final award. The December 1920 award was suspended for work at Innisfail, Goondi and Mourilyan Harbour, although this was lifted for Innisfail (which was the branch that supplied labour to the other sites) in the May award.\(^{192}\) Bowen had introduced a gang roster system\(^{193}\) and similar systems were in operation in other Queensland ports. However, based on the evidence presented to the Court on Bowen and the coalworkers all had not be successful. Therefore the Court placed a general onus on employers to ensure the equalisation of work in preference to any specific scheme.\(^{194}\)

Moreover demands for the equalisation of work extended beyond Queensland. The Sydney branch requested a conference on, *inter alia*, a union run rotary system, in November 1920.\(^{195}\) Fremantle introduced a rotary system in July 1921. Based on two registers – deckmen and labourers listed separately – each class of worker was pick-uped in turn.\(^{196}\) Note that this type of system was associated with the skill exclusivism of the informalist pattern of labour organisation. Since the influence of informalism remained strong in Fremantle (and Pt Adelaide) it is not surprising to find it appear here. The Melbourne men demanded a more limited scheme – the employment of relief gangs after 5pm that ensure better distribution of overtime work, and so earnings.\(^{197}\)

Within weeks of the publication of the Queensland award, the Innisfail men resumed their demand for control over the pick-up. The action was taken without consultation with the State Executive.\(^{198}\) Union preference was suspended at the port in August 1921.\(^{199}\) Chas Dawson, Brisbane branch secretary, commented that the Innisfail trouble was the "usual storm centre in Queensland".\(^{200}\)

The impetus for rotary increased despite the reported "serious problems" in the west.\(^{201}\) Agitation in Brisbane and other ports increased later in the year, when Brisbane submitted a union controlled scheme to the court based in restricting income to £4 5s. a week.\(^{202}\) The state Court order a ballot on the issue of limiting working hours to 36 a week. It was lost 577 to 430. A variety of reasons were given for this; a seamen's strike at the time, fewer overseas vessels and a plague scare all of which cut work in the port in the latter half of 1921.\(^{203}\) Thus the concern over the volume of work saw men grab as much as they could and accusations of discrimination also increased. Whereas in Rockhampton the plentiful work made the men indifferent to the issue.\(^{204}\) Given this result the Court, in December, refused to vary the clause 14. The Federation also claimed one pick-up time, in the morning 8–10 am, which was refused.\(^{205}\)

The Innisfail dispute included more than the demand for a rotary scheme. The union sought control over the allocation of labour in the labour process itself, that is, stage five in the employment
relation. In effect, rotary denied employers the right of control over the allocation of tasks in the workplace— in other words, an assertion of work control in the labour process. The spread of work, or 'job control', intensified on the Australian waterfront through the mid-1920s— particularly in several Queensland ports.

3 Why Queensland?

The Queensland ports displayed a number of enabling conditions which underpinned support and spread of rotary and its effects in work control. As I noted earlier, the size and mobility of the labour force combined informalism with militancy. Many small ports of less than 50 to about 500 men were suitable for informalist relations. The seasonal work was centred on several perishable cargoes (such as sugar and meat) which gave workers significant short term strategic power. Recall also that syndicalism was most attractive to mobile casual workers and the growth of socialism in the 1920s after the formation of the communist party was also influential. Moreover the state Labor government was sympathetic to casual labour given that its most influential supporter, the AWU covered many casual workers in the large rural industry.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Fatal</th>
<th>Non-Fatal</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>WWF members</th>
<th>Accident Rate per '000</th>
<th>Mortality Rate per'000</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1918-19</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>336</td>
<td>340</td>
<td>n.a.</td>
<td>102.1</td>
<td>n.a.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1919-20</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>288</td>
<td>293</td>
<td>2869</td>
<td>102.1</td>
<td>1.74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1920-21</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>368</td>
<td>369</td>
<td>(+2900)</td>
<td>127.2</td>
<td>(0.34)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1921-22</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>366</td>
<td>368</td>
<td>3045</td>
<td>120.9</td>
<td>0.66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1922-23</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>496</td>
<td>502</td>
<td>3239</td>
<td>155.0</td>
<td>1.85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1923-24</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>414</td>
<td>421</td>
<td>3552</td>
<td>125.6</td>
<td>2.09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1924-25</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>524</td>
<td>529</td>
<td>(3400)</td>
<td>(155.6)</td>
<td>(1.47)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1924-26</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>513</td>
<td>520</td>
<td>(3500)</td>
<td>(152.9)</td>
<td>(2.05)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1926-27</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>471</td>
<td>479</td>
<td>3772</td>
<td>127.0</td>
<td>2.12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1927-28</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>474</td>
<td>475</td>
<td>3882</td>
<td>122.4</td>
<td>0.26</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Sub-total) | 46     | 4250     | 4296  |             |                       |                        |

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Fatal</th>
<th>Non-Fatal</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>WWF members</th>
<th>Accident Rate per '000</th>
<th>Mortality Rate per'000</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1928-29</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>653</td>
<td>660</td>
<td>#</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>–</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1929-30</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>646</td>
<td>651</td>
<td>#</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>–</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>5549</td>
<td>5607</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Queensland State Insurance Office, in I. A Paterson to J. Healy, 8 July 1940, WWF, Federal Office, Brisbane Correspondence, ANU/NBA E171/3/1; Membership figures, Qld Registrar of Industrial Unions, Registration Application, No 82, 20 Oct 1920 (estimates used for some) Qld Industrial Registry; M. Tull, "Blood on the Cargo" Table 2, p.24

Moreover much of the increase in port visits of larger overseas vessels in the 1920s, referred to in chapter seven occurred in Queensland. The search for homeward cargoes by the predominantly British companies enhanced the strategic position of the waterfront workers. Companies could be more easily "stuck up" for additional payments. To be sure more port visits increased labour demand but it also stretched the state's poor port facilities. The need for quick...
tumaround placed more pressure on wharf supervisors and thus workers labouring on poor wharves, with poor equipment and no mechanical devices. As one WWF Queensland official commented,

The steamship companies ... don't seem to make any kind of a start in getting new trucks such as mechanical trucks or ball bearing trucks [ie hand pushed]... that will really tend to ease the work or other devices for the easing of the labor of our members.209

The rise in labour intensification this implies is difficult to measure. The numerous statements of workers is strong evidence, but accident and fatality statistics are a stronger, if indirect, quantitative measure (see Table 11.4).

It must be kept in mind that stevedoring experienced a high accident rate compared to other industries and these data figures report claims only. The aggregate number of accident claims in Queensland rose from 300–350 per year up to 1921–22, to 400–500 from then to 1928, and then jumped to 600–700 thereafter. Overall the accident rate rose through the 1920s. In Fremantle a similar pattern of increase was evident. Indeed prior to WWI the accident rate in this port was 100 per thousand men or less. While labour employed increased up to the depression (see Table 11.3) it fell during the depression, but the accident rate continued to rise. This is a key dimension in the contingent nature of the stevedoring labour process. Waterside workers continual agitation for the limitation of sling loads, lower trucking loads, limited work rate and similar actions was directed at minimising personal harm.

Finally the state political context in Queensland was more conducive to unionism. The state Labor government, pressed ahead with industrial and social legislation which supported labour in production. In particular the Unemployed Workers Insurance Act of 1922, provided some income security for casual workers. Unemployment sustenance was only payable to employees working under state awards (waterside workers sought a state award before the Act was mooted). The Act imposed a levy on employers to fund unemployment payments, again only for workers under state awards210. Taken together these conditions permitted Queensland waterside workers to pursue industrial demands, particularly rotary, with more vigour than in other states during this period.

4 Rotary, 'Job Control' and Union Demands

While the demand rotary of rotary schemes was primarily directed at hiring and the distribution of earnings it had immediate connections with control over the allocation of tasks, a key feature of management authority in the labour process.

The Brisbane rotary scheme in 1922 for example covered two problems - the distribution of work and control over labour supply, specifically transfers from other ports and mobility in and out of the industry. The scheme provided for the distribution of work on the basis of income. Every man who did not earn £2 10s. in a week registered to be picked up first the following week from Monday morning. In addition a Waiting List was to be drawn up. All transfers and men returning to the industry were to be listed and then transferred to the active membership (limited to 1000) in order as vacancies occurred.211

But rotary pick-up meant that employers were forced to accept the next man for the work offered, irrespective of the supervisors preference. This lead to agitation for 'job control' that shipowners had experienced from seamen. Job control was adopted by radical Walsh, Johansen leadership of the Seamens Union. They had been elected to the FSUA leadership in 1919 and both
were foundation members of the Communist Party in 1920. They swept to office through the influence of IWW syndicalism and socialism amongst the rank and file. The rejection of conscription during the war by both unions had seen politicians like ALP Senator Guthrie removed from the leadership (as he had been in the WWF) But unlike the Federation the impetus towards radicalism resulted in the election of a radical leadership.

In the wake of the 1919 strike the seamen adopted "job control" tactics in support of industrial and political demands (over the implementation of the Navigation Act on 1 July 1921). In retaliation, shipowners threatened to lay up vessels, but negotiations through the Arbitration Court arrived at a settlement. The pattern of threatened lay ups in the face of rank and file militancy was repeated many times in the early 1920s. This was the context in which employers faced waterfront industrial relations. The job control tactic of waterside workers and seamen was a key factor that shaped the employers industrial relations strategy later in the decade.

The Queensland State Executive of the WWF tested support for rotary in a state-wide ballot in 1923. Brisbane marginally supported the system with 52 percent of the vote, which reflected the state-wide 51.3 percent support - 7 ports for, 6 against and one tie. Some branches clearly supported rotary, such as Lucinda Point, Innisfail and Bowen, but others were clearly against it, such as Maryborough and Cairns.

The Innisfail suspension from the award (from August 1921) was removed in mid-1923 as part of the 1923 award application from the Queensland WWF. The award case centred on a number of issues. The Brisbane men continued to press for the restriction of the pickup. Also in contention was an award variation on conditions of work that was made for the new WWF branch at Lucinda Point the year before. A dispute over work rates in 1922, had been settled by a union undertaking to work "with reasonable expedition".

MacNaughton adopted a similar pick-up arrangement for all Queensland ports as applied to Innisfail. Here employers had clear authority to engage whoever they chose from the list of men in the Innisfail branch, subject to the equalisation and appeal provisions. Moreover the award adopted the same "reasonable expedition" provision taken from the Lucinda Point case that addressed the employers concern over low rate of work on the Queensland waterfront. In short, the obligation of reasonable distribution of work on employers was balanced by the workers' obligation to work with 'reasonable expedition'.

For Brisbane the claim to restrict the pick-up to one per day was refused. The men refused to present for the 7:30 am Friday pick-up. The employers took out an injunction to compel compliance. Short of suspension of the award, the Court could not compel men to offer for work. Only a matter of weeks later, in July 1923 the Court abolished the afternoon pick-up, but doubled to 4 hours the morning one (8 am–12 noon). The one pick-up decision was to flow on to a general Federation claim over the following few years. In fact, within weeks, workers in Fremantle, and again in Pt Adelaide, refused to attend the afternoon pick-up.

In the following year the Court again refused a claim to limit the pick-up to 2 hours in the morning which the union argued was sufficient. This was a decision provoked an immediate walkout from the pick-up shed. In August the branch unilaterally enforced a two hour pick-up. A compulsory conference was ordered by the Court and a 3 hour compromise - from 8 to 11am - was inserted into the award. However the men still left the shed at 10 am. This quickly
influenced other ports, such as Pt Adelaide, Fremantle and Bunbury, where waterside workers enforced a morning only pick-up. Indeed Pt Adelaide had pushed the issue since 1921. Melbourne had again restricted employment after 5 pm, this time insisting on a minimum of 4 hours overtime. In short a national momentum for rotary and the limitation of pick-up times grew.

Recall that the Sydney labour bureau issue came to a head in late 1924. The WWF conference in October 1924 in Sydney on the issue also adopted rotary as union policy for the regulation of the pick-up. The large stopwork meetings and overtime ban which followed was also in support of general regulation of the labour market in favour of the union. Certainly, the pick-up issue in Brisbane enabled the union to pull the men out in the absence of any detailed understanding of the Sydney issue.

The following year, 1925, saw a large increase in the industrial disputes and WDL in the maritime industry (see Table 11.1). The employers reported that it was a "very bad" year for industrial matters, where they tried "to defeat seamen and WWF job control". Action by seamen in January and February over engagement, was marked by dissension between the rank and file and the FSUA leadership. The CSOA successfully gained the deregistration of the union in June which precipitated a strike July and August. The seamen demanded the maintenance of award conditions. An agreement between shipowners and seamen, backed by a number of unions including the Sydney WWF was signed on 6 August. A key condition was the cessation of job control action. But the Bruce government then pressed for the deportation of Walsh and Johansen (now Johnson) under an amended Immigration Act. A High Court decision later freed the two. Despite the August agreement, a further 46 instances of job action occurred over the rest of the year. The employers recorded 146 job control actions in 1925 resulting in 3138 days of vessel hold-ups.

A critical point needs to emphasised here. The decline of the FSUA after August 1925 was closely related to job control demands. Although job control was first propagated by the communist leadership, it was sustained by a socialist pragmatism of the rank-and-file, still strongly influenced by the populist syndicalism of the WWI period. Certainly the communist party could not claim any organisational or theoretical credit. Communists were expelled by the Labor Party in October 1924, and the CPA could claim less than 300 members in 1925. In a practical and uniquely Australian fashion, the Party journal Communist ran an essay competition to set out its future! Even the resultant "propagandist" line (disseminating socialism amongst workers) may well have been an optimistic assessment of its role over the rest of the decade. Populist radicalism or militancy was more apt description than communism in the maritime industry. Its ideas were more informed by the industrial application of the political ideology of class, reflected in its organisational innovation. The Militant Minority Movement, formed early 1928, gained support on the waterfront over the next six or seven years. Nelson saw this as the successor of the IWW within the union. Key platforms were the extension of industrial unionism and the OBU, direct action and class struggle – all ideas already alive on the waterfront. The communists did not formally organise on the waterfront until 1930. Even in this case its leader, Joe Crowe in Sydney, has been described as carrying "many of the characteristics of the IWW".
Shipowners saw the WWF's "militant policy" as the main source of disputes recorded "at most of the ports [which employed] ...Waterside Workers". Queensland employers in all ports complained of 'domestic rules' and irritating tactics in the mid-1920s. The key issues in Queensland were again the regulation of the pick-up and rotary. The Brisbane men continued to ignore several provisions of the award on pick-up, as did many of the other ports. In general, Queensland waterside workers felt that the employers had not complied with the equalisation of work provision (Clause 14(1)) of the state award. For example, President Frank Dunn argued that the union had given the employers almost 18 months, from July 1923 to November of the following year, to re-organise the pick-up to equalise work in Rockhampton. In November 1924, the branch enforced a rolling preference system. That is, men who were not engaged in the previous pick-up were deemed to be preference men for the following pick-up. The union secretary attended the pick-up calling for preference men to go forward when the foreman stevedore engaged men. Feeling also ran high against the inaction of the Federal union on the issue. In June 1925 Dawson reported that the Brisbane branch meeting demanded that the resolutions on rotary passed at the Sydney conference the previous October be carried out.

A mid-year Rockhampton state conference of the Queensland WWF, strongly endorsed rotary. On 7 September the Queensland union attempted to unilaterally enforce rotary, by declaring that all men would be engaged only in rotation. Brisbane, Townsville and Maryborough rejected this approach, largely because of the men who benefited from the bull system. Several northern ports then black banned Brisbane.

Not surprisingly the shipowners rejected the scheme and responded by suspending trade to rotary ports. Over the next four weeks negotiations under the auspices of the state arbitration court were unsuccessful. Although the Court found that the action was a strike, it refused to issue an injunction against the union. As time wore on the workers agreed to return to work, provided a government inquiry into the waterfront was appointed. An inquiry into unemployment in Queensland ports was appointed later in the year. It had one representative each from the WWF and the employers under the Chairmanship of Thomas Ferry. It reported in April 1926. Meanwhile negotiations with employers in early February did not reach any settlement.

The Ferry Report identified casual work, seasonal nature of the work, excessive labour and the unequal distribution of work as the primary causes of unemployment on the waterfront. Ferry found considerable variation in the structure of the labour market and the method of pick-up. Port Douglas, Innisfail and Lucinda Point had enforced rotary systems, Cairns retained the bull system, Townsville had a gang system (equalised work across stable gangs to the satisfaction of the men), Rockhampton had a preference system, and the remainder of Queensland ports had variations of the traditional engagement, all of which he stated complied with the award. Nevertheless, he reported that, in most ports a condition of open hostility exists between waterside workers and their employers.... Charges of favoritism, victimisation, and corruption on the part of the stevedores in the selection of labour were all too numerous, detailed and specific to be lightly brushed aside as improbable or impossible.

Although actions such as these by employers were only in the minority, he argued that the system required checks to ensure harmonious work in the industry. Furthermore, the branches claimed the right to pass and enforce domestic rules in spite of clause 22 of the state Award.
Limitation of pick-up times, rotary, manning, sling (and other) loads were all issues covered by unilateral domestic rules. The employers complained that any rotary scheme was fundamentally flawed – as they required employers to engage all workers in the port in rotation irrespective of their capacities. The basis on which rotation was based varied. In Rockhampton, the local rotary system was based only on the engagement of men in rotation – the preference system – unilaterally introduced in November 1924. In this case the union branch did not claim that the scheme would equalise earnings, but only eliminate discrimination and victimisation. However in other ports, workers claimed more. As I have shown in the case of Innisfail and Bowen, the union also claimed the industrial authority over allocation in the labour process. Work in the holds particularly affected earnings. Other ports, which attempted to enforce rotary in September 1925 and before, claimed it was directed at the equalisation of earnings.

The rotary issue in Queensland ports uncovered several key matters of industrial authority. For employers any type of rotary system was an attack on the freedom of choice in the labour market. They maintained that permitting the union to chose workers (or fixed rules for this), adversely affected output and efficiency, illustrated by the experience of the Brisbane coalworkers, Bowen and other ports more than five years earlier. The employers' evidence (see Table 11.5) indicated an average decline in output of 30 percent (tons p.h. per gang). In some ports, the union actually set the level of output – 15 tons p.h. in Innisfail and 17 tons p.h. in Port Douglas – which increased the handling cost per ton of cargo. Recall (see chapter seven) that Australian ports worked cargo at about 20–25 tons p.h. per gang, which puts these rates well below capacity and past practice. Clearly the drop in work rates and the 'go-slow' practices behind them, alarmed shipowners.

| Table: 11.5 Work Rates Selected Queensland Ports 1918–1927 |
|----------------|----------------|----------------|------------------|
| Year | Port and Cargo (Rate, tons / hr / gang) |
|      | Lucinda | Lucinda | Goondi | Mourilyan | Bowen |
|      | (sugar) | (general) | (sugar) | (sugar) | (meat) |
| 1918 | 28.5 | 28.5 | 13.6 | 13.2 | 15.45 |
| 1920 | 29.0 | 22.9 | 13.2 | 13.7 | 13.8 |
| 1922 | 28.5 | 22.9 | 13.6 | 14.0 | 13.5 |
| 1923 | 24.2 | 10–12 | 13.6 | 14.7 | 14.1 |
| 1924 | 16.4 | 13.2 | 13.7 | 13.8 | 13.5 |
| 1925 | 16.5 | 12.9 | 14.0 | 14.7 | 14.1 |
| 1926 | 17.1 | 14.7 | 14.7 | 14.7 | 12.3 |
| 1927 | 16.9 | 14.7 | 14.7 | 14.7 | 12.3 |

* use of contract or railway dept labour; note: Goondi and Mourilyan labour is from the Innisfail WWF branch
# average up to 1923
** Moxon's minority report, Ferry Report [1926]

Source: Rotary System and Go-Slow, Queensland, 9 Sept 1928, McKellar Collection ML MSS 4548/Box 119, Envelope 236, item 6; W. Moxon, minority report, Ferry Report [1926] pp.1086,1103,1105

The employers argued that the rotary pick-up placed strangers together in the same gang, who do not work well together (ie loss of informal cooperation). The Townsville system of gang rotation was the most effective, precisely because the men were accustomed to working together. Moreover, employers wanted to reserve the right to hire outside labour for jobs requiring less "experience", such as trucking, carrying and stacking. Slow work was compounded by demands...
for additional manning or payment. Rockhampton employers were forced to increase meat gangs from 29 to 34 as the men refused to work with less. In Port Douglas the local agent was forced to pay at the 17 ton p.h. rate set by the union even though the job was finished half the time – a job-and-finish practice that doubled the hourly pay rate. In short, employers saw this overmanning and slow work as "nothing but Job Control," which "tended to increase the cost of handling cargo, cause further delays to ships and diminish the output of tonnage per hour." This economic argument was matched by a concern over workplace authority. One employer for example disputed the union claim that all the men were competent, stating that "men are sometimes left out because of their pilfering propensities and sometimes insubordination carrying out the preference clause. We think our right to reject such men should be safeguarded." Moxon's minority report attacked the "extremists who have moved about this coast and preached the doctrine of class-warfare." Another employer reported that a meat gang under the influence of alcohol sang the 'Red Flag' and 'Mother Macree' while they loaded 18 tons in 5.5 hours rather than the usual 1.25 hours. At Bowen, a centre of radical demands, many waterside workers were identified as "inferior" and many other "men practically had to be driven to work by [the] stevedore."

Union authority over pick-up through rotary was quickly transformed into authority over work in the labour process. Any man who was sacked was soon reassigned to another employer, or even the same employer. Moreover workers retained customary rights to pilferage but invoked the newer tactic of systematic manipulation of work rates – a new effort bargain. And through the Unemployed Workers Insurance Act, waterside workers qualified for sustenance payments, since "the method of picking labour allows for inequitable distribution of work." By 1926–27, £27,360 was paid to some 4,000 waterside worker applicants. Moreover, for employers rotary was as much a political strategy in support of job control, as an industrial institution to equalise work or earnings.

Finally, the extent of industrial relations activity in Queensland was proportionately greater than the remainder of the industry which was under the federal award. While the incidence of references to the Court cannot be conclusive, it does indicate formal activity. Between 1920 and 1928 there were 34 amendments or variations to the Waterside Workers (State) award, 16 interpretations, 5 cancellations (of particular ports) and 5 injunctions, over 63 cases heard by the State Industrial Arbitration Court.

For the reasons mentioned above the Queensland branches were able to pursue the issues of engagement and equalisation of work. Action by waterside workers in other ports increased through 1926 and 1927. I argued above that action by seamen was a key influence in shaping employer attitudes to labour through the 1920s. The employers successful action in 1925 pointed to the future on the wharves. The de-registration of the FSUA in June 1925 split the union as Walsh and Johansen had fallen out. The NSW coastal employers attempted to register a bogus company union to exploit the situation, but failed. The ASOF was able to report that 32 vessels were held up for a total of only 401 days in the following year. These hold-ups were the result of factional union struggles rather than job control. Moreover the employers successfully opposed the re-registration of the union, and introduced a harsh system of discharging seamen. Its effects were
soon felt.\textsuperscript{264} The employers' attention soon turned to the WWF as the principal source of "industrial troubles."

The rotary issue continued to cause disruption through 1926. In July the Queensland court again addressed the problem in Bowen which had demanded a rotary system since January, and ordered a system to be introduced.\textsuperscript{265} Also in January the Melbourne men unilaterally enforced the single pick-up (from 8–10 am) thus joining Fremantle, Port Adelaide and Brisbane.\textsuperscript{266} The \textit{Ferry Report} was publicly released in June. A conference, under the auspices of the state court, decided to defer consideration of it to a later date. And labour shortages in Sydney forced a conference over labour supply regulation, but it was inconclusive.\textsuperscript{267}

Disputes occurred at all major ports. Melbourne limited night work, demanded retrospective payments for coalworkers (including an overtime ban and a 'go-slow' that cut output by 20\%\textsuperscript{268}) and introduced domestic rules contrary to the award. The Sydney men attempted to limit sling loads and truck weights on several occasions. The Fremantle men introduced domestic rules contrary to the award; and Hobart pressed for preference over work at Risdon.\textsuperscript{269}

At the national level the WWF served a Log of Claims on the shipowners in May 1926. Both the ASOF and OSRA responded with separate but uniform counter logs. Negotiations in June, and a compulsory conference in August failed to find any settlement.\textsuperscript{270} The Federation was particularly keen to restore the pre–1921 overtime penalty rate and secure preference in several trades still outstanding. A request for negotiations on this issue was rejected by the employers. On 22 November the Federation imposed a national ban on overtime in support of its claims. Compulsory conferences failed to arrive at a settlement. Judge Beeby agreed to hear the issues in January provided the ban was lifted before 17 December – the WWF accepted this. In Queensland de-registration procedures initiated by the employers were dropped. After hearing some issues Beeby handed down an interim award judgment on 1 February 1927. He did not accept the employers' contention that overtime was actually shift work, for the evidence showed that most additional time worked was a continuation of existing engagements. On the other hand Beeby rejected the claim for the pre–1921 hourly rates due to inappropriate circumstances. He thus only marginally raised overtime rates, by 6\pence an hour.\textsuperscript{271} While this matched the existing Queensland rates (which were set out two weeks later in the 1927 state award\textsuperscript{272}) the issue remained a union priority. Beeby deferred preference to the main case.

In sum this section has shown that as the WWF gained control over the labour market through preference, additional demands over the \textit{terms of engagement} emerged to address the longstanding problems of the labour market. These were problems that Judge Beeby admitted in early 1927, were "as acute as when arbitration courts first inquired into the wages and conditions of wharf labourers."\textsuperscript{273} Arbitration was an important institutional condition in regaining preference of employment, \textit{but} preference, as recognised by the Court, was based on existing custom. This reflected employer complicity and the enforcement capacities of local WWF branches. The drift to decentralisation in employer industrial relations policy after the crisis of 1917 was evidence of the strength of localism. It also enabled the low cost, low technology policy of employers to reap the advantages of informal workplace cooperation. But this sparked greater demands for rotary through 1922–1927 that \textit{limited} employers authority. In this process the spread of militancy and socialism
transformed informalist relations into an oppositional weapon, rather than an operational tool. The relative economic stability and low unemployment after 1921 enable waterside workers to press these demands.

In conditions in Queensland were more favourable for work equalisation. First, the Queensland Court accepted the principle of equalisation and so legitimated union demands. The same applied to the rationalisation of pick-up places and times. Second, the size and the seasonal work in the ports were conducive to informalism, radicalism and militancy. Third, these same conditions rendered foremen stevedores' employment practices more visible than in the impersonal labour market structure of larger ports. Finally, workers in small seasonal ports had greater strategic strength to introduce rotary and enforce output restrictions. Job control became a critical tactic in industrial relations. It was a politicised form of informalist work control. In a formal system it was marginalised and condemned as subversive. Queensland was thus a key arena in stevedoring industrial relations in the 1920s. But similar demands were made in other ports and similar tactics were used to pursue them – the go-slow, work bans, and slow work-rates. Not surprisingly Judge Beeby of federal Arbitration Court called on employer to provide evidence on the performance of the waterfront.274

3 The Stage is Set

From the interim award in February 1927 the tempo of industrial action on the waterfront increased. Table 11.1 indicates a four-fold increase in maritime industrial conflict in 1927 and a further three-fold in 1928 arising from waterside worker action.275 Employer frustration grew. Moreover as the economic pressures on overseas owners rose, their economic and industrial situation mirrored the interstate owners. The latter laid up vessels from 1925 – the tonnage laid up doubled from 1926 to July 1928.276 The rise in industrial action pushed the ASOF and OSRA closer together. Their identical counter log of 1926 indicated closer joint action after the collapse of cooperative efforts in 1920. From the middle of 1927 until September 1928 the employers developed a joint strategy and a new organisation to counter the WWF. The union was ill-prepared and inadequately organised and again suffered a crushing defeat from which it took more than a decade to recover.

I have argued that the WWF was able to mop up the effects of the 1917 strike faster than the 1890 strike due to the institutional environment, namely the arbitration system. As early as 1920 the employers drifted back to direct and local agreements, of which the Queensland state award was the most obvious. The closure of the Sydney labour bureau took longer, but in general industrial authority swung more in favour of the Federation through the 1920s. In this section I will discuss the immediate conditions prior to the 1928 strike. It differed from 1890 and 1917 in that the WWF was not drawn into a larger dispute in support of other unions, but fought for its own demands. Ironically, it was a fight that found little support from other unions.

Two issues exemplified the trajectory of events in the 1920s and marked turning points for industrial relations in 1927. Both were subjects at a special national conference of the Federation, and were triggers for renewed co-operation between employers. A dispute over the rotary policy at Cairns and the limitation of the pick-up at the national level were the key issues.
In September 1927 a WWF special conference attended by delegates from forty-seven branches addressed several key issues. Rotary schemes, overtime rates, one pick-up and preference to eliminate non-WWF labour were the main issues. The delegates spent most time considering a leadership dispute in Cairns precipitated by rotary. It symbolised the effect of radicalism in the Queensland branches and the organisational dilemma of the union. The policy adopted with respect to the pick-up reflected the problems associated with union action. Moreover Joe Morris announced he would retire as general secretary at the 1928 union conference.

The first half of 1927 saw a build up of local industrial agitation. The Queensland branches continued to press ahead with the one pick-up policy. In February, Cairns unilaterally informed employers that *inter alia*, only a morning pick-up of 45 minutes would operate as from the fourteenth. In March, the Bowen branch refused to handle any cargo from the Bowen Fruit Export Society or Mr G. Turner, in retribution for their position in the rotary issue the year before. In late April Townsville applied to the state Court for a single morning pick-up. Disputation in Queensland was matched in other states over similar issues.

In light of numerous disputes around the country Judge Beeby accepted the employers affidavits and refused to hear the federal award case scheduled for continuation in late March. Beeby sought an assurance from the COM that waterside workers would work in accordance with the federal award. This was refused and the case was held up.

A key dispute took place in Cairns and stopped work in the port intermittently for more than 6 months. Cairns had been a centre of dispute over rotary for two years. The opponents of rotary, led by Les Brophy succeeded in organising the transfer of sufficient supporters to oust the militant Dillon for branch leadership at elections on 18 March 1927. Dillon attempted to neutralise transferee votes with a three-month residential rule prior to the vote. The federal COM not only directed that the rule be rescinded but banned officials responsible from holding office for twelve months. The Dillon men refused to stand down from the leadership. Several stoppages (and black bans by other branches) took place and more than 200 Dillon men were expelled in June. They were deemed to be unfinancial. Conferences under the direction of the state Court failed to resolve the issue and the Court suspended the port's award coverage to put more pressure on the men to reach a conclusion. The employers were caught in the middle. The COM and the Brophy men attempted to then gain preference of engagement. Not only did the dispute attract condemnation from employers, but it precipitated a special federal conference for the union. An agreement was eventually hammered out in July under the auspices of the state court. The men where divided into ship and shore gangs of the two factions, and the work was equalised between them. The award suspension was lifted.

The union prepared for a special conference on the issues, but the shipowners were deeply concerned over the slow work in Cairns in mid-September. Two weeks later on 27 September, the ASOF formed a sub-committee to develop consistent policy in respect of all maritime awards and agreements.

The union Conference adopted the policy that branches could no longer unilaterally expel members. In terms of industrial action the rotary was overshadowed by the pick-up issue, which was the second key dispute through 1927. The union felt that there was no reason why shipowners
should know their daily labour requirements before 10 am, and it was onerous for men to wait around for the afternoon pick. There was often no shelter available, or men had to waste time and money in travelling in from the suburbs. They decided two pickups was excessive. The Conference therefore endorsed a one pickup claim for the federal arbitration case. The Conference also resolved to adopt an overtime ban if no progress was made in Court or in talks with employers. Such "irritation tactics" had become a standard industrial tactic.

The Court would not proceed with the award case while WWF members did not work in accordance with the award. The approach to the Court in October proved fruitless. Judge Beeby still refused to proceed while the branches continued to enforce domestic rules contrary to the award. Approaches to the interstate employers were also rejected. OSRA demanded a substantial cash bond from the union. The Sydney men took the matter into their own hands and resolved to unilaterally enforce the one pick-up there from 20 October as other ports had done in the past. Given the failure of these initiatives to make headway, the COM directed action at Sydney, Newcastle and other ports. It then called for stopwork meetings around the country. Members supported the use of 'irritation tactics' through a national overtime ban effective from 21 November. The COM was now prepared to take a harder stance in support of the key pick-up and overtime issues.

The two shipowner organisations, OSRA and ASOF, differed in regard to tactics. OSRA favoured negotiations in order to give the WWF an opportunity to settle the issues, and this approach strengthened the employers hand in the Court. They met with the Federation leaders on the eve of the ban but no agreement was reached. The ASOF favoured a no negotiation policy and deregistration. The interstate owners had already resolved to tackle the pillaging that flourished in Queensland ports by developing an eleven point plan to combat it. Industrial action continued as further negotiations with OSRA took place, and indeed the overtime ban was supplemented by random "black" bans on different vessels.

However the tension between the federal union and the branches reappeared. As early as October the Queensland branches questioned the need for their involvement in any national action, given that many of them already worked under a one pickup system. Moreover they refused to revert to two pick-ups in order to satisfy the Court demand for progress to be made in this avenue. After several weeks of equivocation between Queensland and Melbourne the branches joined the national action. Brisbane secretary Brown was able to report in early December that the "men [were] standing solid" but he required "more official information to counter the Tory Press and Employers Propaganda". The difficulty the WWF had in ensuring united action was spotlighted in this case.

The employers criticised the Federation leadership in the Arbitration Court. They pointed out that the COM maintained that the branches were uncontrollable yet it seemed able to organise and coordinate national action. Further negotiations between OSRA and the COM still found no resolution of outstanding issues. The overseas companies still demanded that the union put up a bond to guarantee it would abide by any agreement arrived at. And the Court still refused to hear the award case while industrial action was in progress.

By the end of November the overseas and interstate shipowners resolved to take action. The associations "for the first time acted in close co-operation and a Central Committee comprising
representatives of both bodies was formed ... with State Committees in other states." In a joint letter to the WWF leadership the shipowners declared that the "position has become intolerable". Therefore, from 8 am Wednesday 30 November the employers would only engage men on the basis of existing Awards and Agreements. The newly formed Central Committee issued instructions to existing state bodies, outlining shipowner policy of rejecting any and all non-award provisions. This was effectively a lockout and all work ceased on the coast.

The employers anticipated "an early victory" but were thwarted by the Arbitration Court. The matter came before Judge Beeby on 5 December and two days later the COM gave an assurance that they would seek to curb the action of members. The men returned to work the next day. The dispute was estimated to have resulted in 115,000 WDL, more than 90 percent of the total year (see Table 11.1). Beeby also issued an interim award, effective for three months, that set pick-up times and places as at 10 January 1927. Therefore some ports had one pick-up, the result of direct action by the WWF. The Court's intervention was prompted by an approach to Beeby by the ACTU. Moreover the ACTU urged the COM to give the assurance that it was willing to exercise control over its branches. The interim determination that resulted was not what the COM understood to be the agreement and hence it condemned the interference of outside bodies in the industry.

Turning finally to the development of the employers' policy. Recall that about fifty men remained working in the local trades in Sydney, some of whom were members of the PCWLU, after the Sydney labour bureau settlement in early 1925, and the union was registered only in New South Wales. A meeting of 60 members the following year attempted to gain federal registration, but the positive decision of the Industrial Registrar was later overturned, in May 1927, on appeal by the WWF and others. Under section 17 of federal Act the minimum size was 100 members. At another meeting on 14 May 1927 (eight days after the Arbitration Court decision) the union applied to the NSW Registrar to change its name to the PCWLU of Australia, NSW Branch and was duly registered in NSW in November. It also submitted another application to the federal registrar in July 1927, which was granted. An appeal by the WWF was not heard until 1930 – when it was dismissed. The shipowners were in contact with the P&Cs in November and were undoubtedly keen to secure federal registration of the union. Contact with the union continued in the early part of 1928. It is not clear to what extent shipowners initiated, rather than facilitated, P&C activities in the federal system. It is probable that certain companies aided the union and the peak bodies accepted this with no official assistance recorded.

Furthermore the employers looked again to the arbitration system for labour control. Their applications for award penalty clauses had been rejected through the 1920s. The federal Bruce–Page government campaign against arbitration gained momentum from 1925 and amendments to the Act in 1926 and 1927 assisted shipowners. They allowed intervention of the Attorney–General in certain issues, penalties to be imposed by the Court, secret ballots and the introduction and extension of the powers of conciliation commissioners. Changes were also made to the NSW legislation. One employer reported that the amendments in late 1927 were "the direct outcome of the recent Waterside strike [national overtime ban], and Employers are viewing ...[the] provisions hopefully." The legislation was changed as a Federal referendum seeking the abolition of
arbitration was defeated. PM Bruce made a symbolic gesture in the form of an Industrial Peace Conference in 1928, but in essence the more coercive framework of arbitration was already in place by the beginning of the year.

In sum, the Cairns and pick-up disputes triggered the development of a more co-ordinated framework of employer action. The ASOF industrial sub-committee (formed in September) was the first step. With OSRA cooperation, it became the Central Committee of shipowners in late November, and was to dominate employer policy for more than thirty years. These disputes were critical in the shaping the employers’ response to the growing strength of workplace organisation of workers. Further industrial action in 1927 only served to frame the employers' industrial policy. The Cairns dispute flared in October and November (with a 50 percent fall in output on sugar work), Bowen enforced one pick-up in late September, Devonport restricted pick-up times in November and many others. Even Lord Inchcape condemned the action of waterside workers in London in December. The Central Committee was in the process of strategy development immediately on its formation in November 1927. In short, the conditions of 1890 and 1917 were replicated.

From the WWF perspective, the strength of its industrial authority appeared to be high. Workplace organisation was strong and its national overtime action appeared to be successful. Certainly it was able to overcome localism by co-ordinating members for national industrial action. But workplace organisation (seen in the Cairns dispute) and the difficulty in getting cooperation from Queensland pointed to crucial weaknesses in its organisational capacities that were soon to be seen.

Finally, Judge Beeby outlined a series of problems in union methods and warned that without change the WWF may face deregistration proceedings. Beeby singled out interference of VOs in the workplace, local stoppages, domestic rules, workers' "own interpretations of local customs" and arbitrary work rate limitations. This was a critical difference from 1917, where Higgins had been sympathetic to waterside workers. In the succeeding years the Arbitration system no longer mediated the force of the state in the same manner. The stage was set for the largest waterfront strike in Australian history to that date.

V. The 1928 Strike

The first half of 1928 the employers strategy was crystallised. It was centred in the Central Committee, although formal records of its deliberations were not kept until July 1928. Nevertheless its dominant partner, the ASOF, was instrumental in developing policy through the year. Although the strike was did not break out until September the employers expanded their organisation and coordination from the formation of the Central Committee in November 1927.

1 The Award Case

In mid-January the federal Arbitration Court resumed hearings on the award case. In early January the Brisbane employers were criticism of the ASOF for conceding claims to waterside workers and seamen. The Cairns trouble was still causing concern for the union. Two weeks later, after a report from Appleton on the Queensland situation, the ASOF resolved to seek the inclusion of Queensland in the federal award. The overseas owners agreed soon after, although they
expressed reservations later. The shipowners were also considering deregistration proceedings against the Queensland branch.

The interstate owners proceeded to serve a new Log on the union in early April. On this basis a fresh dispute application over the Log was made in late April, which Beeby determined to be a new award case that now included the Queensland WWF. This surprised the union, as legal opinion prior to the Court's decision indicated that the shipowner application was tenuous. Opinion immediately after the decision indicated that it would withstand a challenge, notwithstanding a procedural error. The Queensland Executive of the WWF and meetings of members resolved to "emphatically protest against this action."

Both employers' association began to develop mechanisms to counter the WWF. The ASOF developed a set of procedures for member companies to ensure that the award was followed. OSRA employed a publicity officer to handle information related only to the WWF. The employers strong stance against the marine cooks in a strike from April to June pointed to their resolve. The cooks were forced to return to work and the employers' rejected any role of union rules in selection. Meanwhile the waterside worker case was conducted around the country where Beeby took evidence at fourteen ports, although none in Queensland.

At this time local disputes continued, particularly in Queensland. The Cairns men demanded to be paid during the employers' time because the equalisation scheme spread employment over several companies and therefore they had to collect pay from a number of pay offices. Output in Cairns fell by 25 percent and tonnage costs rose by a third. The Mackay men demanded an extra 1s. an hour for cement. Brisbane stopped work in protest against the prosecutions of the union officials Carrigan and Brown under the Crimes Act. Rockhampton pressed for equalisation of work, as did Brisbane, Bowen refused to work certain cargoes and so on. The union defended these actions by charging the employers with introducing arbitrary changes, permitting harsh treatment by foremen and general 'pin-pricking' against the men. In view of the problems of supervision, recognised by shipowners themselves, the union had a strong argument, but it did not sway ex-labor minister Judge George Beeby.

The Court issued a draft award in late June. It included no change in wage rates, introduced provisions for shift work and transfers, qualified preference and the maintenance of the two pick-up system. The award will be considered below. But, first, the judge's reasons are instructive.

In reference to the WWF, Beeby commented that it may well not be possible for the Court to take a "broad and sympathetic" approach to the improvement of conditions on the waterfront. For arbitration provided better pay and conditions and protected workers from "undue strain" and yet the men still reserved the right to secure further conditions by direct action. He observed that the Court was "dealing with a psychology different from that prevailing" at the time of the first award and concluded that the "union's attitude ha[d] changed during recent years." The Court could no longer "leave [things] to undertakings and understandings, but [had] explicit to lay down the terms and conditions of employment and to prescribe penalties for breaches of the award". The union placed "entirely wrong interpretation on the words used [in the award], ... [and] has systematically, on the grounds of 'custom', imposed new restrictive conditions, and by enforcing domestic rules, has superimposed on the award conditions which had been refused by the Court, and most of which had
not been established by custom. Branches had continued to enforce domestic rules and thus effectively disregarded the Federation. Moreover many domestic rules were not "democratically" adopted.

This description by Beeby was nothing but the strategic use of advantage in bargaining in the formal system of industrial relations. Beeby attributed attitudinal change to psychological causes rather than structural relations. Beeby reported that he was forced to conclude that the union and its VOs were "responsible for most of the unrest of recent times on the waterfront." The strategic use of 'custom' was the inversion of the employers' dependence on informalist relations in the labour process to reap economic returns. Job-and-finish, overmanning, rotary and the 'immobility' of labour policy of the union were all aspects of the same dynamic of bargaining. Beeby, then, was at a loss to explain the reluctance of union officials to provide lists of local conditions or agreements and the view of officials that these conditions had been "won". Beeby explained their actions as "the natural result of the indifference and neglect of society" rather than effects of the structure of production relations in shipping and stevedoring. To address the 'problem' the Judge turned to penalties. Earlier that month he had indicated that the lack of penalty provisions in the award lay at the heart of industrial trouble in the industry.

In reference to the employers, Beeby lamented the lack of collection and analysis of production data he had requested in early 1927. He found it difficult to understand the reluctance to provide accurate information. He therefore could not accept the employers assertion that handling rates had declined by almost 25 percent. An independent analysis conducted by the government statistician on the data they did submit revealed a mixed picture - some ports and trades showed improvement, others deterioration - but overall a decline had occurred. But the exact extent was not possible to determine given the limitations of the data.

The parties were given more than six weeks to respond to the draft award. Meetings of the employers and Melbourne wharf superintendents and overseas stevedores only commented on minor points. The interstate owners where critical of the treatment of smokos, preference, insufficient control of VOs and clause 18 which called for equal distribution of work. The superintendents and industrial officer considered the latter the "worst clause", which would reduce output or "result in claims for rotary or some equally objectionable scheme." On the positive side, the transfer provisions was of "material benefit" to employers, the ban of domestic rules and local customs did not go far enough, but the "benefit of ... two pick-ups [would]... far outweigh the disadvantage of central engagement" that would be needed in order to make the system work.

Beeby's criticism of the employers' propensity to concede conditions was stressed. A further meeting of superintendents in early August stressed the importance of companies' standardising work. In particular they recommended,

the work rate ... from the date of operation of the new Award ...[be] up to the full limits mentioned in the Award and that ... superintendents [were] to meet and fix a uniform size of sling for each class of cargo and also prepare a list of domestic rules which are not to be recognised.

Two weeks later, the list of sling loads covering some 41 cargoes, and domestic rules was prepared. Furthermore a new disciplinary procedure was adopted where men "guilty of misbehaviour", (which was not defined) were to be stood down for a period determined by a weekly meeting of superintendents.
The Queensland WWF branches adversely responded to the draft award, as did the COM and the twenty-six other branches. The Queensland branches were particularly concerned since several ports would lose the one pick-up system, their equalisation schemes and other conditions. Stop work meetings were held in Brisbane (18 July) and Fremantle (15 July), at which Brisbane refused to recognise the court or the award and Fremantle sought a conference with employers. The shipowners refused. Action was reported at Bowen, Lucinda Point and Innisfail by the employers. These were ports controlled by militants. On 18 July Sydney called on the Federation as a whole to repudiate the award, and the militants called for the union's national conference to be brought forward. A week later Melbourne also repudiated the award and resolved to ignore it. The COM called the Triennial Conference to convene from 6 September 1928 so all branches could consider the situation. Disputes at Cairns and Bowen were continuous through July and August, although not directed at the new award. The communist Militant Minority played a central role in action at Cairns. The final award was handed down on 21 August to operate from 10 September. By the beginning of August, five weeks after the release of the draft award the union response was already marked by disarray based on the localization characteristic of the union. The COM was not able to develop any clear response. On the eve of the operation of the award, the communists urged waterside workers to follow the example of the Queensland branches and repudiate the award and make it ineffective.

2 Preparations and the Beeby Award

At the same time the employers used the period between the release of the draft and the operation of the award to finalise an industrial strategy of defence and action against the WWF. The Central Committee cabled London on 6 July to outline the situation and gain the approval from overseas principals for concerted action on industrial matters. In particular the Committee wanted no demands conceded by local agents. Second, they arranged uniformity of action with employers outside OSRA and the ASOF. Third, ensured that federal regulations in regard to arbitration were in place. Fourth, comments were sought from state committees on a scheme of action prepared by associations' officials. This anticipated ten forms of union-worker action - from a general strike to various bans and "rough handling" of cargo. Ironically a strike was considered unlikely. The committees were urged to "be in readiness to act promptly on instructions from Central Committee" and fully report any award breaches.

The London reply pointed out that overseas companies would not concede conditions, but there was a limit to hold ups should any dislocation be lengthy. The draft scheme included two issues that were to be central in the regulation of the waterfront. First, the use of industrial inspectors, who were yet to be appointed under federal arbitration, to handle workplace disputes. Second, consideration of the use of "fixed or permanent gangs", as in Vancouver, or "of approaching the Government with a view of having wharf labourers licensed; the license to be subject to temporary or complete suspension." Third, the draft scheme was adopted with appropriate amendments on 6 August. Also companies outside the associations agreed to cooperate in the event of action by the WWF. In mid-August the federal government's new regulations to the arbitration Act were completed. Finally, at the end of August, almost two weeks prior to the
operation of the new award, the Central Committee circulated the final draft of the instructions to state committees in anticipation of action by the WWF on 10 September.348

The central thrust of the instructions was to resist all concessions outside the award. Established procedures were to be used to handle disputes, and any union action contrary to the award was to be documented and reported to the Central Committee. In the event of continued actions, port inspectors, provided for by the Act, "should be called upon to give evidence in support of the Company, and state that he ordered the men to continue to work". The award should be followed at all times to avoid any charge of unfairness. Local employers should ensure that they act uniformly and forward factual evidence in all cases for possible legal action.349 In short, concerted action and a dependence on legal action and the mechanisms of the state where key elements in the employers strategy.

The final Award was delivered on 21 August. Judge Beeby pointedly criticised both parties in their comments on the draft; the union merely rebutted every clause which was not granted as part of its claim, and the employers "approached [the] consideration of the draft award in a litigious spirit."350 In the view of employers' confidential plans this was a perceptive comment. The final award differed only in details from the draft, with the exception of preference. Beeby had planned to grant preference subject to need for outside labour, but the final award this was weakened to a recognition of the undertaking of employers to "continue the present practice of giving preference of employment to members" of the union.351

The award rejected one pick-up, already in place in several ports, including the main ports. The Court maintained its earlier view that the union policy "to secure greater control of waterside operations and to limit the selection of labour by foremen"352 had to be rejected. In addition new pick-up places were specified and in many small ports the pick-up hours were from 8am to 5pm.353 New transfer provisions were designed to overcome labour 'immobility' in the labour process to "more closely" reflect employers needs.354 And the Award also introduced a new distinction in working hours. Overtime was distinguished from shiftwork and each attracted a differential penalty rate. This overcame the earlier recognition that the industry did not have a shiftwork provision. For overtime, the traditional penalty rate (of time and a half) after 5pm and extraordinary overtime (of double time) after midnight were restored, but only for work continued after ordinary hours. Shifts were defined as work commenced after 5pm and thus paid at time and a quarter rising to time and a half after 11pm. In other words, the employers' push to lower night wages was accepted and ironically, the Federation's policy of cutting long hours by using relief gangs after 5pm, was also accepted but at the cost of a wage cut.355 The claim for paid day smokos was rejected, but existing practice in Port Adelaide remained.

Finally, the Court strengthened the regulation of the direct labour process. First, through the refusal of closer control over the pick-up. Second, local customs were prohibited (as they had been for a number of years), however even those "in addition" to the award were now banned. The right of entry of Vigilant Officers could be withdrawn if they 'interfered with' work and encouraged stoppages and stopwork meetings. Third, a long penalty clause was included, permitted under the recent amendments to the Arbitration Act. Fines ranged between £1000 for the WWF (and employers' association) to £5 for individual workers. For the first time, failure to attend the pick-up
for engagement was considered a breach of the award for which the Federation or branch was held liable.356

The WWF Triennial Conference met in Melbourne four days before the award was due to come into effect. The shift in union politics was clear from the first day. The militants, favouring direct action, were in the ascendancy, although not dominant, over the Laborites. The latter favoured negotiation, arbitration and constitutional methods.357 As I have already indicated, the militancy seen in many ports remained heavily influenced by a strong thread of pragmatic socialism and popularist syndicalism.358 The local actions in July and August demonstrate the strength of localism that had *not been* dampened by radicalism but merely adapted by the communists.

3 **The Award Repudiated and the Strike**

1 **First Reactions**

When the award was released the Federation soon addressed it. Brisbane's James Thompson, seconded by Melbourne's Jack Goddard, proposed a short motion repudiating the "vicious and pernicious Beeby Award of 1928" which was passed by the Conference delegates on 7 September.359 The delegates then recommended that the branches continue to work under the existing award after 10 September.360 From there the Conference turned to other issues.

The issue of industrial unionism resurfaced. Again a proposal to form a Marine Transport Industrial Union of Australia was suggested.361 Short attention was paid to the Award issue. It was decided that the union seek direct negotiations with shipowners.362 In reply the owners expressed a willingness to meet, but rejected any change to the award. Shipowners asserted the award "represents the law, which must be obeyed by both the employers and employees", and the companies were instructed to ensure that employment was strictly based only on the Beeby award.363

On Monday 10 September the WWF response to the award varied by port. In some, such Sydney, work proceeded almost as normal, others, Melbourne, Fremantle, Newcastle and Adelaide, only some vessels were worked, and still others, Port Kembla, Hobart, Brisbane, Bowen, Cairns and others all work ceased. Queensland ports stood to lose the most since many of their conditions were the result of local rules unilaterally enforced.364 While most conditions were unaltered key changes such as the pickup, mentioned above, immediately affected the men. The Port Phillip Stevedores could no longer be engaged at the union rooms – but now the failure to attend the new pick-up was also an offence. The Sydney men refused to attend the afternoon pick-up.

And while many branches requested guidance the conference focused on the general Transport union issue.365 The union's affiliation with the ACTU on 11 September was an expression of this, but it was insufficient for the militants. The COM received the official refusal of negotiations from the shipowners on Wednesday 12 September when men in many ports had refused to offer. The union conference again requested negotiations as Turley pointed out that the union had to make a clear choice between action or acceptance of the new Award.366 The militants believed that direct action could force the employers to abandon the new conditions and the conference again endorsed the policy of working only to the old award.367 On the Wednesday and Thursday of that week, several proposals to work under the new award in order for negotiations to
proceed lapsed, or were defeated. On two occasions the repudiation motion was passed. These were conveyed to the Prime Minister.\textsuperscript{368}

No support came from this source. The employers pushed ahead with their legal tactics. Elford contacted Attorney-General Latham on 10 September who agreed to institute legal proceedings against the union, subject only to agreement by the PM. The latter initially agreed to publicly support the employers. Although the owners thought that newspapers were not needed "for propaganda to any extent at the moment". Second, shipowners' kept Judge Beeby informed of WWF actions.\textsuperscript{369} Apart from the obvious refusal to work, they collated evidence of additional breaches, such as interference of Vigilant Officers (in Melbourne) and refusal to obey orders (in Newcastle). On Thursday 13 September the employers applied to the Court to have the union actions declared a strike. Beeby so declared.\textsuperscript{370} Moreover, the difficulty in obtaining men for the second pick-up meant that free labour was necessary. The employers thought free labour would be needed for all ports, including Sydney. With rising unemployment there was no shortage of men offering.\textsuperscript{371} Contact with the Prime Minister, the London principals, and the Premier Hogan of Victoria continued through the latter half of the week. Other state governments expressed support for the federal government. In the meantime the Central Committee warned Morris of the consequences of continued action.\textsuperscript{372} By Saturday 15 September, shipowners had prepared a scheme for the use of free labour in Melbourne, secured action in the Court and gained the support of the Victorian and the Federal governments, although the latter declined to invoke the Crimes Act.\textsuperscript{373} They were well prepared to test the afternoon pick-up on the following Tuesday and if Federation men failed to offer, employ free labour. The Central Committee met several times a day to closely monitor the situation and co-ordinate their activities.\textsuperscript{374}

At the end of the first week the WWF moderates attempted to change the conference policy. Morris had already advised that the appeals to the owners for negotiations were ineffective. A return to work was needed to press for changes. So the moderates proposed that work be resumed, although they were careful not to suggest that the Beeby award was acceptable.\textsuperscript{375} Brisbane's James Thompson suggested that the repudiation resolution was duly recorded and work should resume. This was particularly the case after talks with Victorian Labor Premier Hogan and ACTU representatives Crofts and Duggan. A resolution to resume work on Monday 17 September was passed, 47 votes to 22, on Saturday 15 September\textsuperscript{376} since ominous signs of scab labour had already appeared.

On Wednesday 12 and Thursday 13 September company labour loaded vessels in Pt Adelaide and volunteer labour was used to discharge vessels in Hobart.\textsuperscript{377} On Friday, the South Australian government pledged support and protection for free labour on the Adelaide waterfront. On Saturday the shipowners successfully sought leave in the Arbitration Court to initiate action against the Federation.\textsuperscript{378} At the same time the moderate Sydney leadership, including its delegates at the conference, had persuaded the Sydney branch to resume work that day.

2 Different Paths

On Monday 17 September several ports reportedly returned to work – Adelaide, Gladstone, Sydney and others, although there were significant sections of workers that met to decide what action to take.\textsuperscript{379} Melbourne men attended the morning pick-up and went to work, but the
afternoon pick-up was ignored, especially by the Stevedores.\textsuperscript{380} Workers in other ports returned to work in groups during the week,\textsuperscript{381} but at the same time workers also decided to go out. The Militant Minority men urged the Brisbane men to stay out, a mass meetings during the week again repudiated the award.\textsuperscript{382} The Queensland men wanted to remain under the state award – indeed the Brisbane men demanded local autonomy the next day.\textsuperscript{383} The Fremantle men went out at the end of the week, when their conference delegates returned to Perth and supported direct action. The Adelaide men went out.

The key point was that in the second week of the dispute, from Monday 17 September, the options taken by different branches was a function of the strength of radicalism. Some with militant leaders or members stayed out (or most did), such as the Queensland ports, whereas ports with moderate leadership, such as Sydney, South Australian outports, most Tasmanian ports, returned to work. Moreover the actions of the shipowners in provoking branches, as in Melbourne, aided the confusion.\textsuperscript{384} The moderates in the key port of Sydney, were able to deflect the efforts of the militants to involve Sydney in a general Federation action.\textsuperscript{385} By the end of the second week each port pursued its own policy, with little or no direction from the federal COM. The dynamic of the strike had moved to the local branches. As they had done a month earlier, the communists called for the formation of 'committees of action' to resist the implementation of the award.\textsuperscript{386}

In this context the employers pressed ahead with their strategy. First, they supported Federal government prosecutions on 17 September and after – and indeed were pleased to see this in government hands.\textsuperscript{387} The summonses served on Melbourne officials Joe Cadden and Foster were the most prominent.\textsuperscript{388} Within days the WWF was fined £1000 for its action in Melbourne. Second, an application for cancellation of preference was made at the end of the week. Clause 19 was suspended for several main ports, Fremantle, Pt Adelaide, Pt Kembla, the Port Phillip Stevedores and Brisbane, as from 24 September.\textsuperscript{389} Further variations to the award in October opened the way for the continued employment of free labour on a large scale. I will consider these below.

Third, non-union labour had already been used. But on Tuesday 18 September the Central Committee directed its State Committees to advertise, which appeared at the end of the week. In Melbourne it was on Thursday morning\textsuperscript{390} and on Friday 21 September in other ports. On Thursday the state committees were clearly instructed by Central Committee not to give any promises to the volunteers regarding the future. As noted earlier volunteers were working in Hobart the previous Friday and Newcastle had one volunteer gang working on Wednesday 19 September and 7 men were in Pt Adelaide on Thursday 20 September, but then 120 enrolled the next day. On Friday Melbourne had two vessels worked by volunteers and by Saturday Brisbane saw a good response for volunteers (400)\textsuperscript{391} The state committee had organised protection and staff for the Labour Bureau used to engage free labour.\textsuperscript{392} Adelaide and Fremantle also saw the formation of the essential services groups (ordinary citizens in support of employers) and the use of barricades on the wharves to protect volunteers.\textsuperscript{393} In Melbourne the shipowners still employed Federation members who were willing to work under the new award. In order to strengthen the effect of this, they resolved to stand down all Federation labour if any vessel in port was black banded. The
policy was immediately relayed to Sydney. Central labour bureaus were established as they had been in past disputes.

Finally, at the same time the Transport Workers Act (TWA) was pushed through Federal Parliament. It was passed on 22 September and assented two days later. It was justified as a necessary step in light of the failure of arbitration in this instance and the need to safeguard transportation against radicals (as Hughes did in 1917 against the IWW). The key feature of this short Act was its lack of actual provisions, except it gave the government the power (under sec. 3) to issue regulations in respect of transport workers. The latter were defined widely. The regulations could specify ports at which they applied, issue licenses to waterside workers, specify conditions under which licenses may be held or revoked, prohibit the use of non-licensed workers and other powers. Not surprisingly, the employers immediately pushed for such regulations to be issued as soon as possible. They were issued on Tuesday 25 and gazetted the next day.

By the middle of the third week, work by the WWF branches in the major ports of Melbourne, Adelaide, Fremantle and Brisbane had not recommenced. Although as I mentioned a few were working in Melbourne, and Adelaide and the Port Phillip Stevedores had attempted to return to work. The Federation was fined a £1000 on 22 September through Cadden's conviction under the Arbitration Act in Melbourne. The COM found it difficult to get any clear information on the ports involved or the extent of the use of free labour. Furthermore, the COM had no strategy with which to counter the employers action. The union turned to other unions. In Pt Adelaide the local TLC and the Adelaide TLC had taken over the dispute. At the national level a conference of Maritime and Transport Workers met in Melbourne under the auspices of the ACTU on Monday 24 September. The COM had effectively ceded control of the dispute to the ACTU – with the Central Strike Committee included COM members. The conference did not support the branches on strike but did condemn the Transport Workers Act and the new licensing system. A contradictory conference resolution urged a return to work but prohibited workers from applying for licenses under the legislation. Thus waterside workers in the dozen ports that were still out were caught in a dilemma. They were urged to accept the Beeby award and return to work, but in order to do so had to apply for a license.

3 State Coercion – The Transport Workers’ Act

The employers pressed the government to license all waterside workers, although in a meeting with Attorney-General Latham they conceded some exclusions. It was imperative that North Queensland ports were included. It took several days for the administrative structure of the licensing system to be put into place. PM Bruce announced on the evening of 26 September, the day the Act was gazetted, that the four main ports of Melbourne, Port Adelaide, Brisbane and Fremantle would be ports in which licenses would be issued. The attitude of the government and employers hardened. In a prepared statement, OSRA chairman, T. Gordon, supported the role of the 'volunteers'. More importantly the employers used Beeby's own statements to argue that the WWF does not merit any return to its pre-strike position. It has "shown itself utterly helpless" in controlling its members and thus "expecting thugs in so-called control of the waterside workers to honour any award or agreement is to credit the impossible." The employers had withdrawn a promise to meet the union and the preference cancellation case was heard in the Arbitration. In
short, the employers presented the lack of organisational control in the union as the basis of its exclusion from a key position in the industry.

The announcement of licensing raised the stakes of the dispute. Pt Adelaide workers rioted on 27 September after several instances of violence against free labourers over the preceding days. Many of the Queensland branches remained resolute in their opposition to the award and the TWA. The Brisbane men were unable to gain support from other unions without evidence of Federation solidarity. The Brisbane branch nevertheless "reiterated its defiance of and determination to fight the pernicious and vicious award" and called for a state All-Ports Conference to extend the strike to the whole state. The conference two days later did not generate support for the handful of ports still out. But a local state Central Strike Committee was set up to control the strike in Queensland, thereby further dividing the leadership and direction of the strike.

At the end of the third week of the dispute the mainland capital city ports (except Sydney), Newcastle and several North Queensland ports remained on strike. And of course the use of volunteers forced remaining unionists out of work. Apart from the effects of the new shiftwork clause, these ports suffered the most in terms of the deterioration of conditions. The loss of the one pick-up system and rotary were the key issues that hardened attitudes.

Licenses under the TWA (one shilling a year to 30 June) were issued from 26 September to apply from Monday 1 October in the main ports. Additional ports in Queensland were prescribed in the following weeks. This action by the federal government moved the strike into the final stage in which the position of WWF members was untenable and the strike collapsed. Initially waterside workers refused to apply for licenses. On the first day, a large protest in Flinders Street, Melbourne turned violent as thousands of non-unionists took out licenses at the Customs House in front of striking waterside workers. The existing position of the COM and the ACTU on the TWA was largely instrumental in this. Where unionists did take out licenses, as in Melbourne, they were labelled "white--wingers". The ACTU continued to condemn the TWA (termed the "Dog Collar Act") and urged PM Bruce to revoke it. These actions were applauded by the communists, who advocated a ten point plan of action to defeat the government and the shipowners.

But branches were still taking independent action, with no effective co-ordination by the federal body. Pt Adelaide, Brisbane, Melbourne, Fremantle and Newcastle faced labour bureaus. The Pt Adelaide branch found little support from other unions, with the carters and drivers refusing to go out. The branch returned to work on Thursday 4 October, after some 500 members had taken out licenses by Monday afternoon. A few days later the Fremantle men returned to work. On Friday 12 October the COM urged the men still out to take out licenses, given the lack of support from other unions. The Brisbane branch remained defiant in the weeks after the issue of licenses began, despite little support from other transport unions. It urged the COM to ban work in Queensland, for it believed that if the sugar crop was held up "victory would be achieved [in] this state". This was despite 2,500 licences issued to free labourers. On Wednesday 17 October, the Brisbane branch capitulated. It agreed to resume work under the Beeby Award and accept the TWA, provided the shipowners register all its members at the Bureau and withdraw all free labour. The employers refused and the men then soon capitulated unconditionally.
Stevedores and Melbourne men surrendered on the same day at mass meetings with the COM. The strike had collapsed.

4 Survey of the Situation

The position in the second half of October was dismal for the WWF. In Fremantle, and in Brisbane, it was reported to the shipowners that WWF members took out licences as one of the last of the WWF branches to return to work. It was reported that 16,600 licenses were issued by the Dept of Navigation nationally during the third week of October and it rose to over 21,000 before the end of the month. In regard to the actual number of men recruited and working on the wharves the picture was different (see Table 11.6).

Volunteers took over most of the work in Port Melbourne, Williamstown and Victoria dock. There were approximately 2,000 free labourers and 600 WWF men working by the end of October which stabilised to the end of the year (in mid-December the numbers were 1,902 and 840 respectively). The WWF men worked the interstate trade at Yarra River wharves, largely because these areas were difficult to protect. In Brisbane more than two thirds of the work was done by free labourers (about 1,200 volunteers to 469 WWF men) and less than half in Adelaide (about 550 volunteers). In early November, the NSW state committee wanted the number of free labourer increased to 200, it was thus lower. In mid-December, 133 volunteers were employed compared to 56 WWF men in Newcastle.

Of the remaining port branches, Townsville was able to minimise the effects of volunteer labour, through the acceptance of the Beeby award under the conservative leadership of Anthony Ogden. In contrast, the Bowen waterfront was almost entirely worked by free labour (the employers later adopted a half and half policy) and the Lucinda Point branch was smashed (as CSR refused to engage WWF men). Columns (1) and (2) of Table 11.6 summarises the available evidence from a diverse range of sources. The handwritten notes (probably by Turley in column (1) without brackets) in the WWF files thus appear to be quite accurate.

Only in Fremantle did the employers encounter difficulties. They were unable to recmit free labour, or secure adequate protection from the state government and were forced to by-pass the port. The Fremantle branch then resolved to accept the Beeby award, but negotiations by the State Disputes Committee extended over several weeks in terms of the role of the TWA. The men still resisted registration, (as no volunteers were licensed), reportedly supported by the Premier. But some 2889 men were registered in the first year. But the prescribed TWA status of Fremantle was later withdrawn.

In addition to the effects of the TWA, the employers commenced a series of claims in the Arbitration Court. On 16 October, the employers applied for the cancellation of WWF preference, weekly employment and pick-up places in Melbourne. On the same day the Central Committee decided to make permanent the existing labour bureaux in Adelaide, Melbourne, Brisbane and Newcastle, based on weekly employment. In smaller ports such as Port Kembla, the interstate shipowners looked to the formation of a stevedoring company to control the labour market.
### Table: 11.6 Volunteers, TWA Licences 1928, PCWLU members, Australia (1928-30, 1931)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Port</th>
<th>1928 Volunteers employed</th>
<th>1928/29 TWA Licenses Issued</th>
<th>1928-30 P&amp;C members</th>
<th>1931 P&amp;C members</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Brisbane</td>
<td>1200</td>
<td>4649</td>
<td>147</td>
<td>*65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Townsville</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>1278</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bowen</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>643</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lucinda Point</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>618</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Innisfail</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>1029</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Urangan (M'tough)</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bundaberg</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>381</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Port Douglas</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>113</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Port Adelaide</td>
<td>650 (#875; +588,694,585)</td>
<td>3456</td>
<td>(**559)</td>
<td>(@418)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Newcastle</td>
<td>180</td>
<td>1574</td>
<td>= 184</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(300)</td>
<td></td>
<td>(100)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Melbourne</td>
<td>2,000</td>
<td>10880</td>
<td>@700</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>4260</td>
<td>24621</td>
<td>309</td>
<td>94</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Brisbane put at 1066 (before 21 Oct) plus 17 after; and 2070 plus 159 at Melbourne, and 506 plus 82 at Port Adelaide, *Lawson Report*; Report by M. Stewart (Industrial Registrar) of men actually worked, Adel (506 plus 79 admitted later), Brisbane (1,066 plus 7) and Melbourne (2,068 plus 159), 26 Apr 1930; latter figure used by Central Comm, *Minutes* 29 Jan 1929, p.146
++ reported statement from Anthony Ogden (see TownsviUe WWF), *Workers' Weekly*, 9 Nov 1928
* note that the names listed for Brisbane 1928-30 and 1931 are different
+ 1928 Volunteers employed at the volunteer bureau Nov 1930, *RC on Waterfront* (1930), p.27, although the actual number working at the end of 1930 was put at 524 (p.18). The P&C "membership roll includes the great majority of volunteer waterside workers" p.18.
# *RC on Waterfront* (1930), p.17. Approximate figure from review of three other investigations (pp.20-21), puts the figure at 819, 585, and shipowners 550. = number of volunteers as of Aug 1930, but were additional P&C men in the port
@ figure for 1932, P&C members probably in the majority; figures from employer wage sheets; numbers for 1933 - 415, 1934 - 395
- Includes 2882 licenses issued for Fremantle
\* membership of PCWLU as reported to shippers, Central Comm, *Minutes*, No 2, 10 July 1930, p.72
\* bracketed figure in this column were handwritten on Proposals for dealing with waterfront (n.d. c. Nov 1929), WWF, Federal Office ANU/NBA T62/61/3


Five days later Dethridge CJ cancelled the preference and distribution of labour (Cl 19,18) of the WWF award. In respect to weekly work, the Chief Judge accepted the WWF arguments regarding the effects on the distribution of work, but concluded that on balance the advantages outweighed these objections. He granted the application for weekly (or permanent) employment by employers, reasoning that they already had power to employ non-unionists in casual and weekly employment (which they did), the award variation merely permitted union labour equal access to weekly employment. Many employers saw the move as necessary for the retention of free labour. The variation set the wage at £4 9s. for a 44 hour week (or 1s. 1d. an hour). Finally, the Court varied the pick-up places in Melbourne, specifically to exclude the Stevedores rooms and
keep scabs and the WWF men apart. Hogan's Flat was written into the federal award. Moreover, Dethridge made comments concerning the allocation of labour between the WWF and free labour, or PCWLU men. He set a ratio of 40:60 for the respective unions — which was ignored by shipowners, since it was not written into the award, nor was there an organised P&C union to grant work to.

Recall that I outlined the actions of the Permanent and Casual Wharf Labourers Union and its contact with shipowners earlier in the chapter. The role of the shipowners was not clear then — although the role of the peak association appeared to be limited to encouragement. In the course of the strike and its aftermath this also was the case — as the employers had no need for the P&Cs. Only in early October where the shipowners advised that the P&Cs were in Melbourne to recruit members. While no assistance was initially provided the employers did not stand in its way. When it appeared that the P&C secretary was unsuccessful in recruiting volunteers the employers decided to provide assistance in future attempts. A branch of the P&Cs was reported to have been formed in Brisbane, again in early October. But its size and influence were minimal. A Waterside Employees' Association was in contact with shipowners in 1929 but appears to have had no impact. The Sydney Shipowners Committee suggested that the Adelaide owners assist local organisers of the P&Cs. There was strong support for the spread of the union in many companies. One employer reported at the end of October that the P&Cs were forming branches in the main ports. The union was encouraged by employers "as it was felt that this Organisation may eventually displace the Waterside Workers' Federation at certain ports." P&C membership was reported to be higher in Adelaide than other ports (see Table 11.6), with a meeting of 250 volunteers reported. But allegations were made later in the month that the union had been taken over by communists in Adelaide. PCWLU had a branch in Newcastle. Officials also claimed membership in at least three north Queensland ports in the early 1930s. The P&Cs had no formal award coverage or preference and the employers could not give any union preference under the WWF award. The Court decision of 22 October removed this restriction. In any case the employers' and government's public position was the support of 'volunteers,' not any union. Thus where free labour was used, the employers retained the policy of non-unionism. Thus newspaper and other reports of 1900-2300 P&C members in the third week of October were fabrications.

In early November the PCWLU unsuccessfully applied to the federal arbitration court to be made party to the Beeby award. Union officials met A. Elford in mid-December, but the owners would not enter into any specific agreement with the union, since legally all volunteers were already employed under the award. The union submitted revised Rules to the NSW Registrar in December 1928.

Thus the role of the P&Cs in 1928 was minimal, since its recruitment was largely unsuccessful, it was shunned by the arbitration system and critically, the employers had little use for it. However its ideological impact was significant for two ways, first, it gave an appearance of union choice for free labourers — although the vast bulk remained non-unionised. Second, it became a symbol for WWF opposition to scabs and the source of bitterness for decades. The union's growth in several ports came well after the dispute when the conditions for employers altered.
Chapter Eleven

4 The Resumption and Organisational Control

The last week of October brought the strike to end – it was officially over on 21 October. However, like the dispute itself, the resumption was also uncoordinated. I shall briefly discuss this period in the dispute, looking at four areas. The continued employment of the free labour, the restructuring of workplace industrial authority, the restructuring of the labour market and the untenable management of the dispute by the union were largely responsible.

The continued employment of free labour has been outlined above. Of the branches on strike in October, only Fremantle did not have to deal with hundreds of scabs. Sydney and some thirty small ports in all states that took only limited (or no) action escaped the imposition of free labour but not the threat of it through the TWA.

The second key condition was the employers strategy to reconstruct the contours of workplace industrial authority. The Beeby award judgment noted that a "substantial percentage" of foremen were members of the WWF. I mentioned in chapter ten that in the employers' view foremen as little more than wharf labourers. During the 1928 strike the employers set out to break the nexus between workers and first line supervisors and introduce a more detailed control-system for labour.

On 10 September the Fremantle WWF instructed its foremen members to pick-up men only on the basis of the old award. Consequently, superintendent stevedores could not obtain labour. The Central Committee immediately decided to bar foremen membership of the Federation. Over the next week instances of men working under the old award in the port where reported to Melbourne. Indeed in large part the Orient Company policy in by-passing the port was endorsed and adopted by Central Committee due to the employers inability to curb the Fremantle men. On 24 September Central Committee instructed Fremantle to remove permanent foremen from the union. Similarly in Pt Adelaide, foremen were WWF men, and the organisation of labour in the workplace was solidaristic. Hatchmen still had responsibility for hiring men and foremen worked closely with the men in work, and in the union. Although this system came under increasing pressure through the 1920s prompting complaints of the unchecked personal power of supervisors. Central Committee advised Adelaide shipowners to get permanent foremen out of the union, or recruit non-union foremen. Foremen were reported to have discriminated against free labourers, but they were forced out of the WWF by 19 October. But their resistance continued, as casual foremen (who remained in the WWF) then refused to work with scabs. The Adelaide shipowners responded by encouraging the development of a Foreman Stevedore association. But plans were abandoned in November, since a large employer of permanent foremen wanted them to remain non-union. Fremantle employers also abandoned plans for casual foremen to form a foremen's union. It was established the following year.

In other ports, the employers pressed ahead with this policy. Brisbane employers forced foremen to leave the union or be sacked. In Melbourne foremen were under threat from workers for enforcing employer policy and police protection for them and their homes was required. Where foremen did defend unionists they were sacked. Sydney also followed the policy of non-WWF permanent foremen. As I have mentioned previously, foremen's unions in Sydney and Brisbane emerged in the 1920s, and they were spurred on by the actions of shipowners in the 1928
dispute. Adelaide was later added to this. In short, the employers adopted a policy of authority 'realignment' of foremen, in order to assert managerial control through more formalised organisational systems. In solidaristic ports, the employers broke the union nexus between foremen and waterside workers – although in several cases the nexus favoured the position of foremen rather than workers. Where the nexus was somewhat weaker, as in Sydney, Melbourne and Brisbane, employer action quickened occupational differentiation between foremen and waterside workers. This was reflected in separate unionisation.

The realignment of workplace authority between workers and foremen was complemented by closer monitoring of work. Apart from the need to prove go-slow tactics and comply with Court requests, the monitoring of work by employers promised an improvement in output. The experience of WWI and the 1920s had slowly increased the saliency of formal workplace organisation in stevedoring for shipowners. Central Committee stressed that since,

concessions and private understandings between individual stevedores and representatives of the union have caused endless trouble in the past, it is essential that no such concessions or private understandings should be entered into.

To restrict the role of "concessions and private understandings", Central Committee commissioned both interstate and overseas stevedores to devise "the best means of obtaining a proper day's work from watersiders, and the procedure in case of offences." Draft instructions were prepared by the state committees and a sub-committee formed to consider the recommendations.

In both Melbourne and Brisbane the employers introduced a card–system of labour control. In Adelaide an allocation committee was established for the engagement of labour. In Melbourne, foremen issued free labourers with oval brown dockets and Federation men square dark pink dockets. Each docket detailed work to be performed by the worker. On the job the docket was then handed in and only returned to the worker on satisfactory conclusion of the job. In Brisbane, employers initially issued pink tickets to workers who had been vetted as suitable for employment. Later discs were issued to Bureau workers, where more skilled men (eg hatchmen, winchmen and others) were separately enrolled. Labour was allocated from the different "classes of labour", and each man was given a numbered disc. The disc was then handed in on the completion of the job. The worker was then available for reallocation to another job (provided no adverse report was recorded against his name). This organisation expressly had "the object of obtaining cheaper working costs." Although in the latter case, tickets/discs were not used to detail specific work tasks, both systems differentiated work tasks and were part of an individualised labour control–system in which lack of compliance could be recorded. Foremen remained key personnel in the assessment of work performance, but the system of disciplinary action was tied to the tickets or discs and exercised at the Bureau pick-up. The July scheme circulated to employers noted that where workers were seen to be unduly rough in handling cargo, this should be noted and "borne in mind when men are picked up". There were many instances where workers were 'suspended' in Brisbane.

In Adelaide the allocation committee (of shipowners) was charged with task on ensuring that first preference was given to free labour. It allocated labour to each vessel handled by its agent – the stevedore. Thus the engagement of the type of labour – free or Federation labour – was
removed from the direct employer and pick-up in accordance with the general instructions from Melbourne.\textsuperscript{461} In addition, a bureau committee dispensed discipline, "usually the delinquent ...[was] ordered to stand down for varying periods."\textsuperscript{462} This committee consisted of three shipowner officials.

The card-system, in whatever form, created significant resentment amongst Federation members in Melbourne and Brisbane as did the allocation/bureau committee system in Adelaide. In all ports these new mechanisms of organisational control were closely linked to the labour bureau. In a crucial difference to prior experience, these (and other prescribed) ports operated under the shadow of the licensing system of the Transport Workers Act.

Thus the third aspect of the instability at the conclusion of the strike was the restructuring of the labour market by the employers. Melbourne, Brisbane and Adelaide were key ports, as the use of free labourer in the small north Queensland ports undermined any significant resistance. Bowen and Innisfail lost rotary schemes previously granted by state arbitration. In the main ports resistance continued after 21 October. It is to this that I now turn.

In Melbourne the employers wanted to break the demarcation between the interstate men and the Stevedores. For in some trades, such as timber and the overseas work, the ship and shore men had to be picked up in different places. In addition employers had long protested at union domestic rules (mainly sling loads, travelling time, places of work, work after 5pm and the use of relief gangs). Provisions gained in the Beeby award permitted the employers to engage men of both branches. Central Committee ensured that Melbourne employers were fully prepared for this provision before September.\textsuperscript{463} In short, the strike was an opportunity to reconstruct the labour market and labour in the workplace, faster than through the processes of bargaining.

After the introduction of TWA licensing the employers pressed ahead with the elimination of Federation restrictive practices, and unwanted members where possible. On 20 October the Melbourne committee wanted to use free labour on the river wharves in the interstate trade, although WWF men had been working in this trade. In order to use the Beeby award to break down demarcation between the branches, the employers deliberately employed men on ship and wharf work. They sought to avoid WWF men having preference in interstate work.\textsuperscript{464} Resistance from workers presented problems. First, the Melbourne men often refused to offer for timber and other work.\textsuperscript{465} Second, constant police protection was needed for the free labourers all around the port. Free labourers were chased off at the "Marawah," attacked outside Victoria Dock, and they even refused to work fearing further attack.\textsuperscript{466} Advice from General Blamey (in charge of protection) indicated that the Yarra wharves could not be adequately protected and the only option was to separate the men.\textsuperscript{467} Third, Judge Dethridge considered that the employers had no responsibility to free labourers enrolled after union men resumed work.\textsuperscript{468}

By early November many of the free labourers had drifted away from the waterfront. So much so that when the Sydney committee suggested in early November that no Melbourne men be employed at all (because they were placing black bans on certain vessels) the Central Committee promptly replied that this was not possible.\textsuperscript{469} The decision of many free labourers was no doubt influenced by the events of 1 and 2 November. A riot against the scabs on the morning of 1 November at Princess Pier resulted in the shooting of four unionists by police, one of whom, Allan
Whittaker, later died. The unionists attempted to storm vessels worked by free labour. It was precipitated when the employers failed to engage any of the large number of union men who presented for work that morning. At its afternoon meeting the employers resolved to that the Port Phillip Stevedores would no longer be engaged. Violence continued for weeks. Several union men received long goal sentences for a bombing in December.

Fourth, the cost of using free labour became increasingly burdensome – a cost that shipowners defrayed to others wherever possible. Free labourers were less efficient than WWF men, but shipowners levied all vessels. Two men had been killed on the job in early October, and the use of southern and eastern European workers, often unable to speak English, created safety hazards at work. The repeated attacks on free labourers raised the question of compensation. Central Committee considered appeals to the government for more protection and the public for assistance. They even resolved to approach a charity for assistance. The cost of protection itself mounted. In Pt Adelaide the local Protection Corps requested funds from employers, who approved a 'donation', but were very careful to avoid it being seen as regular support. SA Premier Butler estimated the cost of protection to be £27,000 a year. In Melbourne, Premier Hogan was increasingly reluctant to support shipowners. As early as 23 October he complained of the exclusion of WWF men from Victoria Dock. After talks with the WWF, he proposed a plan that included the construction of a shelter shed for a WWF pick-up and the engagement of skilled men for timber work. The "Hogans Flat" pickup, as it became known to WWF men, was never developed, but remained open and cold. Moreover the Harbour Board then indicated it was to levy a berthing charge on interstate vessels at Victoria Dock. Soon after the Trust banned interstate vessels in the Dock.

The owners were forced to reconsider the allocation of labour. Although police protection was still needed at Port Melbourne, the owners reversed their policy of ten days earlier. On 12 November they resolved to engage Stevedores, but still give free labour first preference. An interpretation by the Arbitration Court however was a clear victory for shipowners. In reference to clause 17(e) the Court determined that the words, overseas and interstate sections, designated the place of origin of vessels and not branches of the Federation. This determination severely weakened the position of the Stevedores and they never recovered.

In other words, in view of the continuing resistance of unionists (which included seamen, firemen and others), the costs involved in the use of free labour and the views of state governments (and agencies) pressure mounted on employers to stabilise labour arrangements. This was done through the use of a permanent labour bureaus. Although approved in mid–October, Central Committee considered them further in November.

Similar experiences were found in other ports. BHP complained of "bad work" by free labourers in Newcastle, free labourers were unable to do coal work in Adelaide, Newcastle WWF men refused to transfer to other vessels to make way for scabs and so on. When the Brisbane men obtained licenses and attempted to attend the picking shed on Tuesday 23 October they had to be locked out. Three days later the unionists along with all licensed men could register at the Bureau if they signed an undertaking to work as directed. Employers were in the process of selecting 'suitable' WWF men through an employers' committee and the 400 WWF men initially selected was closer to 500 in practice. However Central Committee considered that this
discrimination against the other union members would lay employers open to charges of victimisation under the Arbitration Act. The JCWE however went ahead and even brought 'moderate' union men down to Brisbane from the north. It had vetted the bureau with State Premier McCormack asserting that "urgent action" was required to avoid labour shortages in the port. Central Committee agreed to proceed in Brisbane on 27 October and a scheme for North Queensland on 2 November.484

The Brisbane employers were not only anxious to exclude unsuitable WWF men but also unsuitable volunteers. With a labour force of approximately 1500 for Brisbane the WWF men were needed. For more than 200 of the 1200 volunteers were "weeded out", and thus 469 WWF men were employed. A committee of wharf superintendents checked company lists to selected men "of good character, known capacity for work, [and] who would work peaceably alongside volunteers". The employers wanted to "permanently and definitely exclude[e], for all time, the undesirable men who have caused so much trouble in the past."485 The employers rejected the overseas companies preference for permanent employment in favour of the general ASOF policy of casualism. The employers knew that the fall in income for casuals, if permanent men were employed, would trigger worker discontent and instability.486 The Pt Adelaide employers also had to weed out more than a hundred of the 550 volunteers in the port. Here too the employers rejected permanent employment.487 The operation of bureau was put in the hands of a sub-committee after a joint ASOF and OSRA conference in early December. In Newcastle a permanent bureau was in place in December.488

The fourth and final factor of instability after the official end of the strike was the management of the dispute. I have shown that from June 1928, the COM was largely unaware of the union's inadequate organisation. From early September it could not develop a coherent response to the new award and the decisions of the hurried Triennial Conference only confused the situation in the first week of the dispute. Finally the fragmentation of the management of the dispute − covering labour councils, state bodies and individual branches − from the end of the Conference on 15 September was disastrous. In later years Jim Healy pointed to the lack of discipline of COM members. Decisions of the COM were not seen as binding and members advocated action according to political view rather than union policy.489 This created disorganisation. But here the internal political tensions in the union were symptomatic of the wider processes of ideological change and the underlying structural tensions in the industry. The transformation of the customary basis of informalism into a new political ideology was incomplete. The waterfront was awash with ideas which had yet to be translated into a coherent union policy, or organisational capacities to carry out such a policy.

Union leadership was also in transition. Morris had announced at the 1927 Special Conference that he intended to retire at the 1928 Triennial Conference. But ill-health plagued him through 1928. Although he did resign, the election for General Secretary were held in the heat of the strike – and only about half of the membership voted. The result was announced on 18 October. Arthur Turley, a moderate from Port Pirie, gained 37 percent of the vote, Melbourne's Bates received 27 percent and the Stevedores' V.O., Clarke 20 percent.490 Turley was immediately
identified by the communist militants as a key figure in the COM back down at all stages during the dispute. The task of recovery proved to be difficult.

VI. Conclusions - Tensions of Bargaining and Arbitration

Chapter seven outlined the continued economic and industrial development of shipping from the 1890s to the 1930s. This chapter and previous two closely examined the operations and practices of labour and industrial relations. The conclusion is that the industrialisation in the form of shipping was not matched by adequate formalisation of the content of operational practice in general or industrial relations policy in particular. Thus the tensions between direct bargaining, focused on local conditions, and formal federal arbitration had the paradoxical effect of sustaining instability in labour relations and the cyclical model of shifting industrial authority over this period.

The early period of national collective bargaining was successful in that the WWF leadership gained a uniform national agreement between 1908 and 1911. To be sure it was underpinned by the framework of arbitration that provided union security and impetus for employers to bargain (to avoid a direct award). Moreover after 1910 the employers had to contend with two other conditions, uncertainty in the product market and political context. Taken together these conditions led both parties to a national agreement in search of certainty.

Indeed employers attempted to strengthen the dual regulation of the industry – market regulation and industry level labour policy – with the turn to arbitration as a mechanism of labour control at the end of 1913. But the absence of a consistent will and bargaining expertise was exposed in the unstable conditions of wartime. The companies' dependence on labour intensive work methods afforded them few choices beyond informal relations and coercive practices. In the context of the war and arbitration the WWF members and branches were able to press their industrial demands based on an increasingly politicised solidarity in the workplace. In effect formalised industrial relations – whether collective bargaining or arbitration – was provisional for many in the WWF. Shaped into a populist syndicalism the ideology was strongest amongst the rank and file, although union leadership at the port level were not immune. The growing tension between the politician-leadership of the WWF and rank and file activism saw the expulsion of politicians and the rise of radical influence and even leadership in some ports. By the 1920s the ascendancy of this ideology infused a new political discourse into traditional solidarity. Industrial claims and action were constituted as political rights, buttressed by a moral imperative. In short the organisational and attitudinal characteristics of formalism were weak in the union.

The shipowners' first turn to federal arbitration failed under wartime conditions and their turn labour market control through joint stevedoring companies and labour bureau, was also abandoned in the early 1920s. The drift back to local arrangements presented new problems in the 1920s. Both the employers and the federal WWF were unable to control the rise in militancy at the workplace/local port level. Initially the union attempted to accommodate the former by tying reorganisation to the political agenda of workplace militancy – the syndicalist conception the One Big Union. This failed. The result was little integration between the federal leadership, port leadership and workplace action, particularly from 1924 to 1928. In the 1920s socialist strands and communism, suitably adapted to the populism of the previous decade, acted a spur to militancy in the context of labour intensive work methods, rank and file organisation and local arrangements.
The spread of political militancy contributed to the sharp decline in the legitimacy of 'traditional' informalism. This was a logical result of a growing formalisation of the industrial relations system.

The employers did little to actively manage industrial relations, relying instead on the use of arbitration for labour control. Compliant and conservative Federal governments from 1917 onwards, restored product market regulation, under shipowner control. They were also increasingly receptive to punitive industrial relations regulation. The role of informal relations became more contradictory and the 1928 dispute was the result. Its size, severity and bitterness were measures of the intensity of the contradictions.

The 1928 dispute marked a new level of state intervention in the industry. Prompted by shipowners, the federal government saw arbitration as inadequate for labour control and the Transport Workers' Act afforded greater security of employer authority over the labour market. The state sanctioned licensing system implemented under the TWA, flooded the labour market (some 21,000 licences issued for a pre-strike labour force of 12,000) and thereby handed a significant coercive mechanism to the employers. I will consider this in more detail in the next chapter.

Initially some 7,500 WWF members were excluded from the industry, and the main ports of Melbourne, Brisbane and Adelaide suffered a fall in working membership from a total of about 8,500 in early September to less than 2,000 at the end of November 1928. In addition more than 400 members were lost in Newcastle and several north Queensland ports. Employer controlled labour bureaus were an administrative system based on job ticket or discs that closely controlled labour effort and discipline, in contrast to the existing informal practices. Job tickets could be used for formal monitoring and permitted the allocation and transfer of different classes of labour previously in the hands of workers or first line supervisors. In other words, it permitted direct managerial control of stages 5 and 6 of the employment relation set out in chapter two.

In short, in the main licensed ports labour management control—systems were more closely aligned organisationally with the formalisation the industrial relations system, but in favour of employers. But this occurred in less than a third of ports and despite favourable post-strike management conditions the critical issue of the pattern of industrial authority remained unresolved. The experience of the depression, explored in the next chapter, did little to change this situation.
teleg. Fenwick (sec. Brisbane) to Morris, 6 Mar 1917, WWF, *Brisbane Correspondence*, ANU/NBA T62/8/1/1; the extensive definition of waterside work and preference may be seen in the union claims for the 1921 State award. It included all work on wharves, piers, jetties, wrecks, roadsteads and other anchorages, in ships, including receiving and delivering, coaling, trimming, bunkering and no sailor or other labour to be employed within half a mile of the high water mark, Log of Claims, 2 May 1921, clauses 3, 4, Exhibit No. 19, File No. 682 of 1920, Queensland Industrial Commission.

Storemen and packers did the work in the dumping sheds, but where sheds were on the wharf, WWF men did the work. *Copy of Agreement*, n.d. attachment to L C Dawson (sec. Brisbane) to Morris, 19 May 1919, WWF, *Brisbane Correspondence*, ANU/NBA T62/8/1/1.

John Gray (AWU) to Morris, 3 Dec 1918; Is. Woods (Wallaroo) to Morris, 6 Dec 1918, 11.15 Jan 1919; I. Morris to Woods, 15 Jan 1919, all ANU/NBA T62/12/6 cited in Powell, *Uncertain Frontiers*, pp.142-143,173

Statement of Cameron (WWF), No.682 of 1920, *Transcripts*, 5 May 1921, p.10, Queensland Industrial Commission

Case No.559 of 1921, appeal against decision of the local Industrial Magistrate 21 Nov 1921, Queensland, *Government Gazette*, Vol CXVII, No. 6, 9 Jan 1922, p.43. For the same reason a Magistrate's decision on seamen working cargoes of less than 15 tons was also reversed on appeal in the same case.


WWF, *Minutes*, 21 July 1920, p.326, ANU/NBA T62/1/1

WWF, *Minutes*, 21 July 1920, p.324, ANU/NBA T62/1/1

The relevant rules were; Nos, 38,43,44,45,6, WWF, *COM*, pp.17,19,151-158

Legal costs continued to drain the Federation's finances, WWF, *COM*, pp.287,288-289, ANU/NBA T62/1/1

Motions by Thompson lapsed but this was an issue that generated some resentment in Queensland, WWF, *COM*, 21 April 1919, pp.303-304, ANU/NBA T62/1/1

The represented (with the numbers of delegates) were Wallaroo, Hobart, Bunyie, Pt Adelaide (3), Brisbane (3), Pt. Lincoln (2), Townsville (2), Sydney (4), Melbourne (2), Port Phillip (2), Port Pirie (2), and Albany, *Daily Herald*, 21 Aug 1918, listed in Powell, *Uncertain Frontiers*, p.10

Collector's vote from Sydney, Gladstone and the Port Phillip Stevedores and others, WWF, *COM, Minutes*, 19 July, 26,27 Oct 1921, pp.479,535,540, ANU/NBA T62/1/1

It was a little over £16 in credit at Aug 1916, but with a deficit of £4996. at 30 Jan 1919, WWF, *COM, Minutes*, 17 Feb 1919, pp.298-299, ANU/NBA T62/1/1

Legal costs continued to drain the Federation's finances, WWF, *COM, Minutes*, 10,11 July 1919, pp.324,327,328; conference cancelled after a branch ballot, WWF, *COM, Minutes*, 26 Oct 1921, p.537, both, ANU/NBA T62/1/1

Motions by Thompson lapsed but this was an issue that generated some resentment in Queensland, WWF, *COM, Minutes*, 24 Apr, 18,19 July 1921, pp.465-466,471-473 ANU/NBA T62/1/1

Eg, during the campaign for the closure of the Sydney labour bureau, the Adelaide men refused to work the "Baron Mackay" (banned in support of Sydney) as the local TLC wanted the men out in support of the seamen. Branch secretary E. Carr was abused, see WWF, *Minutes*, 20,22 Jan 1925, pp.465-467,470-473 ANU/NBA T62/1/1

In fact Thompson (Queensland delegate from the Brisbane branch) actually stated the "as far as I am concerned, the sooner it [WWF] goes out of existence the better, and the whole of the members of Queensland I think are of that opinion" (p.475), WWF, *COM, Minutes*, 19 July 1921, p.472,473-476, ANU/NBA T62/1/1. However Thompson's view was not supported by many in Queensland Boyland (who replaced Thompson on the COM later in the year) pointed out that in regard to dues and breaking away from the Federation, was "not [the view]... of the whole of the branches of Queensland". WWF, *COM, Minutes*, 21 Oct 1921, pp.516, ANU/NBA T62/1/1


WWF, *COM, Minutes*, 3 Mar 1913, p.128, ANU/NBA T62/1/1

WWF, *COM, Minutes*, 26 Mar 1913, p.168, ANU/NBA T62/1/1

A second problem area was the relation between the political and industrial wings of the movement, but this is not of direct concern here, *Socialism and Australian Labour*, pp.234-250, esp.p.234-235

Eg, the decision of the local TLC want the men out in support of the seamen. Branch secretary E. Carr was abused, see WWF, *Minutes*, 26 Oct 1921, p.537, both, ANU/NBA T62/1/1

Associated with men such as Judd and Jock Garden, Turner, *Industrial Labour and Politics*, ch.8, pp.182ff; Farrell, *International Socialism and Australian Labour*, p.20


Although there was considerable discussion and they wanted more information about the organisation, WWF, *COM, Minutes*, 17 Feb 1919, p.300, ANU/NBA T62/1/1

Eg representatives to the TWF were Woods and Morris; Townsville voiced protest, WWF, *COM, Minutes*, 16 Jan, 17 Mar 1919, pp.337,350, ANU/NBA T62/1/1; Brisbane passed resolutions condemning his appointment, I. Dawson to Morris, 1 Mar 1919, p.2, WWF, Federal Office, *Brisbane Correspondence*, ANU/NBA T62/1/1

WWF, *COM, Minutes*, 21 July, 18 Aug 1919, p.316, ANU/NBA T62/1/1

WWF, *COM, Minutes*, 24 Apr 1920, p.553, ANU/NBA T62/1/1

Eg, ASOF, *Minutes*, 4 Oct 1917, p.211, ANU/NBA E217/5; 30 July, 22 Sept 1920, pp.92,111, ANU/NBA E217/6. The employers replied (22 Sept) that all work is covered by awards or agreements between companies who deal with "various Associations on matters connected with the work."

There was some confusion over the position. The COM first voted to cut links on 25 Oct (day 2 of the third quarterly meeting) then suggested that a union ballot be held, 26 Oct (day 5), which was not supported by 1 Nov (day 8) which saw a vote to withdraw on 2 Nov, WWF, *COM, Minutes*, 22,26 Oct, 1,2 Nov, pp.404,409,410,416 ANU/NBA T62/1/1

WWF, *COM, Minutes*, 24 Apr 1920, p.558, ANU/NBA T62/1/1

WWF, *COM, Minutes*, 22,23 July 1921, pp.488,493,495-496, ANU/NBA T62/1/1; see Burgman, *Revolutionary Industrial Unionism*, pp.17,19, pp.151-158

WWF, *COM, Minutes*, 11 Sept 1919, p.326 [emphasis added], ANU/NBA T62/1/1
Resolutions at a union conference were passed for four schemes, viz., Transport Workers' Federation of Australia, the Transport Workers' Federation of New Zealand (Hughes' original concept), International Transport Workers and the Big Four (Waterside, Seamen, Miners and Railway unions). WWF, COM, Minutes, 10 Jan, 28 Apr 1920, pp.337-335-354, ANU/NBA T62/1

WWF, COM, Minutes, 3-6 Aug 1920, pp.385-389, ANU/NBA T62/1

WWF, COM, Minutes, 3 Nov 1920, pp.417-418, ANU/NBA T62/1

OBU conference was from 15 Oct 1920, WWF COM, Minutes, 28 Aug, 25,28 Oct 1920 pp.392,404,409-410,413, ANU/NBA T62/1

OBU conference 27-28 Jan, WWF, COM, Minutes, 27 Jan, 3 Feb 1921, pp.440,443, ANU/NBA T62/1

WWF, COM, Minutes, 28 Jan 1921, p.445, ANU/NBA T62/1

WWF, COM, Minutes, 21 Apr 1921, p.458, ANU/NBA T62/1

Morris had been unable to attend the full conference and thus Cremen acted as proxy, WWF, COM, Minutes, 22 July 1921, pp.491-492, ANU/NBA T62/1/1; CPA policy was to work through trade unions, ie "white-ant" them, to advance the communist programme, Davidson, The Communist Party of Australia, p.12

Davidson, The Communist Party of Australia, pp.12-13. Note that Davidson's account of the conference is more positive, focusing on the role of the communists.

WWF, COM, Minutes, 25 July 1921, pp.497-499, ANU/NBA T62/1/1. The results of this ballot provided a clear to the political logic of the issue; on the one hand, Port Adelaide and Port Augusta, conservative branches opposed it, on the other hand Rockhampton (anonymously) and Brisbane more influenced by the radicalism supported it, WWF, COM, Minutes, 21 Oct 1921, pp.517-518, ANU/NBA T62/1/1

The conference on 10 February had representatives from the AWU, miners and the waterside workers, Lockwood, Ship to Shore, p.197

Indeed the issue had been canvassed in 1920 when it was pointed out that the WWF could be maintained with as few as 100 members in two states, in which case the Arbitration Court would no deregister the union, COM, Minutes, 23 July 1920, p.368, ANU/NBA T62/1/1; the employers lodged objections to its registration, CSOA, Minutes, 3 Jan 1924, p.51, ANU/NBA E21/70

Only token support of the OBU by the COM were seen after 1921. Dawson complained on several occasions of the lack of action, eg. 1. Dawson to Morris, 12 June 1925, Cremen to Dawson 9 July 1925, ANU/NBA T62/8/1/3; the conference called in late 1925 to set up an Australian Transport Alliance was also largely ineffective, see documents, WWF, Federal Office, ANU/NBA T62/23

Davidson, The Communist Party of Australia, p.32

Although the seamen withdrew before 1922. Moreover the COM also complained about the craft idea in the notion of the transport section of the OBU as it was by this stage, WWF, COM, Minutes, 21,27 Oct 1921, pp.519,539, ANU/NBA T62/1/1

Davidson, The Communist Party of Australia, p.26

Morris minuted in WWF, COM, Minutes, 28 Apr 1921, p.355, also comments p.35A, ANU/NBA T62/1/1; note that Lockwood's account of the OBU makes no distinction between the politics of the different OBU proposals and makes no comment on the opposition of Turley and others to the (Garden inspired) OBU and the reservations Morris held in regard to the schemes despite his attraction to better organisation of unions, Ship to Shore, pp.196-198.

WWF, COM, Minutes, 5 April 1918, p.271, ANU/NBA T62/1/1

Which covered 279 employers, with a further application dated 4 Feb 1919 covering a further 11 employers, CAR, Vol 13, 1919, pp.601-605

CAR, Vol 13, 1919, pp.601-606

Covering Port Pirie coal work, reinstatement of preference and pick-up places and penalties against Alexander and Co., all discussed earlier in the chapter.

WWF, COM, Minutes, 21 Aug, 16 Dec 1918, pp.283,284,291-293, ANU/NBA T62/1/1

The union submitted 7 editions of its Rules from December 1917 to Oct 1925. NSW Industrial Commission, Rules from December 1917 to Oct 1925, NSW Archives, "Sketch of Scheme Operated by Late Shipping Labour Bureau, Sydney Employment of Waterside Workers on Permanent Basis", by J. O. Pilm (an official at the Bureau) 11 Oct 1928, included in I. T. Trousdale (sec OSRA Sydney) to Sec OSRA Bris, 11 Oct 1928, McKellar Collection ML MSS 4548/Box 119 Envelope 236 Item 14

Negotiations on 18-20,27 Sept, 11,22 Nov 1918, ASOF, Minutes, 13 Nov 1918, p.10, ANU/NBA E21/6

WWF, COM, Minutes, 31 Oct 1918, p.287, ANU/NBA E21/6, cf Nelson, The Hungry Mile, pp.60-70

Idle time (referred to as unemployment time) included travelling and waiting time which was not strictly idle time. Sickness and accident pay limited to 1 week, but the latter was partly covered by insurance, details from PUm (an official at the Bureau) 11 Oct 1928, included in I. T. Trousdale (sec OSRA Sydney) to Sec OSRA Bris, 11 Oct 1928, McKellar Collection ML MSS 4548/Box 119 Envelope 236 Item 14; see also citation of evidence of OSRA's Scale, CAR Vol 20, 1924, p.848

Dispute Report [1920], p.660

The number of men employed through the Yarra Bureau is given as 2,049 and 2,409 in the Rules, 1920, included in 1. T. Trousdale (sec OSRA Sydney) to Sec OSRA Bris, 11 Oct 1928, McKellar Collection ML MSS 4548/Box 119 Envelope 236 Item 14; see also citation of evidence of OSRA's Scale, CAR Vol 20, 1924, p.848

The number of men employed through the Yarra Bureau is given as 2,049 and 2,409 in the CAR judgment - a typographic error - CAR, Vol 13, 1919, pp.617-618

WWF, COM, Minutes, 20 Jan 1919, p.296, ANU/NBA T62/1/1

Commonwealth Conciliation and Arbitration Act section 81(a); the result was the formation of servicemen's 'unions'. The degree to which this may be seen as specifically a government tactic to dilute the coverage of the WWF is a moot point, Lockwood, Ship to Shore, p.184

He was responding to the reports of trouble in Fremantle where returned servicemen demanded first preference over WWF and national volunteers, J. Macdonald to Lochcape, 13 Dec 1918, AUSNCo, Correspondence 1886-1961, Letter Book, No 10, p.474, [emphasis added], McKellar Collection ML MSS 4548/Box 131

Indeed he moved a motion of no-confidence in Morris, although not seconded. The COM in fact passed a motion of confidence in the General Secretary later in the meeting. Thompson favoured 12 months, the COM voted for 3 years, WWF, COM, Minutes, 8,11 Sep 1919, pp.319,327,328, ANU/NBA T62/1/1


97 WWF, COM, Minutes, 12 Apr, 29 Mar, 2,16 Dec 1920, pp.415,418–420,424, ANU/NBA T62/6/1

98 WWF, COM, Minutes, 21 Apr 1920, p.458, ANU/NBA T62/6/1

99 WWF, COM, Minutes, 19 Nov 1920, p.131, ANU/NBA E217/6; Evidence of Weatheriake (OSRA), No.682 of 1920.

100 WWF, COM, Minutes, 21 Jan 1921, p.435, ANU/NBA T62/6/1; WWF, General Secretary's Report, Fourth Biennial Conference, Sydney, 15 Sept 1921, p.26, copy from AEWL, Federal Office, Sydney

101 Specifically, ordinary overtime was cut to 136.4% (from 150%) and extraordinary overtime cut to 163.5% (from 200%).

102 The hourly rate was then 2s.6d. and hour and ordinary overtime 3s.8d. an hour, WWF, General Secretary's Report, Fourth Biennial Conference, Sydney, 15 Sept 1921, p.27, copy from AEWL, Federal Office, Sydney; the no retrospective claims was disputed but since no decision was made by the Arbitration Court until well into 1922, it was rendered irrelevant, WWF, COM, Minutes, 19 Apr 1921, pp.454–455, ASOF, 10 Feb 1921, p.160, ANU/NBA E217/6

103 WWF, COM, Minutes, 21 Apr 1921, p.462, ANU/NBA T62/6/1

104 Justice Powers (appointed 30 June 1921), CAR, Vol 16, 1922, pp.850–851

105 CAR, Vol 17, 1923, p.188

106 The Melbourne employers were Huddart Parker and the Union SSCO. These he found to be "embittered by the actions of the union" and employed not only loyalists and returned servicemen, but "any other men capable of doing what labourers' work" provided they were not union members, CAR, Vol 18, 1923, pp.1218–1226
with other labour after further consideration of legal position of loyalists, that the equal position of Judgments dated 7, 19, 24 December 1923, CAR, Vol 18, 1923, pp.1230-1241.

An interpretation application lodged by the WWF 13 Feb, decision on 28 Feb, CAR, Vol 19, 1924, pp.12-14

Legal Advice of Owen Dixon, 30 Sept 1924, Waterside Workers Federation, Miscellaneous Papers ML MSS 1049/Box 1 Item 1

The issues related to the operation of the Sydney overseas Labour Bureau, a similar bureau operated by three companies that were part of the Holyman group, and a claim that all waterfront workers be employed on a casual basis throughout the country.

CAR, Vol 20, 1924, p.749

CAR, Vol 20, 1924, pp.547-550

CAR, Vol 20, 1924, p.741

CAR, Vol 20, 1924, pp.744-745

CAR, Vol 20, 1924, pp.746-748, quotation at p.746

CAR, Vol 20, 1924, pp.845-846

Memorandum of Agreement, WWF & 30 shipping companies, 13 Dec 1924, 12 clauses, signed 15 Dec, included representatives of ASOF (Swanton) and OSRA (Seale). Waterside Workers Federation, Miscellaneous Papers LM MSS 1049/Box 1 Item 1; ASOF, Annual Report for 1924, p.20, ANU/NBA E217/92

Lockwood claimed that the bureau were in effect closed as a personal favour of Inchcape to Bruce, and not by the Australian government or law. Ship to Shore, p.200-201. The role of the industrial action of the WWF is thereby devalued. The close association of Inchcape with Australian shipping was pointed to in chapter seven

They were outlined by Sydney's Barney Mullins, WWF, COM, Minutes, 23 Jan 1925, p.7 Waterside Workers Federation, Miscellaneous Papers ML MSS 1049/Box 1 Item 1

ASOF, Annual Report for 1925, p.23, ANU/ANL E217/93

According to the evidence in the Arbitration Court there were about 1200 returned servicemen in Sydney in 1923, and about a 100 WWF members registered at the overseas bureau. In 1925 the bureau was closed, with the men absorbed by the union, CAR, Vol 18, 1923, pp.1220,1226. Mullins reported to the COM in Jan, that there were 729 men at the government bureau, 479 old bureau men, leaving about 250 outside returned soldiers.

Memorandum figures from Waterside Workers Federation, Miscellaneous Papers ML MSS 1049/Box 1 Item 1; Nelson, The Hungry Mile, p.72. He gives the Sydney membership in 1923-1925, and states that the 1925 figure was as a result of the absorption of the returned servicemen (about 200) and the P&Cs. There were not 1195 P&C members – the difference was probably in the recruitment of non-unionists (snipers) as he argues that the union was in a boom period prior to the 1930s depression.

Technically WWF rules made no provision for permanent employment. Healy was correct in stating that these men worked in the intrastate trade, but incorrect to argue that they were to become the PWCLU – as the union was already registered and was granted a state award in 1917, 1918, 1920 and 16 Jan 1925; Healy, Brief History of the Australian Waterfront, p.36, NSW Arbitration Reports, 1926, pp.514ff; Nelson, The Hungry Mile, p.72 outlines the refusal of the eight and rejection of two P&C men in the 1925 settlement and so kept the PWCLU alive; Lowenstein and Hills, Under the Hook, p.57 repeat this but is unreferenced. Williams, The Years of Big Jim, p.30 also repeats this and is unreferenced. The registration file of the union in NSW lists the signature of 7 members in Nov 1922 on its application to change name to the NSW branch of a federal union, NSW Industrial Commission, NSW Archives, A.O. No.10/42139 T.U. File 535; Healy mentions that 7 or 8 of the original 1917 scalps (P&C members) worked on the North Coast and other interstate (sic) wharves after the Sydney bureau was closed in 1925, Minutes of Deputation to Mr J. N. Lawson M.P., Parliamentary Secretary for Industry, 2 Feb 1939, p.58, WWF, Federal Office ZZ5/Box 33; more recently Beasley, Wharfies, p.64 repeats that eight P&Cs remained, but again is unreferenced.

Lowenstein and Hills, Under the Hook, pp.32,35,36

Lockwood approvingly quotes the comment of Justice Staples in regard to the waterfront in a 1931 decision, Ship to Shore, p.201

The official data does not disaggregate disputes by occupation. Thus this data is indicative of disputes against shipowners from all occupations. In fact, most disputes came from the waterfront.

Those covered coal work with the CSOA, Port Hunter Stevedores Association and various companies, registered in the federal Court, CAR, Vol 15, 1921, pp.645-665

CAR, Vol 16, 1922, pp.844-846,852-853

CAR, Vol 16, 1922, pp.856-857

CAR, Vol 16, 1922, pp.846-850. For example small cargoes including wheat, to be carried on the wharf had to be landed on stages or docks from coal or coke to be dampened down to mitigate dust, clause 13 (a)-(q) in the award.

ASOF, Report for Year 1922, p.15, ANU/NBA E217/90

CAR, Vol 19, 1924, pp.362-363,367

ASOF, Report for Year 1924, p.3, ANU/NBA E217/92

CAR, Vol 19, 1924, pp.358,360-361; ASOF, Report for Year 1924, p.18, ANU/NBA E217/92

CAR, Vol 19, 1924, pp.844

Some of these men may have been IWW supporters in Sydney who, as Tom Glynn noted, suddenly found "urgent business in other parts of Australia" after the government crackdown on the organisation in 1923, cited in Burgman, Revolutionary Industrial Unionism, p.246.

Registration No.60, 23 Dec 1917, Register of Industrial Unions, Queensland Industrial Commission

Resolution of the branches, 9 July 1923, Registration No.82, 11 Nov 1920, (application 20 Oct) Register of Industrial Unions, Queensland Industrial Commission. The Maryborough registration was cancelled at the same time, as this branch was now included as part of the Queensland Branch of the WWF.

It was noted by the steamship federation in Oct, and the local employers wished to extend for direct negotiation in Dec, ASOF, Minutes, 29 Oct, 3,10 Dec 1920, pp.125,132,139, ANU/NBA E217/76

The Federation also argued that observance of a state award would be easier, evidence of Herbert Adams (ASOF), No.141 of 1933, Transcript, 13 July 1933, p.36, Queensland Industrial Commission

The operation of the bureaus, special cargo negotiations and others had precipitated proposals for closer organisation.

The hullmen agreed to a reduction of 5s. a week and the shipwrights to 1 1/2d. less per hour, 10 other unions were served logs which included cuts in wages, and eg wages for the marine cooks and bakers were reduced 11s.6d. a month, ASOF, Report for Year 1922, pp.13-14, ANU/NBA E217/90

Comparison of Claims with Commonwealth Arbitration Court Award of 13 Oct 1919, Clause 4, 5,11,17,18, No.682 of 1920, Transcript, Exhibit No.19, 2 May 1921, Queensland Industrial Commission
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214. Dawson to Morris, 24 Feb 1921, WWF Federal Office, Brisbane Correspondence, ANU/NBA T62/8/1/2. There were a number of issues covered in this dispute, including work at Moonlight Harbour. The Innisfail dispute was discontinued on the intervention of the Premier, and the resultant agreement was seen as unsatisfactory by employers. For more than two years the union had controlled the distribution of labour. Labour was dispatched to the shipping companies after application to the union, evidence of Joseph Ferguson (Innisfail WWF secretary), No.682 of 1920, Transcript, 15 May 1921, pp.197-199, Queensland Industrial Commission; Innisfail, No 56 of 1921, Queensland, Government Gazette, Vol CXVI, No 59, 18 Feb 1921, p.611; Queensland, Industrial Gazette, Vol 6, 1921, p.330.


216. Comments of MacNaughton, No.682 of 1920, Transcript, 3 May 1921, p.20, Queensland Industrial Commission. In addition, certain travelling and waiting time rates were higher than in the federal award. The overtime rates were thus 140% for ordinary and 177% for extraordinary overtime.

217. Clause 11 included eleven paragraphs and sixteen sub-paragraphs covering Brisbane and a number of other ports. Waterside Workers - State Award, 21 May 1921, Queensland Government Gazette, Vol CXVI, No 628, 9 June 1921, p.1803; Queensland, Industrial Gazette, Vol 6 No 7, 11 July 1921, pp.514-520

218. Comments by MacNaughton, No.682 of 1920, Transcript, 6 & 9 May 1921, pp.131,132,132a, Queensland Industrial Commission; clauses, 18,19, Waterside Workers - State Award, 21 May 1921, Queensland Government Gazette, Vol CXVI, No 628, 9 June 1921, p.1804; Queensland, Industrial Gazette, Vol 6 No 7, 11 July 1921, pp.514-515

219. The hourly wage increase added £70,000 to the wages bill according to employers. The ASOF monitored the progress of the case through April and May. Reaction was only to approve an incorrect press report of the award, ASOF, Minutes, meetings in April and May, 30 June 1921, pp.162,174,184,194,199,212, ANU/NBA E217/6

220. WWF, COM, Minutes, 25 July 1921, pp.498-500, ANU/NBA T62/1/1

221. WWF, COM, Minutes, 24 Oct 1921, p.527, ANU/NBA T62/1/1

222. Although the Court had been reluctant to enforce any specific scheme for over two years, Queensland, Industrial Gazette, Vol 5, 1919, p.132, Vol 5, 1920, 534,1084. The coalworkers scheme was a union controlled one based on income over the week, but also gave an officer paid by the union the right to terminate and transfer men, see Brisbane United Coal Workers and Lightermen’s Union, Rules 53-59, Rules 23 June 1921, Registration File No 95, Queensland Industrial Registrar.

223. Queensland, Industrial Gazette, Vol 6, 1921, p.131. The dispute spread to Cairns and in March the award proceedings for the full award were suspended, Industrial Gazette, Vol 6, 1921, p.186

224. Queensland, Industrial Register, Vol 6, 1921, p.260


226. ASOF, Minutes, 19 Nov 1920, p.131, ANU/NBA E217/6

227. WWF, COM, Minutes, 23 July 1921, p.493, ANU/NBA T62/1/1

228. ASOF, Minutes, 18 Aug, 7,8 Sept 1921, pp.231,238-239,240, ANU/NBA E217/6

229. WWF, COM, Minutes, 24 Oct 1921, p.525, ANU/NBA T62/1/1

230. WWF, COM, Minutes, 24 Aug 1921, Queensland, Industrial Gazette, Vol 6, 1921, p.704


232. Adair also reported on progress in Sydney, WWF, COM, Minutes, 26 Oct 1921, pp.534,535, Queensland T62/1/1

233. The key points were that the union would engage men and dispatch them to the employer. The latter could not reject any worker (unless incompetent as decided by the union V.O.) but had freedom of allocation of labour in the labour process. The union V.O. had the power to stop members working longer hours than to earn the set time incomes, Distribution of Work Scheme, n.d. Exhibit 11, No 471 of 1921, Transcript, Queensland Industrial Commission

234. No 471 & 564 of 1921, Queensland Government Gazette, Vol CXVII, No 8, 9 Jan 1922, pp.47-52; l. Dawson to Morris, 23 Sept 1921, WWF, Federal Office, Brisbane Correspondence, ANU/NBA T62/8/2/2; similar comments by MacNaughton in the state Court, Queensland, Industrial Gazette, Vol 7, 1921, p.93


236. MacNaughton foreshadowed a future ballot on the issue, due to confusion on the issue, Queensland, Industrial Gazette, Vol 7, 1921, p.92ff

237. "In the port of Gladstone the WWF branch had 85 members but in the off-season (April to September) there is not enough work for more than 30 men, and wool are the commodities ships in the busy season from October to March, evidence of C. Schade, Transcript of Ferry Report, 7 Sept 1925, p.6, WWF Federal Council, ANU/NBA T62/59; in Mackay the ush season length of the port was 120-130 men, but in the high season it jumps to between 220 and 300 men, in Lucinda Point, the 16 man labour force increased to over 60 and so on, Ferry Report (1926), pp.1076,1101

238. North Queensland returned a communist member of parliament in 1924.

239. "In Moonlight Harbour the increase in sugar throughput exposed the inadequacy of the wharf. When two vessels in port they tie up side by side and the cargo of the outer one is worked over the vessel by the wharf, evidence of William Moxon (Old manager of ASSCo), No.682 of 1920, Transcript, 15 May 1921, pp.203-205, Queensland Industrial Commission.

240. Evidence of Purnell (WWF) No.682 of 1920, Transcript, 6 May 1921, p.92 [emphasis added], Queensland Industrial Commission. See other comments on the lack of equipment or insufficient manning, pp.48-49 (freezer work), p.53 (washes), p.54 (where men took the bags of icing sugar to wrap around their shoes for protection), 15 May 1921, pp.199-201 (loading sugar in Townsville).

241. The Act came into operation 1 mar 1923. The Regulations set the contribution at 3d. a week, but casual workers often worked less. It was therefore set at 1/2d. a day and each worker had to have a "premium card" (later a contribution card) in which stamps indicating payments made. The rate later increased to 4d. a week or 1/2d. a day. The scheme was also a third funded from workers payments and a third from government funding. The Unemployed Workers Insurance Act of 1922, The Queensland Statutes, Vol 12, 1922-1923, pp.10073-10093; numerous regulations were issued, see, eg Unemployed Workers Insurance Act (Regulations and Orders), 7 Dec 1923, QPPs, 1924 Vol 1, pp.689; ASOF, Report for Year 1922, p.23, ANU/NBA

242. The branch voted to stop transfers to the port early 1922 (contrary to Federalisation rules), l. Dawson to Morris, 23 Feb 1922, rotary scheme outlined in Scheme for Distributing the work of the port of Brisbane, n.d. [c. April 1922], WWF, Federal Office, Brisbane Correspondence, ANU/NBA T62/8/1/2

243. "Labour control" was a familiar term in the Seamen’s Journal from 1921, Fitzpatrick and Cahill, The Seamen’s Union of Australia, p.53

244. "Cargo" 2 Dec 1920, CAR, Vol 15, 1921, p.10-15

Lucinda 100% vote in favour, Innisfail 99%, Bowen 96%, Gladstone 79%, Rockhampton 63%, Bundaberg 61%, Brisbane 52%; those against, Maryborough 87% [against], Mackay 74%, Cairns 73%, Cooktown 68%, Thurs. Is 62%, Townsville 56%; and Moranby resulted in a tied vote, Ferry Report [1926], p.1081

Clause 21A, No 298 of 1922, Queensland, Government Gazette Vol CXVII, No 218, 9 June 1922, p.1084. The dispute centered on recognition of the branch and work on railway cars which the employers viewed as unsatisfactory. A compulsory conference was held on 16 June at which an agreement was negotiated.

The suspension of the award from Aug 1921 was renewed from 19 May 1923; variation contained in Clause 21B; provisions referred to contained in Clause 21B (7) (a) & (b) and 21B (11), Queensland, Government Gazette, Vol CX XI, No.4, 2 July 1923, pp.8-9

No 244 of 1922, Queensland, Government Gazette Vol CXVII, No 203, 15 June 1923, p.1279; the afternoon pick-up was abolished 21 July 1923.

Local action was to be taken by the employers, CSOA, Minutes, 30 Aug 1923, p.48, ANU/NBA E217/70

ASOF, Report for Year 1920, p.20, ANU/NBA E217/93; Ferry Report [1926], p.1078

ASOF, Report for Year 1924, p.20, ANU/NBA E217/92

CSOA, Minutes, 8 July 1924, p.59, ANU/NBA E217/70

Indeed on 27 November Dawson specifically requested a circular setting out the history of the issue, its "objectionable features" as this would be of "great advantage in obtaining support of the members ... [as] unfortunately knowledge [is] vague, even amongst our own members", i.e. Dawson to Morris, 1 Aug. 29 Oct 1924, telegs. Dawson to Morris 28,30 Oct 1924, 4,5,8,27,28 Nov 1924, Morris to Dawson, 31 Oct 1924, WWF, Federal Office, Brisbane Correspondence, ANU/NBA T62/8/1/3

The Sydney men unilaterally declared that the pick-up would be for only 2 hours a day at the Communist Hall. The Melbourne and Fremantle seamen quickly adopted the same policy. The Arbitration Court fixed the Mercantile Marine Office in each port as the pick-up place. Walsh was also required by Justice Powers to give assurances that the union would abide by Court rulings. This he did, only to face initial repudiation by members, see CGR, Vol 21, 1925, pp.10-25

Seamen refused to work the next day, Fitzpatrick and Callih, The Seamen's Union of Australia, pp.60-63; note also that the bulk of the WDL in combined with the number of workers directly and indirectly involved shown in Table 11.1 indicates the effect of the seamen's strike in mid-year and other action earlier in the year.

ASOF, Report for Year 1922, p.13, ANU/NBA E217/93. Through amendments to the Immigration and Navigation Acts respectively. But the federal government, frustrated at its inability to take decisive and coercive action against these unions then amended the Crimes Act to cover the same 'offences', see Fitzpatrick and Callih, The Seamen's Union of Australia, pp.64-66


Davidson, The Communist Party of Australia, pp.31-36

Davidson, The Hungry Mile, p.34; Davidson, The Communist Party of Australia, pp.37,564f

Waterfront Communist Party organised on the Sydney waterfront, Nelson, The Hungry Mile, p.34

E.g. for the Port of Bundaberg – limitation of men in port to 2 gangs; rules on preference in employing outside labour; rules on engagement of transfer men; union approval needed for third gang and how the gang is worked; union demand unloading work for less than 15 tons; refusal to work after tea; reallocation of men in 2 gangs to 3 gangs; refusal to carry only to truck; use of labour for hatch removal/covering on different holds at the same time; employment of floating truckers and stackers all in extracts from correspondence to CSOA or ICWE Brisbane, 2,9,23 Jan 1925, 27 Mar, 27 Apr, 10 May, 10 Aug, 28 Oct 1926, 6 July 1927, attachment to Transcript of Lawson Report [1939], WWF, Federal Office ANU/NBA Z55/Box 33

I. N. Seale (OSRA) to Morris, 27 Mar 1925, WWF Federal Office, Brisbane Correspondence, ANU/NBA T62/8/1/3

Evidence of Francis John Dunn, Transcript, Ferry Report, p.59, WWF Federal Council, ANU/NBA T62/59. Rockhampton was a rotary port, with almost 2/3 support for the scheme in the state ballot reported above. Also he argued that clause 14(1) dated from 1923, but it was included in the 1921 award.

Evidence of Paul Marier, Rockhampton Manager of Howard Smith, Transcript of Ferry Report, [1926], 8 Feb 1926, pp.7-9 WWF Federal Council, ANU/NBA T62/59

I. Dawson to Morris, 12 June 1925, WWF, Federal Office, Brisbane Correspondence, ANU/NBA T62/8/1/3

Healy, Brief History of the Australian Waterfront, p.41

That is, once picked up, no man could be engaged again unless all others in port had been engaged.

ANU/NBA E217/8/1/3

Ferry Report, p.1075

Ferry Report, p.1075; ASOF, Report for Year 1925, p.24, ANU/NBA E217/93

Queensland, Industrial Gazette, Vol 10, 1925, p.914

Ports returned to the non-rotary pick-up through October and November.

Evidence of Herbert Walker (Manager Walter Reid) 8 Feb 1926, Transcript of the Ferry Report [1926] p.40, WWF Federal Council, ANU/NBA T62/59; the report was not publicly released until some weeks later.

Ferry Report [1926], p.1076 [emphasis added]

Ferry Report [1926], p.1077; several of such rules are described in the report.

The men on more than one occasion refused to work for the stevedore Capt Thomas due to poor treatment and victimisation. At the pick up the union secretary first calls for preference men (those not picked up previously) to step forward and the stevedore is then forced to pick from these men first, evidence of Herbert Walker (manager Walter Ried Co), Transcript of Ferry Report [1926], pp.7-8, WWF Federal Council, ANU/NBA T62/59; description of employer practices, evidence of Francis Dunn, (President of Rockhampton WWF), Thomas Maxwell (waterside worker, Rockhampton) stated that he was forced to leave the port for 12 months as he was black listed by Thomas, and when he returned was then black listed by Laidley, 8 Feb 1926, Transcript of Ferry Report [1926], pp.60-61,112 respectively, WWF, Federal Office, ANU/NBA T62/59; "star" gangs were given preference in employment, even to the extent of delaying the pick-up to the last minute to get these men, Ferry Report [1926], p.1091

Hold Nos. 1 and 4 were usually smaller and more difficult to work, whereas Nos. 2 and 3 were larger, lasted longer and therefore generated steadier income. Allocation of by hold thus reduced the foreman's ability to informally reward ball (or 'star' men and gangs) with better work (the 'cream') including overtime rates.

Ferry Report [1926], pp.1084,1088

Ferry Report [1926], p.1085

There were 22 gangs of 19 men, each following a particular company, plus about 120 men in shed gangs and about 50 "jumpers" who filled vacancies in the regular gangs making a total of about 600 men in the port, Ferry Report [1926], pp.1086-1087,1089

Report of the Shippers Representative (W. Moxon), Ferry Report [1926], p.1096

256 William Moxon pointed out that at Port Douglas (a rotary port) was a tidal port so the work needed to be completed to catch the tide. Moreover, the sugar was not slung overboard but loaded via chute, Report of the Shipowners Representative, *Ferry Report* [1926], p.1088

257 Report from stevedore E. Slane to Walter Reid and Co., Rockhampton, Transcript of *Ferry Report* [1926], WWF Federal Council, ANU/NBA T62/59

258 Evidence of Paul Maries (Rockhampton Manager, Howard Smith), 8 Feb 1926, Transcript of *Ferry Report*, p.31, [emphasis added] WWF Federal Council, ANU/NBA T62/59

259 Evidence of Paul Maries, 8 Feb 1926, Transcript of *Ferry Report* [1926], p.46

260 Report of the Shipowners Representative (W. Moxon), *Ferry Report* [1926], p.1097


262 Comments of Mr Callisch (Shipping manager, Macdonald, Hamilton) cited in *Ferry Report* [1926], p.1088; Bowen was mentioned on several occasions in the communist press as a port in which "class-conscious loyalty" was displayed, eg. *Workers Weekly*, 12 Mar 1926, 4

263 *First Annual Report* on Operations under the Unemployed Workers Insurance Act of 1922, *QPPs*, 1924, Vol 1, p.686. The initial legislation allowed for payments after 14 days continuous unemployment. But the continuity of market attachment of the industry was recognised and payments were made if men were unemployed for 14 days or more in any month, with a maximum of 15 weeks in any year this scheme "provided welcome relief for many waterside workers", (p.686).

264 *Seventh Annual Report* of Unemployed Workers Act, *QPPs*, 1930 Vol 2, pp.211,213. The relevant statistical tables refer to applicants and not waterside workers, therefore it is probable that individual waterside workers made several applications.

265 Classification and Case-numbers compiled from Index File, Waterside Workers Federation State Award, *Queensland Industrial Gazette*. Further references to former stevedores, tally clerks, coalworkers and lightermen.

266 Fitzpatrick and Cahill, *Seamen’s Union of Australia*, pp.64–67

267 ASOF, *Report for Year 1926*, pp.4,17–18,38, ANU/NBA E217/94. This was more than an 80% fall in vessel load-up days.

268 Reporting in 1927 the employers felt that seamen “now fear these disabilities arising from a bad discharge .... and their conduct has improved to some extent at any rate since the beginning of the Scheme.” For although the number of vessel hold-ups rose in comparison to 1926, the number of WDL fell by two-thirds, ASOF, *Report for Year 1927*, p.15 and *Appendix “G”*, ANU/NBA E217/95


270 ASOF, *Report for Year 1926*, p.21, ANU/NBA E217/94


272 This issue was determined by the Arbitration Court in favour of the WWF in Sept 1926 after several months of disruption, *CAR*, Vol 24, 1926–1927, pp.155–157

273 This claim by the WWF was rejected on the grounds that the union was not complying with the award, *CAR*, Vol 23, 1926, pp.335–336; ASOF, *Report for Year 1926*, pp.21–26, ANU/NBA E217/94


275 Rates for ordinary overtime were raised from 136% to 143% (of ordinary time) and for extraordinary overtime from 163.5% to 169%, *CAR*, Vol 24, 1926–1927 pp.638–642

276 Wages for ordinary overtime were raised from 136% to 143% (of ordinary time) and for extraordinary overtime from 163.5% to 169%, *CAR*, Vol 24, 1926–1927 pp.638–642

277 In the Old Waterside Workers’ Award – State, overtime rates remained at 140% (ordinary) and 177% (extraordinary) of ordinary time, No 271 of 1927, Judgment on 14 Feb 1927, *Queensland Government Gazette*, Vol CXXVIII, No 41, 24 Feb 1924, pp.659–665


280 Keep in mind that action by seamen had been severely restricted in the wake of the deregistration of the union in 1925. Moreover the large number of direct workers involved in disputes (19,600) in 1927 combined with the WDL also indicates that WWF members played a key role (the WWF membership was approximately 20,000 at the time).

281 Thirty privately owned vessels (about 44,000 tons) were idle in 1926, about 15% of the private Australian fleet, ASOF, *Report for Year 1926*, Appendix “H”, p.39, ANU/NBA E217/94; in July 1926, the figure was 79,403 tons. Commonwealth of Australia, *Tariff Board, Vessels Exceeding 1,000 Tons Gross Register*, 16 Feb 1932, APPs, 1932–1934 Vol 3, p.1373

282 T. D. Dillon (Caims Sec.) to Lyons (Steamship Coys sec Caims) 7 Feb 1927, Registration File No 82, Queensland Industrial Commission. The pick-up was to be 8:45–9:30 am, other demands were for minimum payment when men are informed that they will work after tea but don’t and ordering men back on Saturday or for Monday.

283 ASOF, *Report for Year 1927*, p.23, ANU/NBA E217/95

284 Application for Variation Townsville to Industrial Registrar, 28 April 1927, Registration File No 82, Queensland Industrial Commission. The application was for one pick-up, 9–10 am.

285 Beasley, *Wharfs*, pp.65–70 provides a discussion of an earlier rotary dispute in 1925 on issues that continued.

286 Recall that Cairns was an anti–rotary port working under the bull system. The *Ferry Report*, pp. 1081–1083, detailed the operation of the company list system, where about 150 men were essentially permanently employed and another 150 (who make up the shore men for the 14 ship gangs) as semi–permanent. The competition to get into gangs was “keen”. For the remainder, some 70–150 men, work was very irregular and thus earnings were low. In these circumstances employer discrimination against active unionists (and rotary supporters) was strong.


291 Conference was from 26 Sept, WWF, Sydney Branch, Special Conference *Minutes*, ANU/NBA 2248/53

Chapter Eleven

The internate employers reported that the Cooks Union capitulated entirely, ASOF, Report for the Year 1928, p.3, ANU/NBA E217/96. The employers demanded free selection, but would work from a list of union members, the union wanted to keep the right to be employed "in accordance with its rules", Transport Unions Conference, Minutes, 16-17 May 1928, WWF, Federal Office, ANU/NBA 162/21.

ASOF, Minutes, 14-20 Mar, 24 Apr, 8-22 May 1928, pp.111,114,124,pp.134-135,142, ANU/NBA E217/11; Central Committee, Minutes, No.1, 2 July 1928, p.1. The employers reported that the Brisbane branch voted narrowly for an equalisation scheme, 717 to 672 (ie 51.6%).

Indeed, it has been argued that Beeby's views were less and less in sympathy with the workers' perspective from WWI onwards, Lockwood, Ship to Shore, pp.209ff.

CAR, Vol 26, 1928, pp.870-872 [emphasis added]

CAR, Vol 26, 1928, p.873-874

CAR, Vol 26, 1928, p.875

CAR, Vol 26, 1928, pp.872,876

He also had indicated to the union that he proposed to the union that the new award would "make the union responsible for the concerted action of individual members", CAR, Vol 26, 1928, p.542.

That is, from 17.87 to 13.64 tons per hour, CAR, Vol 26, 1928, p.877.

CAR, Vol 26, 1928, pp.877-883

H. Adams, Waterside Workers' Federation, Comments on Award, 2 July 1928, pp.3,6,7, McKellar Collection ML MSS 4548/Box 119 Envelope 236; Minutes of meeting of Wharf Superintendents, ASOF, Minutes, 12-13 July 1928, p.169, ANU/NBA E217/11.

H. Adams, Waterside Workers' Federation, Comments on Award, 2 July 1928, pp.6,7, McKellar Collection ML MSS 4548/Box 119 Envelope 236; see also Minutes of meeting of Oversea Stevedores Committee, 28, 3 Sept 1928, in Central Committee, Minutes, No.1, pp.15G,15C-15D.

Minutes of meeting of Wharf Superintendents, ASOF, Minutes, 9 Aug 1928, p.180 ANU/NBA E217/11

Minutes of meeting of Wharf Superintendents, ASOF, Minutes, 23-24 Aug 1928, p.190-192, ANU/NBA E217/11; Note also that the sling loads were based on 4 truckers to a gang. The document specifies that with the addition of extra truckers sling loads were to be increased proportionately. Since the average number of truckers per gang in Queensland was 8 the sling loads there would be much larger, see Minimum Strength of Gangs of Waterside Labour – Queensland Ports, Adelaide SSCO, c.Sep 1928, McKellar Collection ML MSS 4548/Box 119 Envelope 236.


ASOF, Minutes, 17 July 1928, pp.170-171, ANU/NBA E217/11

WWF, Sydney Branch, Minutes, ANU/NBA Z224/Box 100


The Claims dispute flared up over the equalisation of wages between the ship and shore gangs on 13 July. There was no work to 15 Aug, when only a few moderates offered. A ballot on 20 Aug voted to return to work, but the radicals used go-slow tactics reducing the handling rate to between 6.75 and 11.25 tons/gang/hr. The July 1927 Queensland state arbitration gang system was cancelled on 31 Aug 1928.

WORKERS' WEEKLY, 31 Aug 1928; the report complained of the "reactionary" Brophy who met the shipowners and the subsequent agreement forestalled industrial action.

WORKERS' WEEKLY, 7 Sept 1928, p.1. The paper advocated the immediate formation of "industrial committees of action ... for protection against any attempt of the shipowners to force any obnoxious condition on the wharves".

Central Committee, Minutes, No.1, 27 July 1928, pp.3-6; copy of cable 6 July 1925 in McKellar Collection ML MSS 4548/Box 119 Envelope 236.

Copy of the Draft Scheme, 27 July 1928, McKellar Collection ML MSS 4548/Box 119 Envelope 236.

Copy of the Draft Scheme, 27 July 1928, McKellar Collection ML MSS 4548/Box 119 Envelope 236.

J. Elford to Brooks (JCWE, Bris), 19 July 1928, McKellar Collection ML MSS 4548/Box 119 Envelope 236.

London also stressed that public sympathy be secured through compliance with the law. see cable 25 July 1928, McKellar Collection ML MSS 4548/Box 119 Envelope 236.

Draft Scheme, 27 July 1928, Rules of Action 1(c), and other sections, [emphasis added] McKellar Collection ML MSS 4548/Box 119 Envelope 236; note also that the Central Committee reported that Macdonald Hamilton (Melbourne) suggested the licensing of waterside workers, Central Committee, Minutes, No.1, 6 Aug 1928, p.8.

Central Committee, Minutes, No.1, 6,17 Aug 1928, pp.8-9,13.

Central Committee, Minutes, No.1, 30 Aug 1928, p.13E.

Instructions for the Guidance of State Committees, enclosed in J. Elford to Brooks 31 Aug 1928, McKellar Collection ML MSS 4548/Box 119 Envelope 236.


T. 19, Waterside Workers' Award, CAR, Vol 26, 1928, pp.911,928.

CAR, Vol 26, 1928, p.901.


allowed transfer from hatch to hatch, ship to ship in the same locality, wharf to wharf, lighter to shore and other provisions, Clause 12(a)-(g). H. Adams and W. Darbon, Comments on the Federal Award (final version), 4 Sept 1928, McKellar Collection ML MSS 4548/Box 119 Envelope 236.

The shift rates cut the penalty rate for relief gangs from 143% to 125% (for work after 5pm) and 169% to 150% for work after 11pm, clause 4, CAR, Vol 26, 1928, pp.929,931.

Clause 25 (a)-(e), CAR, Vol 26, 1928, pp.930-931. Only the collective failure to attend was an offence; note that the amendments to the Federal Conciliation and Arbitration Act which allowed for the imposition of penalties came into operation 14 Aug 1928.

Minutes by Davis, Kelly and Walker among others advocated direct negotiations and withdrawal from arbitration, but were lost, WWF, Triennial Conference Minutes, 7 Sept 1928, pp.3,4, WWF, Sydney Branch ANU/NBA Z224/Box 53.
358 Eg. Davidson, *The Communist Party of Australia*, pp.37–38, describes the educational and propaganda program of the Australian CPA under Jack Kavanagh in 1928 as a “more catholic idea of socialism common among Marxists of the Second International.” The party manual explained that the first task was, “in convincing the majority of the proletariat that its programme and politics are correct.” He concludes that “[i]n 1927 the CPA was more like a traditional socialist party than a communist party of the type desired by Comintern.”

In all a pragmatic view and party.

359 Triennial Conference, *Minutes*, 7 Sept 1928, p.3, WWF, Sydney Branch, Z248/Box 53

360 Motion by Andrew Brown of Brisbane, Triennial Conference, *Minutes*, 7 Sept 1928, p.4, WWF, Sydney Branch, Z248/Box 53

361 Triennial Conference, *Minutes*, 7 Sept 1928, p.5, WWF, Sydney Branch, Z248/Box 53


364 As I noted earlier, the employers closely monitored all ports and consistently advised ports to work according to the award, particularly in regard to the pick-up. Central Committee, *Minutes*, No 1, 10,11 Sept 1928, pp.18,19; *Argus*, 11 Sept 1928; *Age*, 11 Sept 1928; *Sydney Morning Herald*, 11 Sept 1928; reports were often confusing. Newcastle stopped work on 10 Sept (SMH) but was reported to have 84 men working on 11 Sept, Central Committee, *Minutes*, No 1, 11 Sept 1928, p.19; WWF, Triennial Conference, *Minutes*, 10 Sept 1928, pp.7,8; WWF, Sydney Branch ANU/NBA Z248/Box 53


367 Motion by Riordan (Bowen) and Kelly (Binnsfail), motion by Riordan and Hawthorn, Triennial Conference, *Minutes*, 11 Sept 1928, pp.10,11, WWF, Sydney Branch, Z248/Box 53


369 Central Committee, *Minutes*, No 1, 11,12 Sept 1928, pp.17,19,21,23

370 The employers had to prove that there was collusion not to accept work or instructions from the Federation, for the penalty clause of the award was still tied to unionization (as it was not an offence for an individual not to accept employment, a principle established more than a decade earlier), Central Committee, *Minutes*, No 1, 13 Sept 1928, p.24; *CAR*, Vol 26, 1928, p.1041

371 Letter from the unemployed, Central Committee, *Minutes*, No 1, 13 Sept 1928, p.24

372 Labor Premier Hogan thought there was little difference between the awards. Moreover the owners would approach the government for compensation “when the time came to re-engage watermen”, Central Committee, *Minutes*, No 1, 13,14 Sept 1928, pp.24,25,26–28; *Sydney Morning Herald*, 12,13 Sept 1928; *Argus*, 13 Sept 1928; the letter of warning printed in conference minutes, 1. Elford to Morris, 14 Sept 1928, WWF, Triennial Conference, *Minutes*, 15 Sept 1928, p.20, WWF, Sydney Branch ANU/NBA Z248/Box 53

373 Although it was reported that PM Bruce was to advise Premier of the use of the Act, Central Committee, *Minutes*, No 1, 15 Sept 1928, pp.29–30; *Sydney Morning Herald*, 12 Sept 1928, p.17; *Argus*, 12 Sept 1928; correspondence to Premiers, House of Representatives, *Parliamentary Debates*, Vol 119, 11 Sept 1928, p.6526

374 They continued meetings at least twice a day into November.

375 Motions by moderates Thorndike (Fitler.) and Morrison (Pit Adel.), Cook and Clark of the Port Phillip Stevedores, Seale, Ward, and Mullins of Triennial Conference, *Minutes*, 12,13 Sept 1928, WWF, Sydney Branch, Z248/Box 53

376 Triennial Conference, *Minutes*, 15 Sept 1928, pp.21–22, actual votes listed 1. Morris to Seale, 18 Sept 1928, with minutes, WWF, Sydney Branch, Z248/Box 53. Thompson was an erratic militant who had served on the COM in the early 1920s and had opposed resumption two days earlier; the COM notified the shipowners, 1. Morris to Elford, 17 Sept 1928, CSOA Correspondence, WWF, Federal Office ANU/NBA T62/20

377 Clerks and seamen loaded the coastal vessel, the “Katoomba” and the local vessel, “Mimipa”, in Adelaide and employers employed labour in Hobart to unload three vessels, *Sydney Morning Herald*, 14 Sept 1928

378 Granted by Chief Judge Dethridge the same day, *CAR*, Vol 26, 1928, p.1042. Melbourne branch secretary Cadden was then prosecuted under Sec 6 & 6A of the Arbitration Act as his incitement of members to refuse to accept employment on the “Karoooia”.

379 Central Committee, *Minutes*, No 1, 17 Sept 1928, p.32

380 Age 18 Sept 1928; all Melbourne interstate were working, only one overseas vessel declared black banned, Central Committee, *Minutes*, No 1, 20 Sept 1928, p.38

381 34 men at Lucinda Pt on Thursday, all men working at Bunbury on Thurs 20 Sept, stopwork meeting at Melbourne refused by owners, Central Committee, *Minutes*, No 1, 20,21 Sept 1928, pp.38,41


384 Moreover, Labor members in Parliament also attacked the Nationalist government over its unnecessary prosecutions of waterfront workers in view of the 15 Sept resolution, see House of Representatives, *Parliamentary Debates*, Vol 117, 18,19 Sept 1928, pp.6832–6835,6924–6925

385 The branch refused to sent delegates to a Transport Workers’ Group conference on 24 Sept. The militant Findlay attended but the branch refused to take action, *Sydney Morning Herald*, 26 Sept 1928, ANU/NBA Z248/Box 10/1; *Sydney Morning Herald* 27 Sept 1928; M. Recher, *The Strike of Waterside Workers*, pp.55–66

386 *Workers’ Weekly*, 21 Sept 1928

387 Central Committee, *Minutes*, No 1, 17,18 Sept 1928, p.32,35

388 *Lockwood*, *Ship to Shore*, pp.250–252

389 Others were Mackay and Bowen, *CAR*, Vol 26, 1928, p.1098

390 The Prime Minister and state Premiers were informed. The decision not to advertise in Melbourne was taken after the issue was “exhaustively discussed”, although the state committee had reported that it had devised a scheme for the use of free labour, Central Committee, *Minutes*, No 1, 18,19 Sept 1928, pp.35,36,37; the COM was notified by letter on 19 Sept, Healy, *A Brief History of the Australian Waterfronts*, p.51

391 Central Committee, *Minutes*, No 1, 20,21,22 Sept 1828, pp.38,39,41,42 Brisbane delayed the planned Friday start.

392 Central Committee, *Minutes*, No 1, 20 Sept 1928, p.38

393 In Adelaide the Essential Services Maintenance Volunteers was formed in the second week of the strike, *Sydney Morning Herald* 19,21 Sept 1928; a similar group was seen in Fremantle, and the employers were told to encourage them, Central Committee, *Minutes*, No 1, 21,22 Sept 1928, pp.40,42
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394 Central Committee, Minutes, No 1, 21 Sept 1928, p.41; shipowners would not refuse to enrol union labour at Bureaus, Minutes, 24 Sept 1928, p.43

395 House of Representatives and Senate, Parliamentary Debates, 20, 22 Sept 1928, pp.7010-7013,7195-7225; No 37 of 1928, Commonwealth Acts, Vol 26, 1928 p.112; transport worker was defined (sec.2) as "persons offering for or engaged in work in or in connexion with the provision of services in the transport of persons or goods in relation to trade or commerce by sea with other countries or among the States". Sec. 3, gave the government wide power to make regulations which notwithstanding any other Act (with one exception) "shall have the force of law, with respect to the employment of transport workers, and in particular for regulating the engagement, service, and discharge of transport workers, and the licensing of persons as transport workers, and for regulating and prohibiting the employment of unlicensed persons ... and for the protection of transport workers" [emphasis added]. Lockwood repeats the Lang claim that PM Bruce was anxious to maintain the flow of cargo through ports in order to ensure that toys imported for his private company could be in the store prior to Christmas, Ship to Shore, pp.208-209; the wholesale use of regulations in this manner was later described as an "extraordinary ... form of legislation" (though within the power of Parliament) by Justice Stake, CLR, Vol 44, 1971, p.506

396 Central Committee, Minutes, No 1, 24, 25 Sept 1928, pp.43,47

397 Central Committee were aware that Sec. Cranny said that the PPSA were willing to resume work under the Beeby award, as correspondence to that effect was noted by the committee on the Tuesday, Central Committee, Minutes, No 1, 25 Sept 1928, p.46, the action of the rank- and-file the week before did not match this, Age, 24 Sept 1928

398 Violence had been seen in Melbourne, Adelaide and Brisbane over the week of the 22-23 September, Sydney Morning Herald, 24 Sept 1928

399 Age, 24 Sept 1928

400 Sydney Morning Herald, 18 Sept 1928

401 Seven transport unions including the WWF, Sydney Morning Herald, 25 Sept 1928; Healy, General Secretary's Report, Fourth Biennial National Conference, 15 Sept 1952, p.34

402 Central Committee, Minutes, No 2, 18,26,27,28 Sept 1928, 1 Oct 1928, pp.48,52,56,58 (the meeting with Latham was on Friday 28 Sept, the next day the committee reconfirmed that all ports should be included).

403 Sydney Morning Herald, 27 Sept 1928

404 Sydney Morning Herald, 29 Sept 1928, pp.11-12; Age, 27 Sept 1928; the employers approved a press statement on 24 Sept. As I noted earlier, the employers monitored and managed the press in the course of the dispute, Central Committee, Minutes, No 1, 5,12,15,20,24,27 Sept 1928, pp.15,23,31,38,43,45,52 and other instances; statement quoted in Rechter, The Waterside Workers Strike, p.64, but this writer provides analysis of its significance.

405 Courier Mail, 24 Sept 1928

406 Telegram, Brown to Morris, 26 Sept 1928, Brisbane Correspondence, WWF, Federal Office, ANU/NBA T62/8/1/3

407 Daily Standard, 28 Sept 1928; the branches were Brisbane, Bowen, Innisfail, Townsville, Bundaberg, Thursday Is., and Lucinda Point.

408 The ports were Port Adelaide, Melbourne, Fremantle, Newcastle, Brisbane. Six north Queensland ports, Bundaberg, Bowen, Port Douglas, Innisfail (which supplied labour for Goondi and Mourily Harbour), Townsville and Lucinda Point were added through October as the employers made recommendations to the government. Fremantle was deleted as a result of an agreement with the shipowners (see below). Ten licensing officers were appointed for the 13 ports.

409 This and similar scenes saw WWF charged and gaolled, some for long periods. In this incident WWF men, William Lewis, William Chatach, George North, Phillip Corby and other unionists received one month sentences, Age, 2 Oct 1928; Sydney Morning Herald, 23, Oct 1928

410 ACTU, Minutes, 2 Oct 1928, p.357, ANU/NBA N21/16 cited in Morris "Maritime Labour and the TWA" p.4; Workers' Weekly, 28 Sept, 5,12 Oct 1928, p.1. Melbourne WWF and COM member Bates referred to the licencing of waterside workers "like dogs", the communists termed it the "Leg Iron" TWA and several referred to it as industrial conscription – the Dog Collar Act became the general pejorative term.

411 Sydney Morning Herald, 12 Oct 1920; one employer reported that the lack of support for waterside workers (with the exception of seamen) was as "embarrassing" to the was watersiders as the refusal of some branches to strike, 1. Macdonald Hamilton to Sec AUSNCo London, 12 Oct 1928, AUSNCo, Correspondence, 1886-1961. General Letters, No 45, p.709, McKellar Collection ML MSS 4548/Box 234

412 Port Adelaide Working Men's Association, Minutes, 4 Oct 1928 cited in Cunow, Shall We Strike?, p.88; Central Committee, Minutes, No 1, 1 Oct 1928, p.58 (afternoon meeting).

413 Sydney Morning Herald, 13 Oct 1928; Rechter, The Strike of Waterside Worker, pp.87,89

414 The Railwaymen (ARU) and the storemen and packers (SPU, which included several hundred wharf storemen) refused to support them due to the disunity amongst the WWF itself, Courier Mail, 3 Oct 1928

415 Telegrams. Brown to Morris, 10,16 Oct 1928, Brisbane Correspondence, WWF, Federal Office, ANU/NBA T62/8/3. Brown complained of 4 northern ports working. He also pointed out that if the branch agreed to return to work and applied for licenses the branch would be destroyed as only 200 members would be picked up. Lockwood also points to the confusion over the lack of leadership from COM, Ship to Shore, pp.259-260


418 Central Committee, Minutes, No 1, 19 Oct 1928, p.90

419 The Press was already asking what will happen to these men, Central Committee, Minutes, No 1, 19 Oct 1928, pp.90,91; No. issued by 17 Oct was 15,400 and by 20 Oct was 21,389, Licenses Issued Under the TWA, n.d., Proposals re repeal of TWA, WWF, Federal Office, ANU/NBA T62/61/3

420 The actual figure disclosed to WWF officials later, evidence by R. West, Transcript of the Lawson Report (1939), 14 Mar 1939, p.9, WWF, Federal Office ANU/NBA 255/Box 33; the figures given in publications appear very inaccurate, see Beasley, Wharfies, p.84

421 Figures for the respective ports from, Central Committee, Minutes, No 1, 29,24 Oct, 1 Nov, 10 Dec 1928, pp.98,105,112,113,128. In reference to Adelaide the figures reported varied e, 17 Dec (p.132) the employment was 420 volunteers and 261 WWF, but in general terms there were about 48% free labour and 60% WWF; additional newspaper reports, 2,205 volunteers, 4,700 volunteers and 545 WWF, 2,114 volunteers and 107 WWF, Age, 24,25,27 Oct 1928

422 Healy, General Secretary's Report, Fourth Biennial National Conference, 15 Sept 1952, p.37; the branch was able to submit only one membership list to the Queensland Industrial Registrar through the 1930s; evidence of A. Ogden (Qld WWF State Exec), Registration Application No 141 of 1933, Transcript, 13 July 1933, p.48, Queensland Industrial Registry

423 The list appeared to be written at the one time, rather than collated over a while. Indeed, it may have been from a telephone conversation from an employer.
The Fremantle employers reported non-availability of labour from 24 Sept; the Orient company scheduled a vessel to discharge at Albany more than two days earlier, but the central committee accepted this as a general policy; the Premier would not meet shipowners three weeks into the dispute; and the Licensing office was picketed preventing men taking out licenses in the first days, Central Committee, Minutes, No 1, 20,22,24,27 Sept, 2,3,5 Oct 1928, pp.38,42,43,52,60-61,62,63,67

Central Committee, Minutes, No 1, 28 Sept, 8 Oct 1928, pp.54,69

Central Committee, Minutes, No 1, 1,2,9 Oct 1928, pp.57,58,59,74

Central Committee, Minutes, No 1, 8 Oct 1928, pp.54. ASOF, Report for the Year 1928, p.19, ANU/NBA E217/96; for registrations and the formal cancellation was from 19 Dec 1929, Lawson Report [1939], pp.3,32

The ASOF had already discussed the issue and were in favour. The Central Committee then directed the state committees to collect relevant information on voluntary wage, premises, staff and so on, Central Committee, Minutes, No 1, 16 Oct 1928, p.85, the ASOF did not make a final decision to 20 Nov followed by a conference with OSRA representative on 26 Nov to finalise the arrangements, ASOF, Minutes, Book No 11, 20 Nov 1928, pp.211-121

Proposed company discussed with OSRA also in Oct, ASOF, Minutes, Book No 11, 23 Oct 1928, p.207

G. E. Macdonald Hamilton to Sec AUSNCo London, 26 Oct 1928, AUSNCo Correspondence, General Letters No 45, p.717, McKellar Collection ML MSS 4548/Box 134

The Association requested funding for representatives to travel to Sydney, Central Committee, Minutes, No 1, 16, Dec 1928, p.215

Reported that at a meeting on 17 Oct it was decided that the Permanent and Casual Waterside Workers' Association of South Australia be formed, Sydney Morning Herald, 18 Oct 1928, 1 from (unnamed ex-official) to Adelaide Shipowners, reported to Central Committee on 30 Oct, repeated by Local shipowner officials Central Committee, Minutes, No 1, 30,31 Oct 1928, pp.106,110

The union claimed members in Townsville, Bowen, and Bundaberg; Adams (CSOA) stated that P&C members did shed work in Townsville and Bowen (not disputed by WWF representatives), evidence of S. C. Long (PCWLU), and H. Adams, Registration Application No 141 of 1933, Transcript, 13 July 1933, pp.3,28,37-39 Queensland Industrial Registry

Central Committee, Minutes, No 1, 10, Oct 1928, p.76

Such as in Newcastle where the Central Committee specifically advised the port committee to engage free labour on the basis of their volunteer status rather than as P&C members, Central Committee, Minutes, Nov 1, 5 Nov 1928, p.119

Argus, 20,32 Oct 1928; Lockwood claims the union began with about 2,300 members. CAR, Vol 27, pp.38-40

Proposed company discussed with OSRA also in Oct, ASOF, Minutes, Book No 11, 23 Oct 1928, p.207

G. E. Macdonald Hamilton to Sec AUSNCo London, 26 Oct 1928, AUSNCo Correspondence, General Letters No 45, p.717, McKellar Collection ML MSS 4548/Box 134

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Central Committee, Minutes, No 1, 10, Oct 1928, p.76

Such as in Newcastle where the Central Committee specifically advised the port committee to engage free labour on the basis of their volunteer status rather than as P&C members, Central Committee, Minutes, Nov 1, 5 Nov 1928, p.119

Argus, 20,32 Oct 1928; Lockwood claims the union began with about 2,300 members, Ship to Shore, p.261. This is highly unlikely to be true.

CAR, Vol 27, 1928-29, p.339. The final decision was handed down on 17 Dec although Dethridge had indicated on 16 Nov that he was unwilling to grant the application. Several High Court decisions in the ensuing weeks strengthened his legal position. The union was granted an award in 1930.

Central Committee, Minutes, No 1, 10,11,17 Dec 1920, pp.128,130,132-133

U. S. F. File 535, NSW Archives A.O. No 1042139

CAR, Vol 26, p.571

The committee decided that this should not be conceded. The WA owners also requested that other conditions and negotiations be granted to the Fremantle men, all were opposed by Melbourne, Central Committee, Minutes, No 1, 12,14,15,17,18,19 Sept 1928, pp.22,28,30,32,33,34,37

Central Committee, Minutes, No 1, 24 Sept 1928, p.45

Central Committee, Minutes, No 1, 26 Sept, 5 Oct 1928, pp.48,66,67

Central Committee, Minutes, No 1, 11,19 Oct 1928, pp.73,91

Central Committee, Minutes, No 1, 20,24 Oct 7 Nov 1928, pp.92,99,122; The Port Adelaide Foremen Stevedores Association, South Australian Industrial Reports, Vol 10 1929, cited in Cumow, Shall We Strike?, p.97

Central Committee, Minutes, No 1, 19,13,7 Nov 1928, pp.91,91,90,121

In the case of Sydney, Gaby (a foreman in the 1920s) writes that the union was rekindled as a result of the 1928 dispute. But an attempt by himself and several other master mariner foremen to have their position distinguished from ex-waterside worker foremen failed. Gaby, The Unrestful Watersfons, pp.24-26; the Old Foremen Stevedores Association, Union of Employees registered 11 June 1924, 89 members, (but Rules dated 1917 and members joined from Sept 1916), Registration File No 100, Queensland Industrial Registrar.

Need for companies to "systematically to keep careful records of rates of unloading and loading ...to prove the adoption of the go-slow' policy in affidavits, Draft Scheme of employers, 27 July 1928, McKellar Collection ML MSS 4548/Box 119 Envelope 236; eg. Dethridge requested (as Higgins, Powers and Beeby had done) that detailed records be kept by employers of waterside workers and work, CAR, Vol 27, 1928-29, p.39 and other instances.

Instructions to Stevedores and Wharf Superintendents, a.d. (c.August 1928), [emphasis original], McKellar Collection ML MSS 4548/Box 119 Envelope 236.

Central Committee, Minutes, No 1, 1, Oct 1928, p.58 [emphasis added]

Central Committee, Minutes, No 1, 8,9 Oct 1928, pp.70,72


The operation of the system outlined in Report of Interstate Sub-Committee, Messrs Gardiner and Service [in Brisbane], 11 Oct 1928; the overseers men Weatherbie and Craig also recommended the use of discs, Report of Overseas Sub-Committee both in McKellar Collection ML MSS 4548/Box 119 Envelope 236

Draft Scheme, 27 July 1927, McKellar Collection ML MSS 4548/Box 119 Envelope 236

RC on Waterfront (1930), pp.26-27

RC on Waterfront (1930), p.29

Central Committee, Minutes, No 1, 5 Sept 1928, p.15b; meeting of State Committee, Minutes, 27 Aug 1928, p.15b; meeting of Overseas Stevedores, Minutes, 28 Aug 1928, p.15g
Chapter Eleven

WWF men refused to do coal work with free labourers on the night of 1 Nov, Central Committee, Minutes, No 1, 23, 24, 29, 30 Oct, 2 Nov 1928, pp.96, 99, 111, 108, 115. The employers sought advice (20 Oct) on protection on the River wharves after it was decided to break the WWF's position in the interstate trade. Blamey suggested the Stevedores were engaged for Port Melbourne work, volunteers for Victoria Dock, Melbourne WWF for North bank wharves of the Yarra and volunteers on the South bank wharves of the Yarra.


469 Sam Bridges and Arthur Mee were killed and Henry Koopman was injured on Thurs. 4 Nov 1928; overseas interests proposed a permanent labour force of 250, in the Overseas Season. In the Interstate section men were picked up on the wharves, see the Beeby award, CAR Vol 26, 1928, pp.926-927.

470 There was a list of violent incidents (including bombings) against foremen and seabs from the end of September. Alexander (Sandy) McVeigh, one of the men convicted for the December bombing of the Greek club in Lonsdale Street, was not released until 1939. See Lockwood, Ship to Shore, pp.264-269; Lowenstein and Hills, Under the Hook, pp.65-66; Beasley, Wharfies, p.88.

471 The employers agreed to no discrimination between union men, of course after free labour was picked, Central Committee, Minutes, No 1, 23 Oct, 3 Nov 1928, pp.96, 99, 117, 119. Shipowners argued that they all benefited from the employment of free labour.

472 Express articles by Jack Ryan and J.K. which argue that both Turley and Bates manipulated the ACTU and sold out WWF men.

473 Reference to prescribed ports only, including Fremantle at this stage, where the WWF membership was 1,100 and 2,882 licenses were issued for the year to 30 June 1929. By the third week in October there were probably several hundred non-union workers granted licenses.

474 WWF, Federal Office, ANU/NBA T62/8/1/3, votes were in total 15,827, with Turley, 18 Oa 1928, No 1, 2, 3 Nov 1928, pp.96, 98, 101, 102, 104, 105. The JCWE stated that the shed could accommodate only about 1600 men, that is, not all free labourers and WWF men (more than 3000); telegs. CC (Melb) to JCWE, 25, 26, 27, 29 Oct, 2 Nov 1928.

475 The employers sought advice (20 Oct) on protection on the River wharves after it was decided to break the WWF's position in the interstate trade. Blamey suggested the Stevedores were engaged for Port Melbourne work, volunteers for Victoria Dock, Melbourne WWF for North bank wharves of the Yarra and volunteers on the South bank wharves of the Yarra.


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478 The employers agreed to no discrimination between union men, of course after free labour was picked, Central Committee, Minutes, No 1, 23 Oct, 3 Nov 1928, pp.96, 99, 117, 119. Shipowners argued that they all benefited from the employment of free labour.

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Chapter 12
Waterside Workers and the Depression, 1929–1935

I. Introduction

This chapter focuses on the aftermath of the defeat of the Waterside Workers Federation in 1928 and examines the experience of workers and the WWF during the depths of the depression. Employers could more easily exclude 'unsuitable' union men from work due to high unemployment, falling freight demand and labour demand. Armed with the authority of the TWA employers dominated labour relations in the industry for a decade. But the depression also stalled any modernisation of the industrial structure of shipping and stevedoring.

It was perhaps the darkest period for the Australian labour force this century, more so for waterside workers. Like the 1890s, workers had to deal with the effects of a depression and an antagonistic state in the industrial arena. The WWF was organisationally divided as branches came to operate more like port unions. The union gained little from the short lived Scullin Labor Government as a hostile Senate blocked political support for maritime unions, and maintained the effects of the coercive Transport Workers Act (TWA). Although only a minority of ports were 'licensed' under the TWA the threat of extension was ever present to all. Thus each port faced a different labour market structure and legal environment. The WWF held only one conference from 1928 to the 1937 All Ports when the communist leadership under new General Secretary Jim Healy emerged. This marked a recasting of union strategy that signalled a new epoch in stevedoring, not considered in this thesis.

This chapter is organised in the following manner. Sections II and III briefly outline the structural conditions of the industry from 1928 and the shape of industrial conflict in severe economic conditions. Section IV centres on the attempt to shape the politics of regulation in the 1930s. The WWF gained little from the appeal to politicians. Section V turns to developments in the industrial relations system. The final section concludes the chapter.

II. Structural Conditions – Shipping and Stevedoring

The 1930s saw a marked decline in economic activity as the depression bit deeper. Table 12.1 indicates that the tonnage of cargo entering the main Australian ports fell for the five years from 1928 to 1932–33 – but only by an average of approximately 10 percent. By 1933 the 1928 level was re-established in most ports. The fall in freight did not adequately reflect the shape of the industry, the labour force and unionisation. Table 12.2 reports official data and shows that the number of shipping companies on the Australian coast halved from 1926 to 1929 reflecting the background to the strike, but the ASOF companies survived to WWII. The 1929 shock saw 40
percent of firms disappear and marked the effects of rail and road transport competition of the 1920s.¹ The decline in vessels continued for a further five years.

Table: 12.1 Tonnage Entered, Selected Australian Ports, 1928-29 to 1941–42 (mill. tons)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Syd</th>
<th>Melb</th>
<th>N'tle</th>
<th>Bris</th>
<th>Adel</th>
<th>Ftle</th>
<th>Ttle</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1928-29</td>
<td>9.0</td>
<td>6.8</td>
<td>3.7</td>
<td>3.4</td>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>1.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1929-30</td>
<td>8.9</td>
<td>7.0</td>
<td>2.6</td>
<td>3.6</td>
<td>4.7</td>
<td>3.7</td>
<td>1.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1930-31</td>
<td>8.4</td>
<td>6.3</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>3.9</td>
<td>3.4</td>
<td>1.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1931-32</td>
<td>8.2</td>
<td>6.0</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>3.4</td>
<td>3.9</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>1.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1932-33</td>
<td>9.3</td>
<td>6.7</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>3.6</td>
<td>4.2</td>
<td>3.4</td>
<td>1.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1933-34</td>
<td>9.2</td>
<td>6.9</td>
<td>3.9</td>
<td>3.6</td>
<td>4.2</td>
<td>3.4</td>
<td>1.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1934-35</td>
<td>10.0</td>
<td>7.6</td>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>4.1</td>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>1.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1935-36</td>
<td>10.4</td>
<td>8.0</td>
<td>4.4</td>
<td>4.3</td>
<td>5.0</td>
<td>3.6</td>
<td>1.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1936-37</td>
<td>10.9</td>
<td>8.1</td>
<td>4.8</td>
<td>4.4</td>
<td>4.9</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>1.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1937-38</td>
<td>11.6</td>
<td>8.6</td>
<td>5.3</td>
<td>4.7</td>
<td>5.4</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>1.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1938-39</td>
<td>11.6</td>
<td>8.6</td>
<td>5.1</td>
<td>4.9</td>
<td>5.5</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>1.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1939-42#</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

# Figures were not published until 1942-43 to allow comparison. Note also that after 1939 the government requisitioned many vessels.

Source: Commonwealth of Australia, Official Year Book, Nos 24–37, 1931–1946–47

By 1931 ASOF firms had strengthened their position and held 90 percent of interstate trade. However members laid up vessels—a traditional method of minimising costs in downturns—25 vessels laid up in 1928, (total of 79,000 tons in July) and 35 a year later (see Table 12.3). Using this as a measure of recovery, shipping improved from 1934 onwards (1935 covered the seamens' strike).

Table: 12.2 Companies, Steamers and Tonnage Engaged in Regular Interstate and Coastal Service, Australia, and ASOF Members, 1911–1938 (selected years)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>No. of Coys (Aust)</th>
<th>No. of Steamers (Aust)</th>
<th>Tons (gross, '000s) (Aust)</th>
<th>No. of Coys (ASOF)</th>
<th>No. of Vessels (ASOF)</th>
<th>Tons (gross '000s) (ASOF)</th>
<th>Tonnage Ratio Aust/ASOF</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1911</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>178</td>
<td>288</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>n.a.</td>
<td>@293</td>
<td>1.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1921</td>
<td>#39</td>
<td>183</td>
<td>317</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>n.a.</td>
<td>258</td>
<td>0.81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1925</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>209</td>
<td>384</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>116</td>
<td>283</td>
<td>0.73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1926</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>216</td>
<td>376</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>116</td>
<td>294</td>
<td>0.78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1927</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>212</td>
<td>399</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>122</td>
<td>281</td>
<td>0.70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1928</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>201</td>
<td>371</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>122</td>
<td>304</td>
<td>0.81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1929</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>173</td>
<td>349</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>116</td>
<td>302</td>
<td>0.86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1930</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>173</td>
<td>349</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>104</td>
<td>284</td>
<td>0.81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1931</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>162</td>
<td>320</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>95</td>
<td>286</td>
<td>0.89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1932</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>154</td>
<td>307</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>254</td>
<td>0.82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1933</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>154</td>
<td>309</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>240</td>
<td>0.77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1934</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>155</td>
<td>303</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>241</td>
<td>0.72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1935</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>156</td>
<td>325</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>235</td>
<td>0.79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1938</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>167</td>
<td>366</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>94</td>
<td>271</td>
<td>0.74</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

# Number of small companies included for the first time * Includes vessels controlled by Australian Shipping Board @ Discrepancy since tugs included in ASOF, and several small coys not included in national figures) up to and including 1930 (only smaller vessels of 2,000 tons or less)


The Australian overseas trade showed a similar picture of market dominance. The conference lines, working through PM Bruce's Australian Overseas Transport Association (AOTA) from April 1929, was supposed to address the problems of Australian exporters. Business and policy-makers believed that size, through rationalisation and mergers, brought economic efficiency, thus the AOTA would coordinate demand and available shipping capacity to cut overseas freight prices.² The Bruce Government amendments (sec. 7(c)) to the Industries Preservation Act in 1930 deemed conference based freight agreements not to be in breach of the Act if they were approved...
by the AOTA. These arrangements enabled British companies to expand market share on the European route in the 1930s.

Table 12.3 ASOF Members Gross Tonnage Shipping Laid Up 1931–1938 (to Dec)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year (Dec)</th>
<th>Gross Tonnage</th>
<th>Year (Dec)</th>
<th>Gross Tonnage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1931 (July)</td>
<td>141,179</td>
<td>1935</td>
<td>*180,212</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1931</td>
<td>164,519</td>
<td>1936</td>
<td>61,765</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1932</td>
<td>115,736</td>
<td>1937</td>
<td>38,995</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1933</td>
<td>92,224</td>
<td>1938</td>
<td>14,903</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1934</td>
<td>60,269</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* 163,106 tons laid up from the 1935 seamen's strike, rather than economic depression. Also some effect in 1936 figure.


The water transport market continued to decline, especially in passenger demand, into the 1930s. Rail had captured the non-first class market after 1921, but the lower rate of decline in first-class capacity quickened after 1933 as air travel captured this market, especially after WWII. Moreover, passenger travel became ever more seasonal – during holiday periods – leaving berths unoccupied for much of the year.3

Investment in shipping slowed with the onset of the depression. Unlike the 1890s depression the average size (in tons) for passenger vessels declined from 1930 to 1934 and was static for cargo vessels from the 1920s to 19404 with a small fall (2.5%) in the decade 1930–1940. Passenger ship size did increase by 20.7% overall, but the sharp decline in passenger numbers resulted in liners accounting for only 13.8% (or 12 vessels) of the ASOF fleet in 1940 compared to 44.8% in 1913.5 Economic recovery from 1933–1934 saw some new vessels come into service but overall the Australian fleet deteriorated. In 1930, 43.3% of cargo vessels in the ASOF fleet were less than 10 years old, and 58.8% less than 15 years old. In 1940, the figures were 20.3% and 35.6% respectively. Most (79.6%) of cargo vessels were more than 10 years old by 1940.6 Some have argued that new engine technology (oil fired steam engines and motor ships) reduced on-board labour costs,7 but ASOF data indicates only a modest decline of 6.5% in manning during the depression (16.8% decrease since 1913) but no savings in wages. In short, companies slowed investment significantly in ships during the 1930s.8

In addition, AOTA had the task of investigating several other issues; notably unnecessary stevedoring delays, industrial disputes, the excessive number of Australian ports and improvement in port facilities. All these issues were raised in the Buchanan Report two years earlier and in reports over the next twenty years.9 Port facilities and stevedoring technology did not improve through the 1930s. State governments lacked the funds and national economic pressures – the national debt, the depression and WWII – limited port improvements for two decades. Inadequate port facilities were starkly obvious during and after WWII leading to constant hold-ups.10 This meant basic facilities for workers (pick-up or shelter sheds, toilets, lunch rooms and so on) did not exist in most ports.11

Poor port facilities contributed to the lack of mechanical equipment, inappropriate equipment and restrictive practices. These factors are interrelated and were identified as the major impediments to quick vessel turnaround.12 The north Queensland sugar ports and Fremantle provide illustrations. Recall that the Queensland ports played a central role in the lead up to the 1928 dispute. Employers in the 1930s complained that they had not kept pace with "the
requirements of trade and the great improvement in the class of ships now [in use]." ^13 Queensland's annual sugar production approached a million tons before WWII yet port handling methods were unchanged for over fifty years. Raw sugar was bagged, stored in wharf sheds, then loaded and stowed in the hold by manual labour. Some conveyors were used, but waterside workers refused to use them to protect jobs. Only in the early 1950s was large scale bulk handling of sugar considered and implemented. ^14 The Fremantle Harbour Trust (FHT), considered the leading user of mechanical devices, still performed poorly in the inter-war period. A review of the Trust's costs from 1920 to 1938 revealed that investment per waterside worker fell from £69 to £34, and labour costs (76.8% and 76.6%), equipment costs (10.8% and 10.4%) and stevedoring costs (6.4% and 6.1%) remained unchanged. ^15

Mechanical equipment, such as forklift trucks, only appeared on the waterfront during WWII due to the slow movement of war materials through Australian ports. The American armed forces used such equipment to speed up operations. Even in the post-war period, the state provided such equipment, through the CHEP. ^16 Unitisation was rarely used and containerisation was unknown due to problems of cost, weight, small consignments and lack of facilities. ^17

Moreover, many problems in stevedoring stemmed from its relation with shipping companies. The latter continued to expand into stevedoring operations, through the 1930s and beyond, but the function was still seen primarily as a cost. Henry Baston cogently reported in the early 1950s that,

3. ...the stevedoring companies ought to enjoy the authority in the counsels of waterfront management necessary for the performance of these duties [ie stevedoring] and in particular the proper share in the framing of policy toward labour. Lack of status cannot help a stevedoring company to attract and retain the best men for management, to invest in the best gear for its work, or to exercise discipline ... The stevedoring companies do not, with very few exceptions, enjoy sufficient standing and, in part, this is attributable to the organisation of management.

4. The stevedoring companies are seldom free to apply, unimpeded their experience and their technical knowledge of the industry. Although they are often nominally independent companies, they are frequently owned, as to a substantial part of their assets, by shipowners' and ships' agents. ^18

The disjunction between centralised ownership and dispersed operational management pointed to the poor integration of organisational and management structures. In stevedoring departments the general manager, shipping/operational manager (or superintendent) and foreman hierarchy was unchanged for over fifty years. The link to subsidiary firms was looser. From aggregate Census data, management numbered some 450 for an operational labour force of over 47,000 in 1947. ^19 The management to worker ratio was more than 1:150 indicating a lack of elaborate managerial hierarchies and detailed labour command. ^20 Moreover, only 319 foremen were listed, but the figure was probably over 400 yielding an SR of approximately 1:50 in 1947 ^21 unchanged in thirty years. Yet shipping growth up to 1947 resulted in a proportionately larger administrative overhead as commercial functions grew. By 1947 more than 4,500 clerical staff were employed in sea transport, of which fewer than 600 (13%) were directly employed in stevedoring as tally clerks. ^22

The Central Committee based in Melbourne was remote from operational labour management. The Committee consisted of six representatives (later expanded to seven) each from OSRA and the ASOF, with the Chair rotating annually. State committees (and port committees where necessary) adopted a similar structure, and operated under the jurisdiction of the national
body. The Central Committee handled "labour conditions on the waterfront, ensuring in the general interest the continuity of Oversea and Interstate services of the Commonwealth". In short, the employers' industrial relations policy body was by now very centralised, but was not matched by adequate implementation at the operational level. Companies depended heavily on local methods, which prompted continual calls for better control at Central Committee meetings.

The employers' ability to implement policy was greatly assisted by very high national unemployment (see Table 12.4) but waterfront unemployment often exceeded fifty percent, severely weakening labour. It was reflected in trade union membership.

Table: 12.4 Rate of Unemployment, Australia, 1928-1943

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Rate (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1928</td>
<td>10.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1929</td>
<td>11.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1930</td>
<td>19.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1931</td>
<td>27.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1932</td>
<td>29.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1933</td>
<td>25.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1934</td>
<td>20.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1935</td>
<td>16.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Rate (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1936</td>
<td>12.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1937</td>
<td>9.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1938</td>
<td>8.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1939</td>
<td>9.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1940</td>
<td>8.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1941</td>
<td>3.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1942</td>
<td>1.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1943</td>
<td>1.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Commonwealth of Australia, *Labour Reports*, Nos 16-37

Table 12.4 shows that trade union membership in transport fell from 1927 to a low in 1935-36. The maritime section fell 40 percent. WWF membership also fell by more than 40 percent, but as I will show labour supply rose dramatically. Two further points may be made; first, compared to rail and road, members per branch in the maritime industry was low (approximately 500-600 per branch compared to 2,000 in rail and 1,200-1,500 in road). The WWF, with some 20,000 members and 45 branches averaged 445 in 1927, yet only about 275 in the depths of the depression. That is, members were dispersed into smaller branches in contrast to employers' centralisation. Second, the pattern of union membership reflected expansion in rail then road transport, especially after WWII.

Table: 12.5 Trade Unions: Number and Membership by Transport Industry Groups, 1923-1950 (selected years)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year (Dec 31)</th>
<th>Wharf (a)*</th>
<th>Labour &amp; Shipping (b)*</th>
<th>Shipping (c)* (000s)</th>
<th>Rail &amp; Tram (a)</th>
<th>Rail &amp; Tram (b)</th>
<th>Other (c) (000s)</th>
<th>land (b)</th>
<th>transport (c) (000s)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1923</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>(94)</td>
<td>38.0</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>(51)</td>
<td>89.4</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>(14)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1928</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>(58)</td>
<td>38.4</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>(51)</td>
<td>116.1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>(12)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1929</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>-**</td>
<td>38.3</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>113.3</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1930</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>28.1</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>107.0</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1931</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>36.0</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>92.3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1932</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>33.0</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>91.9</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>-</td>
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<tr>
<td>1933</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>(55)</td>
<td>32.7</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>(51)</td>
<td>90.5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>(11)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1934</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>(55)</td>
<td>29.4</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>(51)</td>
<td>91.0</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>(10)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1935</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>(55)</td>
<td>26.4</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>(52)</td>
<td>97.4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>(10)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1936</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>(55)</td>
<td>27.4</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>(50)</td>
<td>94.9</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>(11)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1939</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>(60)</td>
<td>28.5</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>(51)</td>
<td>105.9</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>(13)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1940</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>(58)</td>
<td>29.2</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>(50)</td>
<td>101.4</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>(13)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1945</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>(45)</td>
<td>34.2</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>(50)</td>
<td>125.6</td>
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<td>(12)</td>
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<tr>
<td>1950</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>43.2</td>
<td>26</td>
<td></td>
<td>140.1</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* column (a) no of unions, (b) interstate duplication (usually through state branches) (c) no of unionists
** - = no data reported

Source: CBCS, *Labour Reports*, No.13 - No.43 (various)

The shift to rail and road reduced the shipping market and also changed its *composition*. Ships traditionally handled "modest quantities" of many cargoes on frequent and regular schedules.
Post-war vessels tended to load full cargoes at single ports with irregular sailing times. The appearance of the shift away from regular schedules of mixed cargoes made labour demand more uncertain and amplified the turn-round problems in ports designed for frequent schedules.26

In sum, the fall in freight movements during the depression was accompanied by a long term decline in long distance shipping. ASOF firms compensated by increasing market share (from 70–75 percent to 85 percent or more) and cost cutting by laying up vessels and labour intensification in production. For workers very high unemployment was disastrous. Union membership and density fell marked in the maritime industry and in general. Although recovery began in 1934–35 employment on the waterfront lagged at least eighteen months and only in 1937 did national unemployment fall below 10 percent.

1. Effects – The Aftermath of 1928

This section will examine more closely the post–1928 period on the waterfront in light of the discussion above. In chapter eleven I argued that employers adopted policies to weaken the WWF and the capacity of workers' for 'spontaneous' action. In this section, I examine their results.

The Transport Workers Act was the dominant mechanism of control for employers for more than a decade. By December 1928, 7,500 WWF men were excluded from work in the licensed ports. With labour force requirements of about 12,000 for these ports, more than 21,000 licenses were issued by December, rising to more than 27,000 by 30 June 1929 (see Table 12.6). This pattern continued for a decade where licenses issued bore little relation to labour requirements. By the mid–1930s WWF membership stood at about 10,00028 many of whom only worked intermittently.

Table: 12.6 Waterside Workers' Licenses Issued under Transport Workers' Act, 1928/29–1938/39 (to June 30)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Port</th>
<th>1928/9</th>
<th>29/30</th>
<th>30/1*</th>
<th>31/2</th>
<th>32/3</th>
<th>8/9/33+</th>
<th>33/4</th>
<th>34/5</th>
<th>35/6</th>
<th>36/7</th>
<th>37/8</th>
<th>38/9#</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Melb</td>
<td>10880</td>
<td>8267</td>
<td>5889</td>
<td>5140</td>
<td>4528</td>
<td>3562</td>
<td>4053</td>
<td>3960</td>
<td>6422</td>
<td>5293</td>
<td>7278</td>
<td>5772</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P/Adel</td>
<td>3456</td>
<td>3014</td>
<td>2233</td>
<td>1802</td>
<td>1632</td>
<td>1478</td>
<td>1516</td>
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<td>1342</td>
<td>1278</td>
<td>1264</td>
<td>1244</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F/tle</td>
<td>2882</td>
<td>1924</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N/tle</td>
<td>1574</td>
<td>1191</td>
<td>894</td>
<td>839</td>
<td>856</td>
<td>783</td>
<td>842</td>
<td>974</td>
<td>1053</td>
<td>1080</td>
<td>1232</td>
<td>1132</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bris</td>
<td>4649</td>
<td>2596</td>
<td>2694</td>
<td>2311</td>
<td>1917</td>
<td>1513</td>
<td>1722</td>
<td>3134</td>
<td>3590</td>
<td>2873</td>
<td>3460</td>
<td>3854</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T/le</td>
<td>1278</td>
<td>725</td>
<td>688</td>
<td>638</td>
<td>680</td>
<td>592</td>
<td>597</td>
<td>604</td>
<td>621</td>
<td>609</td>
<td>634</td>
<td>676</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L/da/Pt</td>
<td>618</td>
<td>98</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>40</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bowen</td>
<td>643</td>
<td>265</td>
<td>231</td>
<td>224</td>
<td>187</td>
<td>159</td>
<td>179</td>
<td>188</td>
<td>146</td>
<td>125</td>
<td>144</td>
<td>142</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Infail</td>
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</tr>
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<td>Goondi</td>
<td>1029</td>
<td>479</td>
<td>118</td>
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<td>135</td>
<td>108</td>
<td>154</td>
<td>148</td>
<td>190</td>
<td>194</td>
<td>141</td>
<td>138</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M/lyan</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B/berg</td>
<td>381</td>
<td>172</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>180</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>95</td>
<td>178</td>
<td>351</td>
<td>308</td>
<td>222</td>
<td>167</td>
<td>192</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pt Doug</td>
<td>113</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>27503</td>
<td>18757</td>
<td>12878</td>
<td>11444</td>
<td>10079</td>
<td>8360</td>
<td>9318</td>
<td>10836</td>
<td>13738</td>
<td>11745</td>
<td>1439</td>
<td>13215</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* from 19 Feb 1931 # to 31 March 1939 + date for registration under the WEC preference system

Source: Appendix to Lawson Report [1939] p.32, Australian Archives CA3712 Mercantile Marine Office
Brisbane Acc. BP107/4

The Act had two primary functions that altered the structure of the labour market, and represented the first step of state intervention in the industry. First, it sought to protect the 1928 volunteers, during and after the strike. The Bruce government publicly supported this position. Second, it replaced traditional avenues and methods of labour supply (stage 1 of the employment relation) and the role of the WWF. With the WWF stripped of preference, workers could no longer
be channelled through pre-entry requirements of the union (stage 2). The pick-up (stage 3) was exclusively under the authority of employers, particularly in labour bureau, which flowed into the labour process. For example to gain bureau registration the 450 WWF men in Brisbane had to sign an individual declaration to work "peacefully" with volunteers "strictly" under the Award and "to give good and reasonable service."^{

Table: 12.7 Volunteers 1928 and PCWLU and other labour at Licensed Ports (1928–30, 1931,1933,1938)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Port</th>
<th>Volunteers employed</th>
<th>(1)</th>
<th>(2)</th>
<th>(3)</th>
<th>(4)</th>
<th>(5)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Brisbane</td>
<td>1200</td>
<td>147</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>(750/853)</td>
<td>(120##)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(1083)</td>
<td></td>
<td>(550)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Townsville</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>35</td>
<td></td>
<td>5</td>
<td>(82)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(32)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Bowen</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>18</td>
<td></td>
<td>(89)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Lucinda Point</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td>(55)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Innisfail</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
<td>(37)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Urangan (Mary’h)</td>
<td>11</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Bundaberg</td>
<td>20</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(61)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Pt Douglas</td>
<td>10</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(–)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Pt Adelaide</td>
<td>650 (#875; +588,694,585)</td>
<td>184</td>
<td>(100)</td>
<td></td>
<td>(400/$400)</td>
<td>348/$387</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Newcastle</td>
<td>180</td>
<td></td>
<td>(70/$100)</td>
<td></td>
<td>63</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(300)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Melbourne</td>
<td>2000</td>
<td>700</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(1500/$1500)</td>
<td>¥c.800</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(665;$229)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>4260</td>
<td>309</td>
<td>94</td>
<td>(3177)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(2755 to 4834)</td>
<td>(61,885)</td>
<td>(512)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(¥4151)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

+ Brisbane put at 1066 (before 21 Oct) plus 17 after; and 2070 plus 159 at Melbourne, Lawson Report; figure of 694 used by Central Committee. Minutes 29 Jan 1929, p.146; Report by Ind. Registrar put total to 21 Oct 1928 at 585 Adel, 1,073 Bris and 2,227 in Melb.
++ reported statement from Anthony Ogden (sec Townsville WWF), Workers’ Weekly, 9 Nov 1928
* note that the names listed for Brisbane 1928–30 and 1931 are different
# RC on Waterfront (1930), p.17. An approximate figure in review of three other investigations (pp.20–21), puts the figure at 819, 585, and shipowners 550.
@ volunteers as of Aug 1930, but were additional P&C men in the port
© figure for 1932, P&C members probably in the majority; figures were taken from employer wage sheets; numbers for 1933 – 415, 1934 – 395
§ estimates (the Burnside Inquiry in 1936 found 387 volunteers at Port Adelaide)
ο figures in brackets in this column were handwritten on Proposals for dealing with waterfront (n.d. c. Nov 1929), WWF, Federal Office NBA/NBA T62/61/3

Unlike previous labour bureau, the authority of employers in the labour process was directly sanctioned by the state. The 1928 TWA regulations specifically identified waterside workers, under a general definition of 'transport worker'. Licenses could be cancelled by a licensing officer if such a worker "failed to comply with any lawful order or direction given in relation to his employment", refused to work under the Beeby award, intimidated other workers, or failed to produce the license to a licensing officer, "or any person thereunto authorized by him, or any officer of the police of the Commonwealth or of a State." The employers showed no hesitation in invoking these conditions, that threatened cancellation of six to twelve months (subject to Magistrates Court appeal).

The excess of licenses issued at prescribed ports created a large pool of readily available substitute labour that was a constant disciplinary threat to WWF and free labourers in the labour process. Centralised labour bureaus also restricted foremen's idiosyncratic hiring methods, because they were also targeted by employers in the restructuring of supervisory authority.

The large influx of non-union workers onto the waterfront had a profound effect on WWF membership and organisation. Table 12.7 provides estimates of non-WWF labour (P&C, volunteers and non-union) for selected years and Table 12.8 shows WWF Queensland branch membership from 1932 to 1939 compared to 1927. Also Table 12.8 gives the 1933 WWF membership compared to the number of licenses issued as at 8 September 1933, to indicate the scale of non-WWF workers. In 1933 only about 450 WWF members were registered at the Brisbane bureau and volunteers made up more than two-thirds of the 1200 strong employed labour force. Similarly, in north Queensland the WWF lost 50 percent or more of the work in the ports of Innisfail, Bowen, Bundaberg and Lucinda Point (where CSR refused to employ any WWF men).

Table 12.8 WWF Membership Queensland Ports, 1927, 1932–1939

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Port</th>
<th>Year (at 31 Dec)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1927</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brisbane</td>
<td>1673</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rockh'pton</td>
<td>222</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gladstone</td>
<td>83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mary'bgh</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bundaberg</td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Townsville</td>
<td>695</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cairns</td>
<td>412</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mackay</td>
<td>201</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thurs Is.</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pt Douglas</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cooktown</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lucinda Pt</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Innisfail</td>
<td>101</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bowen</td>
<td>[*80-100]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* licenses issued 8 Sept 1933 + est. based on the 1924 figure and figure given by Turley in 1934 @ refers to no. paid SMC levy # both years reported as financial members; 1936 entered only as a pencil note * of total number, reported that 159 not in possession of a [bureau] disc, 15 known to have left the industry; at the 1934 COM Conference in Melb only 4 Qld ports sent delegates - reported membership as, Brisbane, 579, Bundaberg, 37, Cairns, 326, Gladstone, 88 ** range of estimates


Over the long term the effect of the strike was significant for large branches. Brisbane membership grew steadily from 1902 to 1928 and totalled 1650 in August 1928. Six months later
it stood at less than 300 financial members and by the end of 1930, only 95 financial members remained, less than 1902. The reported number of 1053 in 1931, belied the reality that most men were either locked out for three years, had drifted away, or were otherwise unfinancial or inactive. Initially 469 WWF men were admitted by the Joint Committee of Waterside Employers (JCWE) to the bureau in 1928. Only another 129 WWF men were admitted for the next eleven years, of which only 58 were original WWF strikers. The WWF still had less than 500 members in 1937. In short, the branch was almost destroyed, with more than two-thirds of its members (c. 1,100 men) permanently excluded from work. The branch was weak for a decade and took more than 13 years to regain its pre-strike membership numbers.

The Port Phillip Stevedores branch folded less than two years later in an amalgamation with the Melbourne branch on 30 June 1930. Only a small minority of the more than 1500 Stevedores' membership survived the effects of the strike. The Melbourne union had only 1800 men on its books in 1934, for non-WWF men accounted for more than half of the labour force by 1933. It only slowly declined to about half by 1938. In Adelaide approximately one third of the labour force was non-WWF, falling to a quarter by 1938. Of the other TWA licensed ports Lucinda Point was forced to close, and although the rest retained members some, such as Innisfail, were very weak.

The 7,500 WWF members without work were in distress at the end of 1928, before the depression struck in mid-1929. A brief examination of the position of workers demonstrates the effects. The destitution of waterside workers was widespread. Data used by the Arbitration Court in 1931–2 indicated that in eleven of the larger ports, there was an 'oversupply' of 32.7 percent of Federation men. Added to that were 1,500 scabs (in 4 ports). Beeby estimated there were over 4,000 WWF men not needed or 61.6 percent of the members. National data on WWF unemployment by state (Table 12.9) indicates similar results. WWF members endured more than twice the general rate of unemployment, higher in Vic. Qld and S Aust., where the TWA had the greatest impact.

### Table: 12.9 Rate of Unemployment, WWF members by state, 1931*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>State</th>
<th>Members</th>
<th>Unemployed</th>
<th>Rate (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>New South Wales</td>
<td>5,161</td>
<td>3,275</td>
<td>63.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Victoria</td>
<td>2,738</td>
<td>2,400</td>
<td>87.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Queensland</td>
<td>3,425</td>
<td>2,143</td>
<td>62.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Australia</td>
<td>2,356</td>
<td>1,952</td>
<td>82.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Western Australia</td>
<td>2,254</td>
<td>1,240</td>
<td>55.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tasmania</td>
<td>1,224</td>
<td>506</td>
<td>41.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commonwealth</td>
<td>17,158</td>
<td>11,516</td>
<td>67.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* figures for Mar/Apr and were approximations

The experience of the Queensland men is documented in sustenance claims under the Unemployed Workers Insurance Act (1922) reported in Table 12.10. Even under normal conditions they could claim payments since irregular work resulted in periods of unemployment. Applicants for 1927–28 (year to 1 April) almost equalled the WWF Qld membership in 1927 but jumped 40 percent (or 1,428 men) in 1928–29 resulting in an additional £14,210 in payments. Applicants declined over the next two years, indicating a drift away from the industry. The figures thereafter reflect severe Government cuts in 1931.
Earnings data collected by the Queensland Dept of Labour and Industry further indicates the plight of waterside worker applicants. Table 12.11 shows that with the basic wage at £4 9s. p.w. (£230 p.a.) in 1930 more than 70 percent of waterside workers (2,700 men) who claimed sustenance earned less than this wage. One in seven, or 569 men, earned less than half the basic wage. By 1933 almost all watersiders, still eligible to claim benefits, earned less than the basic wage of approximately £200 p.a. for that year.

The employers wage statistics indicate similar earnings. All Brisbane men averaged only £2/18/5 per week in 1930 falling to £2/10/11 in 1932. Moreover the influence of free labour was reflected in the payments. In the licensed port of Bowen three times as many workers claimed relief compared to the non-TWA Gladstone. In 1932 no WWF member in Bowen earned the basic wage from waterside work, only three of 68 men earned more than £100.

Table 12.10 Unemployment Insurance Applicants and Payments, Queensland, 1927-1934 (Waterside workers)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year (to 31 Mar)</th>
<th>Number of Applicants</th>
<th>Amount Paid (£)</th>
<th>Annual Average Per Worker (£/s/d)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1927-28</td>
<td>3,571</td>
<td>28,934</td>
<td>8/2/–</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1928-29</td>
<td>4,999</td>
<td>43,144</td>
<td>8/12/–</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1929-30</td>
<td>3,889</td>
<td>39,192</td>
<td>10/1/–</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1930-31</td>
<td>3,463</td>
<td>37,794</td>
<td>10/18/–</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1931-32</td>
<td>2,254</td>
<td>7,904</td>
<td>3/10/–</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1932-33</td>
<td>1,657</td>
<td>7,084</td>
<td>4/5/–</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1933-34</td>
<td>1,770</td>
<td>6,409</td>
<td>3/12/–</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Compiled from Seventh and Eleventh Annual Report on Operations of the Unemployed Workers Insurance Act, 21 Oct 1930, Table 15 (by occupation), QPPs, 1930, Vol 2, p.225; and 2 Nov 1934, Tables 12,13, (by occupation) QPPs, 1934, Vol 2, pp.245-246

Table 12.11 Annual Earnings of Sustenance Applicants (Waterside Workers), Queensland, 1929-30 and 1933-35

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level of earning (£)</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>1929-30</th>
<th>Cumulative (%)</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>1933-34</th>
<th>Cumulative (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0-60</td>
<td>233</td>
<td>6.1</td>
<td>6.1</td>
<td>247</td>
<td>14.0</td>
<td>14.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>61-100</td>
<td>336</td>
<td>8.9</td>
<td>15.0</td>
<td>206</td>
<td>11.6</td>
<td>25.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>101-160</td>
<td>1090</td>
<td>27.5</td>
<td>42.5</td>
<td>795</td>
<td>44.9</td>
<td>70.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>161-200</td>
<td>1081</td>
<td>27.8</td>
<td>70.3</td>
<td>372</td>
<td>21.0</td>
<td>91.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>201-300</td>
<td>1103</td>
<td>28.5</td>
<td>98.8</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>8.5</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>301 &amp; over</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>1.2</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>nil</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>3,889</td>
<td>100</td>
<td></td>
<td>1,770</td>
<td>100</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level of earning (£)</th>
<th>(q3494)</th>
<th>(b3436)</th>
<th>(c2259)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0-60</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>61-100</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>101-160</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>161-200</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>201-300</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>301 &amp; over</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

a WWF membership for 1927-28 highest figures used in 1928-29 (from Returns to Industrial Registrar) reduced by 10% for a discouraged worker effect of the beginning of the depression
b no. of TWA licences issued as of 8 Sept 1933 (from Lawson Report)

In short, there was widespread poverty amongst WWF men, and the meagre sustenance payments did little to alleviate this or realistically boost annual earnings. Employers remained steadfast in their policy of preference for (efficient) volunteers and effectively excluded many WWF men from work.

In the licensed port of Pt Adelaide, WWF men accounted for two-thirds and volunteers less than a third of the labour force. The union men averaged less than £3 a week in the latter part of 1928 and the volunteers' more than £5. Six months later the difference had narrowed (£3/2/4 for
WWF and £4/1/3 for volunteers) but the employers' monitoring still showed large disparities. In 1930, the volunteers were allocated over 74 percent of the available work. This maldistribution was a continuing source of dissension on the waterfront through the depression. Volunteers in Melbourne were allocated two-thirds (63.34%) of the work yet were about 40 percent of the labour force. With unemployment above 80 percent, poverty was widespread and even the Melbourne PCWLU approached the employers in mid-1929 for assistance for unemployed members with families. The Victorian Minister of Sustenance Kent Hughes, urged shipowners to adopt a more even distribution of work in 1933 only to be sharply rebuffed. In non-licensed Sydney, the earnings of 'bull' workers were often above the basic wage condemning most workers to low earnings. Union militant Jim Healy averaged £1/15/- a week in Sydney immediately before his election to general secretary in 1937. Even income from pilferage declined dramatically, with pilage falling by at least 40 percent in several ports after the strike.

More than six years after the strike the WWF federal COM reported the loss of more than 8,000 members and three branches were defunct. Table 12.12 shows that most branches lost members between 1928 and 1934, particularly in the eleven licensed ports (where the 1932 active membership in Brisbane, Pt Adelaide, Newcastle and Melbourne suffered large losses). The union revenue dropped by a third. Only seven ports increased membership and Geelong joined the WWF. But despite the decline, union density still remained high, probably two-thirds overall in 1934–1935 indicating that union activity or effectiveness suffered most during the 1930s.

Table: 12.12 WWF Membership by Branch, 1928, 1932 and 1934

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Port</th>
<th>1928</th>
<th>1932#</th>
<th>1934</th>
<th>Port</th>
<th>1928</th>
<th>1932</th>
<th>1934</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Albany</td>
<td>131</td>
<td>146</td>
<td></td>
<td>*Port Douglas</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>22</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Beauty Point</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>497</td>
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<td>430</td>
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<tr>
<td>*Bowen</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>52</td>
<td></td>
<td>Port Lincoln</td>
<td>138</td>
<td>118</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*Bundaberg</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>38</td>
<td></td>
<td>Port Stephens</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>52</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
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<td>532</td>
<td>Port Fairy</td>
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<td>13</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Bunbury</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Cairns</td>
<td>350</td>
<td>309</td>
<td></td>
<td>Stanley</td>
<td>75</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cooktown</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>21</td>
<td></td>
<td>Sydney</td>
<td>4400</td>
<td>4100</td>
<td>3137</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Devonport</td>
<td>127</td>
<td>100</td>
<td></td>
<td>South Coast</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>75</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Esperance</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>50</td>
<td></td>
<td>Thursday Is.</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>21</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Geraldton</td>
<td>175</td>
<td>175</td>
<td>182</td>
<td>*Townsville</td>
<td>600</td>
<td>509</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gladstone</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>86</td>
<td></td>
<td>Thevenard</td>
<td>119</td>
<td>88</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Geelong</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>308</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>Ulverstone</td>
<td>67</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Hobart</td>
<td>389</td>
<td>408</td>
<td>400</td>
<td>Wallaroo</td>
<td>415</td>
<td>250</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*Innisfail</td>
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<td>68</td>
<td></td>
<td>Warrnambool</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>40</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>King Island</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>22</td>
<td></td>
<td>Sub–total</td>
<td>15,522</td>
<td>10,599</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Launceston</td>
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<td>139</td>
<td>136</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mackay</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>307</td>
<td></td>
<td>*PP St'dores</td>
<td>1567</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*Maryborough</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>36</td>
<td></td>
<td>North Coast</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>–</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*Melbourne</td>
<td>1554</td>
<td>2000</td>
<td>430</td>
<td>*Lucinda Point</td>
<td>94</td>
<td>–</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*N’lle Wf Lab.</td>
<td>290</td>
<td>195</td>
<td>288</td>
<td>Fremantle</td>
<td>1482</td>
<td>1400</td>
<td>–</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*N’lle Coal T's</td>
<td>396</td>
<td>339</td>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>18,701</td>
<td>(-8102)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*Port Adelaide</td>
<td>2010</td>
<td>1100</td>
<td>1023</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Port Augusta</td>
<td>116</td>
<td>96</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Licensed Ports under the Transport Workers Act 1928–29; two branches in Newcastle and Melbourne (the Stevedores disbanded)
# Reported as active members seeking work

The effects in individual branches differed greatly. The Port Phillip Stevedores were destroyed, with most of its 1,567 members of 1928 lost, despite amalgamation with Melbourne. The 1933 Australian Census reported 345 stevedores in Victoria (and 2,299 wharf labourers) which is only a fall of 15 percent on the combined total of the branches in 1928, but most were volunteers. There were 533 stevedores reported nationally, only 93 (17.4%) of which were married, compared to 67.7 percent of waterside workers. Thus it is likely that the married men, more likely be concerned with earning the basic wage, no longer considered themselves stevedores and left the industry.

The organisational capacity of the union was weakened. The loss of revenue as noted was large. Large branches — such as Melbourne, Port Adelaide, Brisbane, suffered from the strike, but others, like Sydney and Fremantle, asserted their autonomy. Lack of funds and localism saw the 1931 national conference abandoned, and a national vote was against the 1933 conference. The recalcitrance of many branches to pay dues and continuing legal costs kept the union in financial trouble. Despite action to recover arrears from branches such as Sydney and Fremantle, more than £4,000 remained outstanding from branches in mid-1934, about £800 from Sydney alone. Indeed, it was unable to prevent the withdrawal of the Fremantle branch in 1933. Many Queensland branches proposed to breakaway at a July 1932 state conference, charging Turley with betrayal of the Queensland branches. They pushed for the use of the State Executives. Federal COM attempt to curb the role of State Executives later that year was lost. A States Rights Movement was established in NSW, led by a faction in the Sydney branch. Neither of the latter proposals were adopted, but they too were symptomatic of the sentiment back to local autonomy.

Despite financial constraints, the branches agreed to a national conference in 1934 which was attended by representatives from only twenty ports. Held in June, it focused on organisational and policy issues. The tensions between centralisation and localism were immediately apparent. Support for an industry wide Transport federation was combined with proposals for the decentralisation of the WWF in which the COM would be abolished and replaced by an annual policy conference combined with state or branch autonomy to govern the union. The former was supported, while the latter was rejected in favour of a stronger role of state executives and branch representatives. Turley viewed the transport alliance concept as "probably the most important" aspect of the conference, ironically declaring that "direct contact with the Rank and file of the organisations concerned is essential." There was also unanimous support for Fremantle to return to the Federation. Although the subsequent letter to Fremantle by Turley and the COM was not as conciliatory as the support suggested. Indeed Turley viewed it as a P&C port and felt that the Federation would be justified in forming its own branch in Fremantle.

In sum, the combination of the loss of the 1928 strike and the depression had severe effects on the WWF and its members. The maritime industry was sensitive to cyclical economic downturns in the normal course of events, but the strategic effect of the employers' co-ordinated labour policy was clear. Under pressure the Federation lacked national co-ordination, as internal tensions resulted in greater local autonomy. Even rule changes which flowed from the 1934 conference were disputed. It was under these conditions that the attraction of radical ideas grew through the 1930s.

A final effect must be noted. The tensions of national organisation and localism in evidence over earlier decades continued to generate strong cultural norms. Not surprisingly the larger
licensed ports were at the centre of both the dispute and its aftermath. Melbourne suffered half of the Federation's losses, thus the social, psychological and cultural effects were most acutely felt. The violence seen during the dispute continued in Melbourne and several other ports. It was sustained by informal relations between workers, which spread into the community. Continuing violence against scab free labour may therefore be seen as an index of the strength of direct enforcement of norms under informalism. A participant in Melbourne explains,

We never spoke to the scabs. They weren't allowed to drink on the waterfront. No scab would dare go into one of those pubs... Wherever we met scabs they would be attacked.

This deep hatred of scabs don't exist today [early 1980s]. There was no excuse for a scab then. He scabbed and that was it. It didn't matter what reason there was, what economic pressure. Not all of the wharfies were militants, by no means. But there was this immense tradition against scabbing.

as soon as you did that [join the P & C union] you were a scab. The bitterness was terrible. There was no question of joining the P and C. We'd rather starve. People did starve.67

Months after the strike's end Melbourne shipowners needed more volunteers because Federation men refused to offer for engagement, work "amicably with volunteers", or discontinue "intimidation tactics".68 A similar situation was found in Pt Adelaide, where abuse and continuing violence against free labourers was common. WWF men refused to "abstain from intimidation," and employers had to recruit replacement volunteers after the strike to replace those intimidated.69 More than two years later Judge Kelly wrote,

so long as the volunteer labour is being employed the police protection will, in my view based upon close study of the conditions at Port Adelaide, have to be maintained.... But the fact of their ["irritations"] existence and occurrence will make it clear that if law and order are to be maintained the withdrawal of police protection is impossible. No guarantees given by the federation [WWF] or the "volunteer Union" [P&C] can be effective security against such acts of irritation and hostility.70

Violence against volunteers was a regular occurrence in Newcastle over several years. Almost three years after the strike Newcastle branch threatened the local Chamber of Commerce with action by all of the industrial movement unless the volunteers were removed.71

Indeed there were many complaints about the use of volunteers by local small businesses. In Pt Adelaide, complaints were made that the volunteers spent their wages outside the Port community because they lived outside it.72 Local tradesmen were reported to have sided with waterside workers' action against volunteers two years after the strike.73 In mid–1931 the Pt Adelaide Mayor led a stopwork meeting attended by businessmen and unionists in support the WWF cause.74 Similarly, a deputation of local Port Melbourne shopkeepers and small businessmen met Premier William McPherson in May 1929, complaining of the adverse effects of unemployment amongst the Stevedores.75 Unemployment and underemployment of waterside workers also meant much larger credit overheads. Butchers, grocers and bakers extended credit to workers voluntarily or were intimidated to do so. The credit gained allowed the community to remain intact.76

Allegations emerged in Melbourne and Pt Adelaide that the volunteers were mostly foreigners reinforced cultural solidarity (and racism) against outsiders and shipowners. But only about 75 of 550 men in Adelaide were southern Europeans, but the shipowners still cancelled bureau preference of "a number" of foreign–born workers by the end of 1930. They failed an English language test, and were thus deemed incapable of doing the work.77 Yet in 1935, 76
foreigners were on the Adelaide waterfront, 34 of whom had taken out citizenship. In Melbourne, the number of non-British workers was higher, although still a clear minority.

Two key points may be made here; first, sanctions against scabs, seen as 'outsiders', were essentially individual or small group based action. Informal mateship and 'spontaneous' action occurred without union involvement. Second, this work related, or 'industrial,' action was embedded in community norms and was perceived to be serving local interests. This underpinned its legitimacy. The scabs were not part of the Port Melbourne or Pt Adelaide waterfront communities, lived in other areas, and thus were excluded and ostracised wherever possible. Support for local workers was primary, including by local business. Recall also that local community ties and industrial solidarity in Fremantle was successfully blocked the employment of volunteers.

Indeed Fremantle remained an exemplar of the strength of informal relations embedded in the local community. A key factor was the residential pattern of the geographically isolated Fremantle. About half of the Fremantle lumpers lived within walking distance of the wharves — less than two miles, and 75 percent lived in Fremantle or East, South, or North Fremantle. Intergenerational recruitment was extensive — in 1936 almost two-thirds (62.5%) of the men had the same surname as one or more others and thirty pairs of members lived at the same address, many others were father and son or siblings. Multiple family names living in Fremantle and adjoining suburbs were common through this period at the port.

The cultural effects in Brisbane were not as potent as in other large licensed ports. Violence was isolated, but recall that workers were more dispersed into suburbs in Brisbane by the 1920s. The strength of traditional waterfront community ties and norms declined, but some areas (such as Spring Hill, Newstead and South Brisbane) remained identified with waterside workers until well after WWII. P&G officials still complained four years after the strike that "stevedores [ie waterside workers] are still very aggressive towards the volunteers" who were "resentful when subjected to shouting and abuse." But political ideology was more influential in much of the Queensland labour movement — which shifted the basis of action away from the spontaneity of informalism. Rechter’s distinction between "impetuous and spontaneous" militancy (in Melbourne and Adelaide) and "organised and orderly" militancy (in Brisbane and Queensland generally) accurately captures the phenomenon but it is left unexplained.

2. Summary

In summary a number of points can be made. The dual structure of regulation identified in the earlier period was effectively re-established through the 1930s. On the one side, market concentration rose during the depression, with ASOF companies controlling up to ninety percent of the Australian shipping freight market. The state sanctioned conference system saw British overseas companies dominate the overseas market. On the other side, industrial relations policy was more centralised through the consolidation of the Central Committee, State and port committee structure. The co-ordination of the employers labour policy was tight and operated through the federal award.

But a marked difference in the overall freight market had emerged — the relative decline of water transport in the Australian interstate transport. Paradoxically the depression allowed the employers to press home their advantage over labour but in doing so hastened the demise of the
interstate shipping. The broad measures outlined above, the lack of investment in ships, inadequate port facilities and stevedoring technology, came into clear relief during and after WWII.

For the WWF and its members, the loss of the 1928 strike and the depression were disastrous. The effects of the two are difficult to disentangle, however it is clear that the combined effects placed the union in a very weak position for more than a decade. The rest of the chapter examines the response of the union and the shape of industrial relations in the industry until the mid-1930s in dealing with the conditions examined in this section. It was a turning point in the development of union strategy and organisation. While spontaneous, syndicalist direct action was not eliminated from the waterfront it became increasingly clear that it was an inadequate basis to deal with a formalised industrial relations system. A new era on the waterfront was to develop on the basis of the experience of the post-1928 period.

The experience was shaped by the loss of the possibilities inherent in the long-term centralisation of hiring and allocation of labour. The employment relation was not developed to any significant extent, for the employers remained preoccupied with maintaining a divided labour force. The potential of more formalised control-systems and labour relations were overlooked by the employers when they reverted to the bull-system, cost minimisation, labour intensification and the distortion of informality that this entailed. Indeed it was these policies that created an inadequate waterfront industry to meet the demands of WWII and beyond and precipitated further state intervention to restructure the industry.

III. Conflict and the Depression

The federal union found it difficult to combat shipowners after the loss of the 1928 strike. Branches were pushed back onto their own resources, which often lead to the claim for autonomy over the federal WWF, as in Fremantle and Sydney. Some smaller non-licensed Queensland ports followed suit, as well as ports such as Townsville. Small ports had little choice but to avoid action that may attract TWA licensing. The depression also severely affected union organisational capacities and its financial resources drained. Sydney, Fremantle, and several Queensland ports all fell into arrears in payments, and branches such as Melbourne, Brisbane and Pt Adelaide could only pay nominal amounts given the loss of financial members.

Recall, the employers' labour policy, developed 1927–28, had three main objectives, decrease disputation and stoppages, increase work 'efficiency' (seen by employers to be the rate of work) and finally, counter and eliminate the 'job control' aboard ship and on the waterfront. In this shipowners were largely successful. Although over time these objectives were more difficult to maintain. This section examines the shape of industrial conflict from 1929 to 1935.

Reported industrial disputes in the maritime industry fell dramatically in the 1930s. The TWA definition of a transport worker potentially covered any worker remotely connected with sea transport, thus threatening any occupational group with licensing. The absence in industrial disputes during the 1930s shown in Table 12.13 demonstrates the effects. The number of disputes, worker involvement and WDL all fell in shipping in the decade after 1928. There were only a handful of disputes in the depths of the depression from 1929 to 1933, with none in 1933.
Table: 12.13 Industrial Disputation CBCS Industry Group XI (shipping, wharf labour, etc) Australia, 1928–1954 (selected years)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Number of Disputes</th>
<th>Workers Involved</th>
<th>Working Days Lost</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Directly</td>
<td>Indirectly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1928</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>9,324</td>
<td>7,042</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1929</td>
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<td>91</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1930</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1,582</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1931</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>536</td>
<td>352</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1932</td>
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<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1935</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>5,040</td>
<td>961</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1936</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1937</td>
<td>5</td>
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<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1938</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>328</td>
<td>1,542</td>
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<tr>
<td>1939</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1,699</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1940</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>736</td>
<td>794</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1945</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>19,400</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1950</td>
<td>128</td>
<td>64,604</td>
<td>152</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1953</td>
<td>(S*)268</td>
<td>141,027</td>
<td>153</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1954</td>
<td>(S)123</td>
<td>44,978</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* S indicates separate statistics for stevedoring industry

Source: Compiled from CBCS, Labour Reports, Nos 19–39, 1928–1954

Only the seamen's strike of 1935 and the Port Kembla dispute over the loading of pig-iron exports to Japan in 1938–39 provided notable disruptions over the 1930s. In short, when measured by recorded disputes the employers' labour market policy from 1928 was very successful. In 1939 Senator Lawson observed that the TWA was "most effective in the preservation of peace on the waterfront, no strike having taken place since the Act was imposed in 1928." While it was incorrect, the statement did reflect the situation. One Sydney foreman reflected that the "year 1936 marked the zenith of employer-power along the Sydney waterfront". The same could be said for ports all around the country. The impact of the employers' policy in the labour process is less clear cut.

1. Labour Process Conditions in Stevedoring

The work rate in stevedoring rose significantly after 1928. Both workers and employers agreed. The 1929 and 1930 ASOF Annual Reports indicated that work in licensed ports continued "efficiently and with [an] entire absence of delays or stoppages of work", and in Federation ports "an improvement in despatch [sic] and ... [with] much less friction than formerly." Such improvement was achieved with no change in work methods, equipment, or gang sizes.

The employers' evidence to the Arbitration Court indicated work rate increases of 3 to 300 percent from 1920s to 1932. In Brisbane the work rate in the overseas trade had increased 9 percent, in the interstate trade by 3 percent; Melbourne 41 percent and 175 percent respectively; Sydney, 18 and 26 percent and Adelaide 4 percent on interstate work. The most dramatic rises were reported at the North Queensland 'problem' ports of the shipowners. At Lucinda Point the work rate rose between 235 to 300 percent (from 15 tons/hr to 35.37 with 18 man gangs and 33.5 tons/hr with 16–17 man gangs) under the contract system. At Goondi the rate increased 197 percent. Judge Beeby concluded that the "main purpose of the 1928 award has been achieved."
However, work rate rises did not indicate greater efficiency since greater effort input was the only factor variation in the short run.\textsuperscript{92} There is little evidence of employer alteration of gang sizes, although some changes in labour utilisation were introduced under the award which served to increase effort input. Two considerations are, the difficulties in measuring effort\textsuperscript{93} and second, measuring the effects on workers. In the first instance the rise in work rates required at least some greater effort expenditure. Workers repeatedly reported significant increases in labour intensity or undue strain under the 'Dog Collar Act'\textsuperscript{94} – the "slather and whack"\textsuperscript{95} system was widespread. In Brisbane 'larger slings, and speeding up' were common at certain wharves and the men are "so intimidated" they do nothing.\textsuperscript{96}

Second, the cumulative effect of labour intensification through the 1930s was manifested in the physical condition of many workers. In 1943 Dr Ronald Macqueen reported that premature aging, severe and permanent damage to limbs, high blood pressure, were all widespread among Sydney waterside workers aged between 40 and 60 years holding disability cards.\textsuperscript{97} Also evident was an "appalling" incidence of ulcers, "abundant" respiratory disease and serious hernias. Macqueen had expected to find malingerers was forced to conclude that casualism on the waterfront "had been paid for at the shocking price of premature old age and physical calamity" by the workers.\textsuperscript{98}

Table: 12.14 Age Distribution of Male Stevedores, Lumpers and Wharf Labourers (Australia) 1933 and Waterside Workers (selected years)

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Age Cohort</th>
<th>Occupation</th>
<th>(1933)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Coal St'dore</td>
<td>Lump'rs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10-14</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15-19</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20-24</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25-29</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30-34</td>
<td>33</td>
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<td>35-39</td>
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<td>40-44</td>
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<td>60-64</td>
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<td>35</td>
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<tr>
<td>65-69</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>70-&gt;</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N. S.</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>675</td>
<td>533</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* cumulative percentages in parenthesis  ** less than 0.1  # includes 20 waterside workers who identified themselves as employers

Source: Commonwealth of Australia, Census, Vol 2, 30 June 1933, Occupation Codes 742,743,744; ibid, Census 1921 Part xvii April 1921 Table 25 Occupation code nos. 329; ibid, Census, 30 June 1947, Vol 2, Table 11, code 570, pp.984-984; ASIA, Annual Report, 1958

The assessment of the employers' policy of raising efficiency must include two further considerations, the age of the labour force and the incidence of industrial injury. First, the aging of the labour force was more consistent with the exclusion of union activists, rather than ensuring a young and fit labour force. Table 12.14 indicates an aging that the labour force in 1933 compared to the age profile in 1911, 1921 and later 1947 and 1958.\textsuperscript{99} Before 1933 most of the labour force was younger than 40 years, falling to a little over a third in 1933. It was similar in 1947 but rose by
1958. In 1933 a third of the labour force was 50 or more years old (and over 36% in 1947) compared to 20 percent before 1920. Those over 60 hovered at 15 percent or more in the late 1940s. The average age of the 20,132 registered waterside workers in 1948 was 45 years.\textsuperscript{100}

The primary target of employers was not inefficient men but rather militants, many of whom were younger workers. Thus through the 1930s, despite some counterbalance of younger volunteers, the average age of workers rose, since employers continued their commitment to 1928 volunteers and recruited relatively few new workers.\textsuperscript{101} Moreover, many WWF branches, such as Sydney and Melbourne, closed their books for several years to protect the work of existing members. This halted recruitment of younger workers.\textsuperscript{102} In ports like Brisbane, north Queensland ports and Pt Adelaide, the employers strictly controlled labour entry the industry through their own registration requirements. The decline of men in their twenties points to a fall in recruitment in the five years to 1933, a trend that continued through the decade.

Furthermore, the effects of the closure of union books maybe seen in the comparison of the membership tenure in Gladstone (non-licensed) and Bowen (licensed) (Table 12.15). The WWF covered all workers in the former and approximately half in the latter. Where the WWF recruited regularly through the 1930s in Gladstone, Bowen saw only ten members admitted between 1925 and 1936.\textsuperscript{103} By the end of the 1930s more than 40 percent of the Bowen branch had more than 15 years service. This figure would have been higher but for an intake in 1938.

| Table: 12.15 Membership Tenure, WWF (Gladstone and Bowen branches, 1940) |
|---------------------------|------|--------|--------|
| Years Membership          | No.  | Gladstone | No. | Bowon | Percent* |
| <5                       |      |          | 5    | 3.8  |            |
| 1-3                      | 4    | 3.1      | 30   | 44.1 |            |
| 4-5                      | 50   | 38.5     | 6    | 8.8  |            |
| 6-10                     | 21   | 16.2     | -    | -    |            |
| 11-15                    | 5    | 3.8      | 4    | 5.8  |            |
| 16-20                    | 17   | 13.1     | 7    | 10.3 |            |
| 21-25                    | 17   | 13.1     | 11   | 16.2 |            |
| >25                      | 11   | 8.3      | 10   | 14.7 |            |
| Total                    | 130  | *100.1   | 68   | *99.9 |            |

* rounding error

Source: Qld State Industrial Registry, Application No.141 of 1933 File, Membership returns

The second factor related to increased work rates is the incidence of industrial injuries. I briefly noted in chapter eleven anecdotal press reports of more work accidents due to the employment of inexperienced volunteers.\textsuperscript{104} Table 12.16 repeats the procedure in Table 11.4 (thus allows a comparison with 1918-19 to 1927-28) in presenting accident and fatalities data for Queensland (with seven of the eleven TWA licensed ports) over the 1930s. The first three columns report official insurance data, the others estimate accident and mortality rates.\textsuperscript{105}

The data indicates that the accident rate (per thousand workers) after 1928 was about 45 percent higher than the earlier decade, although the rate of fatalities fell approximately 17 percent. Moreover, the higher rate after 1928 increased through the 1930s and thus was not an artefact of the initial inexperience of volunteers during the strike, nor only labour intensification during the depression, but a long-run trend of intensification and coercion in the labour process over the interwar period. While inexperience did cause accidents, long working hours, poor working conditions, poor equipment, and faster work rates also contributed. Brisbane secretary Andy Brown reported to the COM that "accidents are numerous, and the speeding up ... must cost the State a
considerable sum in compensation for preventable accidents." This was confirmed, when the Brisbane JCWE attempted to lower State Insurance Commission compensation premiums in early 1932. It was rejected, since over three years (to June 1931) premiums fell 48 percent because of lower employment. But claims had fallen only 34 percent and the ratio of claims to premiums had risen from 69.9 percent to 89 percent. Poor working conditions were reported by Senators Lawson and Senator Macdonald, in their investigations into waterfront conditions in 1939. The ageing of waterside workers in the 1930s also contributed to the higher accident rate.

Table: 12.16 Industrial Accidents, Queensland Waterfront 1928–29 to 1938–39 and Estimated Accident and Mortality rates

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Fatal</th>
<th>Non-Fatal</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Labour force</th>
<th>Accident Rate per '000</th>
<th>Mortality Rate per '000</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1928–29</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>653</td>
<td>660</td>
<td>3,882*</td>
<td>170.0</td>
<td>1.80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1929–30</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>646</td>
<td>651</td>
<td>3,494</td>
<td>186.3</td>
<td>1.43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1930–31</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>556</td>
<td>558</td>
<td>3,145</td>
<td>177.4</td>
<td>0.63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1931–32</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>609</td>
<td>610</td>
<td>3,494</td>
<td>174.4</td>
<td>0.28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1932–33</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>554</td>
<td>557</td>
<td>3,436#</td>
<td>162.1</td>
<td>0.87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1933–34</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>562</td>
<td>567</td>
<td>3,366</td>
<td>168.4</td>
<td>1.49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1934–35</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>654</td>
<td>661</td>
<td>3,015</td>
<td>219.2</td>
<td>2.32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1935–36</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>870</td>
<td>873</td>
<td>2,912</td>
<td>299.8</td>
<td>1.03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1936–37</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>907</td>
<td>911</td>
<td>3,187</td>
<td>285.8</td>
<td>1.26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1937–38</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>841</td>
<td>844</td>
<td>3,337</td>
<td>252.9</td>
<td>0.89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1938–39</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>947</td>
<td>949</td>
<td>3,296</td>
<td>287.9</td>
<td>0.61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>7799</td>
<td>7841</td>
<td>(av.3.324)</td>
<td>(av.2.214)</td>
<td>(av.1.14)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* 1927–28 highest figures used in 1928–29 (Table 10.8), from 1929–30, reduced by 10% per year to 1931, then increased by 10% # 2,440 Queensland waterside workers reported in the 1933 Census, and 3,436 in Sept 1933 TWA licenses. For the following years, the difference between the two figures (1,196) is reduced by 100 per year.


In sum, wages, work conditions, safety and waterfront workers' health deteriorated markedly after 1928, as a result of economic depression and the increased managerial power. For employers, the large number of new inexperienced workers, and in some cases, supervisors, was a problem for some time. The TWA gave employers a significant tool of labour intensification and legal sanctions including the threat of suspension or substitution in licensed ports or the introduction of the TWA in others. The TWA was the key coercive instrument which markedly altered the distribution of industrial authority. In this environment a crucial effect was the absence of any interport industrial action by the WWF for a decade. Yet resistance continued over a wide range of local issues involving particular vessels or trades.

2. Labour Discontent and Resistance

Although the official statistics indicated that strikes on the waterfront disappeared through the 1930s, industrial conflict and disputation continued. Given the irregularity and uncertainty of demand in the waterfront labour market, employers still required Federation men in licensed ports (even those who were excluded) despite the marked fall in labour demand. High unemployment during the depression provided few alternative work opportunities. In other words, many Federation men remained attached to the labour market despite chronic underemployment.

Under these circumstances labour discontent was not only widespread but also generated continually by the daily experience of little work and low earnings. For months and years after the 1928 strike ended, the main licensed ports of Pt Adelaide, Melbourne, Brisbane and Newcastle
continued to see community-based violence and resistance in the workplace against scabs, by
individuals and small groups. Moreover resentment against the provisions of the federal award and
growing labour intensification was widespread. Thus discontent and conflict were seen in many
ports. As early as February 1929, OSRA and the State Committee in Adelaide complained to
Central Committee of frequent breaches of the Award and both called for "drastic action."\

As noted in earlier chapters it is difficult to collect accurate evidence of local disputes and
action due to the nature of the industry. However, with greater coordination of employer policy
came better information on such action reported to Central Committee.110 It may be assumed that
employers were keen to press their advantage (and report worker action) soon after the strike. Thus
data reported in Table 12.17 is likely to be more accurate than in other circumstances.111 It gives
details of disputes reported to Central Committee which involved a stoppage, loss of work time,
imposition of non-award work rules or violence, over a two year period after the strike. Claims not
involving any of these events have been excluded.

The scope of industrial action undertaken covered several areas. In the first place, action
against the employment of volunteers in the workplace. Direct attacks on scabs were reported in
three main licensed ports of Adelaide, Melbourne and Newcastle. Employers were forced to
maintain separate pick-ups and often keep men separated at work. The distribution of work and the
definition of volunteer worker were key issues that remained unresolved through the depression and
beyond, despite efforts of the Arbitration Court.

Second, disputes over award conditions continued through the worst years of the depression.
Indeed they became more frequent as the economy slowly improved in 1934 and after. Action over
the second pick-up in Fremantle, smokos in Adelaide and several Queensland ports, restriction of
sling loads in Fremantle, Hobart, Mackay and other ports were reported to Central Committee. The
Brisbane JCWE noted that disputes over award conditions in Mackay "which differ[ed] in certain
respects from those previously applicable" continued with the WWF branch secretary "very
antagonistic" to employers.112 In addition the shift work provision in the Award created claims
over meals, starting times, travelling payments and similar issues. Finally, practices designed to
maximise earnings, such as only offering for night work and not offering for undesirable cargoes
had occurred on the waterfront for many years. Maximising earnings for hours worked was a key
priority for many workers. However, several branches of the WWF adopted policies of rationing
work, by closing the books and also restricting men offering to three days a week, or using informal
rotary schemes.

Nevertheless the information clearly indicates that, first, industrial conflict and direct action
continued despite the weakened position of the WWF and the official government data. Second,
action was not confined to either licensed ports or unlicensed ports but spread across eleven ports.
By 1934 industrial action in more than twenty ports had been reported to Central Committee. If
claims or disputes which did not involve direct action are listed many more ports would be included.
Third, the action was local, covering discrete issues, usually involving small number of gangs or
men. Although union involvement was clearly evident in many cases, action in the second and third
categories outlined above were work control typical of informalism. Finally, employers and Central
Committee were forced to deal with continuing industrial conflict beyond the data reported here. In
short, industrial action, work control and resistance remained a feature of the labour process despite
the dominance of employers in the industry. Much action fell short of coordinated 'job control' type, but was similarly directed at work rules and conditions.

Table 12.17 Workplace Industrial Action and Stoppages, Waterside Workers, 1929–1930

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Month</th>
<th>Port</th>
<th>Action</th>
<th>Issue/details (if given)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1929</td>
<td>Jan</td>
<td>Pt Adelaide</td>
<td>Go-slow &amp; pillage</td>
<td>50% fall in WWF output; pillage up</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Feb</td>
<td>Port Pirie</td>
<td>Refusal to return to work</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Pt Adelaide</td>
<td>Refusal to work</td>
<td>with volunteers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Sydney</td>
<td>Breach of award</td>
<td>–</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Apr</td>
<td>Melbourne</td>
<td>Wilful damage</td>
<td>to stevedoring gear</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Hobart</td>
<td>Breach of award</td>
<td>–</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Nov</td>
<td>Fremantle</td>
<td>Breach of award (several)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Pt Adelaide</td>
<td>Breach of award</td>
<td>–</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Brisbane</td>
<td>Pillaging</td>
<td>report concern over losses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Rockhampton</td>
<td>Refusal to work</td>
<td>support man sacked after insulting foreman</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Dec</td>
<td>Newcastle</td>
<td>Refusal to work</td>
<td>no overtime offered</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Sydney</td>
<td>Not offering at pickup</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Sydney</td>
<td>Refusal to work</td>
<td>after 10 pm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Hobart</td>
<td>Stopping work (2 cases)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1930</td>
<td>Mar</td>
<td>Hobart</td>
<td>Refusal to work as ordered</td>
<td>3 men followed union advice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Pt Augusta</td>
<td>Not offering</td>
<td>2 gangs refused transfer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Hobart</td>
<td>Refusal to work as ordered</td>
<td>gang refused re-engagement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Apr</td>
<td>Hobart</td>
<td>Refusal to work as ordered</td>
<td>ordered by union official</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Hobart</td>
<td>Men knocked off</td>
<td>refused transfer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Port Pirie</td>
<td>Refusal to work as ordered</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Newcastle</td>
<td>Refusal to work</td>
<td>all employed or none then refused to work with volunteers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>May</td>
<td>Newcastle</td>
<td>Refusal to offer</td>
<td>–</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Melbourne</td>
<td>Attack on volunteers</td>
<td>–</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Newcastle</td>
<td>Breaches of award</td>
<td>concern at continuing breaches</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Fremantle</td>
<td>Not offering at pickup</td>
<td>Labour Day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Pt Adelaide</td>
<td>Go-slow</td>
<td>WWF men</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Hobart</td>
<td>Not offering</td>
<td>WWF branch orders men not to work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Hobart</td>
<td>Work-rule</td>
<td>WWF imposed sling load restrictions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Adelaide</td>
<td>Go-slow</td>
<td>4 men sacked for go-slow</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Pt Kembla</td>
<td>Stopped work</td>
<td>unauthorised stop–work by volunteers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>June</td>
<td>Pt Kembla</td>
<td>Stopped work</td>
<td>unauthorised stop–work by volunteers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Hobart</td>
<td>Threat to stop work</td>
<td>WWF men want seamen's work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Aug</td>
<td>Hobart</td>
<td>Refusal to work as ordered</td>
<td>not returned after breakfast re: pay</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Newcastle</td>
<td>Refusal to work</td>
<td>with volunteers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Adelaide</td>
<td>Strike</td>
<td>over employment of volunteers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sept</td>
<td>Melbourne</td>
<td>Attack on volunteers</td>
<td>16 volunteers attacked Yarra Sth bank</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Adelaide</td>
<td>Strike (continuing many references)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Newcastle</td>
<td>Refusal to work</td>
<td>with volunteers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Melbourne</td>
<td>Refusal to work</td>
<td>with volunteers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Sydney</td>
<td>Refusal to work</td>
<td>ban on vessels from Adelaide</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Newcastle</td>
<td>Refusal to work</td>
<td>with volunteers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Pt Adelaide</td>
<td>Strike (continuing)</td>
<td>shippers offer to cap volunteers earnings</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* - indicates that no details were given

Source: Compiled from reported incidents in Central Committee, Minutes, No.1–2, 1929–1931

Central Committee could do little to prevent this type of action, despite calls for more drastic action. In most cases the federal body recommended prosecution under the Award, TWA, other relevant legislation or exclusion from employment. The Brisbane employers' held forthom hopes
that "the success which has been obtained ... in the proceedings [Award penalties] both against the
Secretary and against the members of the Federation [in Mackay] will eventually result in a strict
adherence to the Award."113 Local industrial action formed a continuing background to employer
policy through the 1930s. It generated conditions for continuing demands for change in the
industrial and political arenas.

The continued employment of volunteers precipitated the only major strike in the first half of
the 1930s – in Adelaide in mid-1930. Despite promises given by shipowners and two years of
negotiations large numbers of volunteers remained on the waterfront. Moreover shipowners
employed 1300 volunteers on a permanent basis at £4/10/- a week in Melbourne and Pt Adelaide in
early 1930 to block Scullin government regulations. The slowdown in trade saw a sharp fall in the
work available in Adelaide which resulted significant losses in wage costs for shipowners.
Moreover WWF men lost work as all work was allocated to the 500 permanent men. Discontent
grew despite the Scullin Government's allocation of coal contract work to Federation members.
This was only partially successful.114 The State Premier pressed for more negotiations between the
parties under the Chairmanship of an Industrial Magistrate. Unsuccessful negotiations under SA
Industrial Court President Kelly took place in June, but he then reported proposals in late July.115
Further talks between the shipowners' State Committee, the Government and the Opposition
resulted in a proposal to limit weekly earnings of the volunteers to £3/10/- and allow all additional
work to go to WWF men. However on 27 August 1930, WWF men walked off the "Kooliga" and
stackers walked off sugar work. When volunteers were brought in, the drivers and carters walked
out. Central Committee initially instructed State Committee to insist on the government
maintaining "law and order" – that is supporting them. Reports of serious volatility in the situation
were discounted.116

The Police, the Government and the Opposition expressed concern. In negotiations over the
next two weeks the shipowners conceded neither their commitment to the volunteers or freedom of
engagement. The Adelaide WWF wanted the shipowners' allocation committee abolished (also
part of Judge Kelly's proposals), volunteers restricted and a more equal distribution of work.
Government threats to place all waterfront work under Harbours Board, charge employers for
police protection and to legislate if no solution was found, were deflated when upper house
(Legislative Council) members indicated they would block such actions. Moreover, OSRA and
ASOF threatened to boycott Pt Adelaide and so close the port in retaliation.117

As time passed the shipowners came under increasing pressure from adverse public opinion.
Politicians, church and community leaders all pressed for a compromise. Central Committee finally
agreed to cap weekly earnings at £3/10/- and the government announced a full Royal Commission
under Kelly (from 4 October) to look into the problems.118 The shipowners promise was not
strictly adhered to over the succeeding years as the volunteers continued to get the bulk of work.119
Although shipowners were able to close the port, to do so would have undermined their
legitimation. They were unable to maintain the position of enforcement of 'law and order' where the
allocation of work to volunteers had lead to publicly unacceptable inequities on the waterfront.

On two occasions in Fremantle shipowners again came under pressure from strong
community solidaristic support for workers. A strike by storemen in wharf wool stores threatened
to draw in wharf lumpers in late 1931. Fifteen months later in 1933 the lumpers refused to offer for
the second pick-up, which became a long standing issue in the port over the succeeding years. I shall consider this later in the chapter. Industrial resistance was not confined to the WWF. On several occasions reports of actions by volunteers or a combination of men were received by Central Committee. Employers in Brisbane became concerned in mid-1934 of rising costs despite the fall in wages, pointing to lower efficiency from go-slow practices by waterside workers. But two-thirds of the men were either P&C men or non-unionised. Investigation revealed that "slowing down ... whilst obviously existing, was very difficult to detect." AUSNCo was forced to employ additional foremen to counter the practice. The employers endorsed the procedure of written reports submitted to the Labour Bureau superintendent to discipline workers found to be engaging in go-slow practices. Go-slow tactics were used in many ports particularly Sydney and Fremantle.

3. Summary

The loss of the 1928 strike was clearly a significant industrial defeat and in many ways paralleled 1890. In particular the material losses of work, earnings, workplace safety, decline in the role of the union stood out. Moreover the effects of depression compounded these losses. It is difficult to disentangle the causal effects of industrial relations in this situation. For the employers, the gains in work rates and continuity were seen as positive and outweighed the problems with volunteers and continuing discontent. Industrial action and workplace resistance was not eliminated as the contingencies of the labour process generated the conditions for action. Employment conditions also pushed some volunteers into resistance. The cooperation required was overlayed by the continuing influence of strong informal ties and workplace norms. Discontent amongst Federation men over the scabs broadened the moral rationale for action. But by now the web of rules spawned by institutionalised industrial relations had further marginalised informal work control as a mode of organisation.

Employers were unable to eliminate work control, despite greatly diminished worker capacities to sustain it. Nevertheless it provided a context which delimited the boundaries of employer dominance. It was against this background that employers responded to industrial and political demands after 1928. Their assessment of waterfront labour and reaction to it, were deeply coloured by the experience of past years, which in turn compounded mutual suspicion. With diminished capacity to engage in national or port level action after 1928, the union turned to the political arena. The election of the Scullin Labor government in 1929 provided optimism for the union.

IV. Politics and Transport Workers' Regulations

The position of the Federation in general, and the branches in licensed ports in particular, was very weak after 1928. In the main licensed ports approximately 4,300 volunteers still remained on the waterfront at the end of February 1929. From 1929 politics was an important arena which shaped labour organisation and industrial relations on the waterfront. In a similar manner to the period after 1917, the employers labour bureaus were the key issue.

Not surprisingly, state Premiers were bitterly condemned by many in the labour movement, particularly Labor Premiers Hogan in Victoria and McCormack in Queensland for their inaction during and after the strike. SA Premier Butler was also not spared criticism. Only in Western Australia did the incumbent Collier government escape labour antipathy, largely through the
absence of free labour on the waterfront. Indeed the WWF leadership noted six months after the strike that the WA government had "materially assisted" the union in the past. Hogan began to question the extent of employer policies in the latter stages of the strike, as I noted in the previous chapter. He also recognised the political limits to state action, but still lost office.

Continuing discontent in the three main ports pushed PM Bruce and Attorney-General Latham to also question employer actions. Political pressure on the federal government to encourage industrial peace was heightened by an Industrial Peace Conference convened by Bruce in December 1928. In turn the Joint Management Committee, created by the national conference, pressured shipowners to negotiate waterfront arrangements. Thus by early 1929 the political climate was more conducive to negotiation in the aftermath of the strike. The long term role of volunteer labour was the central issue.

Initially volunteers found the work hard going, forcing shipowners to make unanticipated adjustments. In Adelaide volunteers were initially unable to cope with coal work forcing employers to introduce a training system. Although effective in raising productivity, the continued refusal of WWF men to work with volunteers and the shortage of competent foremen reduced the potential gains. The Brisbane interstate owners had recognised some weeks earlier the need to place WWF men with volunteers to provide training. They had therefore made the willingness to work with volunteers as a condition of admission to the bureau. In Melbourne, the owners used 'white-wingers' to train volunteers. But as I have pointed out resistance by WWF men to free labour continued.

Less than three months after the strike these shortcomings prompted employers to quietly withdraw their unconditional commitment to all volunteers. By early 1929 the Adelaide and Brisbane state committees had decided to weed out many volunteers. The Adelaide owners were especially keen to eliminate "the inefficient foreign element" and the Brisbane committee wanted to eliminate "unsuitable volunteers" on the basis of reports from direct employers. Moreover the Adelaide owners admitted more than 100 additional workers to the bureau to cover about 300 who had drifted away by February 1929. This action further inflamed the Adelaide situation because it contravened the employers undertaking at the end of the strike not to employ any additional non-union men. More importantly it broke an undertaking by local employers in November, and approved by Central Committee, to establish a second preference category for WWF labour (married men and returned soldiers) in the port. Not surprisingly the WWF believed it had first call for any additional recruitment after the strike ended. Inevitably violence continued against non-union labour in Adelaide.

The shipowners through Central Committee were not keen to take any initiative in the face of political and public pressure. The Committee had rejected WWF and ACTU requests for negotiations through October and November 1928. Although negotiations were eventually held in mid-December they were adjourned with no result. The shipowners then delayed recommencement of these talks. They also rejected ACTU initiatives and consistently refused to meet any branch separately through the first half of 1929.

With thousands of men still excluded from the waterfront by early 1929 and violence in Adelaide and Melbourne the Federal government was under pressure to address the waterfront problem. Latham sought a reply from employers over union and ACTU allegations about the
volunteers – new men were being employed and the WWF claimed free labour was only half as efficient as Federation men and pilferage had increased.\textsuperscript{135} Since the government had already limited its obligations to the ‘original’ volunteers (men employed before 21 October) Latham was concerned over any additional men hired, and instructed federal officials to inspect licensed ports.\textsuperscript{136} As I have shown, there was substance to these allegations. However the shipowners claimed in their reply to Latham that volunteers were "80% efficient."\textsuperscript{137}

Latham met Pt Adelaide WWF men in mid-January and then the State government. At meetings with ASOF chairman Elford later in the month and early February, Latham and PM Bruce were clearly displeased at the shipowners’ conduct. Latham threatened to embarrass them by making information about the Adelaide situation public. He repeated that the government had no obligation to the men employed after 21 October. In view of this attitude, shipowners rejected Latham’s request for exact details of volunteers in each port and refused to release any information to the SA government.\textsuperscript{138} The Adelaide owners remained adamant that they retain the right to replace volunteers with men of their choice, given the persistent resistance of WWF men to working with volunteers and the continued intimidation of these men. Central Committee was obliged to adopt the same policy, at least in dealing with the federal and state governments later in February.\textsuperscript{139}

Mindful of the political consequences, Central Committee approved the elimination of unsuitable volunteers in Brisbane provided it was done "by degrees." Not surprisingly the Committee was displeased when notified two weeks later that P&C complaints had appeared in the press over the dismissal of these men. Their displeasure was particularly acute since Latham was in Brisbane at the end of February.\textsuperscript{140} Further tensions between Melbourne and the state committees emerged later.

The Federal government duly incorporated the TWA regulations into the Act in March. Industrial relations continued to be a source of political problems for the government. Instability on the waterfront and the coal strike saw the government again forecast the abolition of arbitration, with the exception of the maritime industry. In view of the employers attitude, the Federation COM also turned to the government to facilitate negotiations with shipowners.\textsuperscript{141} Turley approached Latham over the condition of the Melbourne pick-up, (known as Hogan’s Flat) where shipowners or the state government still had not provided any facilities, and the continuing exclusion of thousands of union men from the industry.

In this context, Latham floated proposals for the joint regulation of the industry and the registration of waterside workers to shipowners and the WWF in April 1929. The government hoped to draw the parties together and alleviate some of the problems of casualism. Latham urged WWF leaders to bring "hostile factions" under "common control" of the union so it could compete with the "most efficient units" of volunteers.\textsuperscript{142} A formal proposal was submitted to the union based the registration of waterside workers, using the existing licensing system. Joint committees at each port would control the issuing and cancellation of licences and limit the number "upon an agreed basis" which wasn't specified.\textsuperscript{143}

Overseas companies supported the proposals, but again the Interstate owners and indeed Central Committee were more circumspect.\textsuperscript{144} Visiting British shipowner Sir Alan Anderson counselled conciliation with the union, although Central Committee baulked at negotiations. It also
recommended Anderson not contact Opposition Labor Leader Scullin. At the same time Elford remained in contact with Latham through 1929 concerning legislative proposals. For their part, the shipowners submitted proposals for legislation to specifically cover waterside workers, leaving seagoing workers under the arbitration system. Employers strongly resisted any suggestion that Latham's proposals involve any absorption of volunteers into the WWF. Latham's proposals did make provision for non-Federation representation on port committees but employers feared that the government's desire to quieten the waterfront may see it give in to this Federation demand.

The main priority for the WWF was the removal of scabs from the waterfront. Union leaders made numerous representations to state politicians, but were only successful in gaining some government related work for WWF men. While the Latham proposals offered some hope, the COM presented a more fundamental plan. In a meeting with OSRA and Anderson in mid-April, the union proposed to undertake all stevedoring in all ports through a Co-operative Contracting Stevedoring Association. The Co-operative would take contracts based on tonnage rates with shipowners, and then adopt pay scales in consultation with rank and file workers. While a similar plan operated in some overseas ports the proposal was dropped, in favour of a more limited position closer to that of the government. The WWF sought registration and joint control only in existing licensed ports in order to regain some influence over waterfront labour.

By mid-1929 the employers were more receptive to Latham's general proposals. Through June and July they decided a number of basic employment principles. At their Interport Conference in May the overseas owners' accepted the interstate employer's continuing commitment to volunteers but nevertheless opted to employ Federation men where possible, consistent with workplace efficiency and harmony. All employers were to 'clean up' WWF lists, determine labour requirements for each port and the distribution of work to ensure equalisation of earnings. Critically this required employers to "unify methods of control" – that is, adopt consistent practices in respect to waterfront employment. Central Committee ratified these proposals in July.

WWF also sought to influence the government proposals. Turley called a maritime union conference in early July to co-ordinate maritime labour input before government legislation was drafted. It met in August, but the proposals canvassed symbolised the dilemma between localism and sectionalism on the one side and a national perspective on the other. All proposals discussed assumed the retention of the Arbitration Act, indeed the unions advocated common rule Court awards and orders. Initially, a system centred on local dispute resolution was proposed, in which Local Councils would be established to deal with local issues consistent with higher level institutions. However amendments favoured a broader scheme where a national Council of Industrial Representatives would be established for each section of the maritime industry. Disputes were then to be handled by local, state or federal disputes committees as the situation required. This plan may well have had the same effect. To avoid disunity with the trade union movement as a whole, the proposals were to be relayed to the government through the ACTU. But Turley and the maritime union leadership required a response by unions in mid-January 1930. By this time Federal political events overtook these proposals.

Meanwhile, at the state level, the South Australian government was seeking solutions to the violence and policing costs of the waterfront situation. Many proposals were thrown up in negotiations between the Premier, the Pt Adelaide WWF and the Shipowners Committee through
1929. These included, the reduction of volunteer numbers, limitation of volunteer earnings, the limitation of volunteers to 500 men, 3:1 ratio in hiring to Federation men with preference for married men, WWF men to replace volunteers as they drifted away and other suggestions. By mid-year the Adelaide shipowners were willing to accept a 50/50 ratio in the pick-up, in light of the continuing instability. Central Committee rejected all these proposals, on the grounds that they undermined the commitment to volunteers in one way or another. But Central Committee, through chairman Elford, had long urged the Premier not to pursue state legislation since the employers favoured federal legislation.

1. Politics and the Waterfront: The Scullin Labor Government

The election of the Scullin Labor Government in October 1929 cut short these plans. The WWF soon urged the new government to remove the TWA and restore preference. Although Scullin had promised to repeal the TWA, the Labor party didn't have the Senate numbers. The COM therefore urged the government, as a "temporary expediency" to use TWA regulations "together with any and all powers at the disposal of the administration to restore preference of waterside work to members of our Federation." In direct meetings with shipowners the union initially demanded that first preference be granted WWF men over volunteers and the 1928 award pick-up places be restored through TWA regulations. Employers unequivocally opposed this. The union eventually submitted that original volunteers and Federation men have equal access to employment at 1928 award pick-ups and the abolition of the bureaus. As a quid pro quo the WWF would guarantee reasonable efficiency at work and adequate supply of experienced men. This position was reaffirmed in conference with the ACTU Central Disputes Council on 23 October.

Labor Attorney-General Frank Brennan pressed employers to enter into further negotiations with the Federation under the auspices of the government. While negotiations held in December 1929 were cordial, only a general agreement on restoring stability resulted. The Federation would accept original volunteers (those licensed and working before Federation men took out licenses) provided that the joint control of licensing was implemented. The employers however maintained their commitment to the volunteers and rejected the return of Federation men excluded since the strike. They also maintained contact with coalition politicians on waterfront issues since the Scullin government was not in a position to repeal the TWA. At the close of 1929 the removal of Fremantle as a licensed port was the only tangible result for the Federation.

The next twelve months proved frustrating for the union. In response to Assistant Minister John Beasley's request for details for each port in respect to pick-up places, Turley submitted these for nine ports in February 1930. So confident was the COM that the regulations would be effective, that in February Turley requested that the government not repeal the TWA until a full assessment of the situation could make by the union. A union conference held in Melbourne on 1 March to do this, called for the repeal of the TWA "at the earliest suitable date" and that regulations be used to "restore complete preference of employment" to WWF members. Turley and Beasley inspected the Melbourne pick-up unannounced, later in the month.

Optimism faded as time passed with no effective government action. The COM pressed the ACTU to use its influence over the Labor Caucus to repeal the TWA or issue preference licences to WWF men and returned servicemen. WWF rank and file became increasingly critical of the government later in the year. A meeting of Federal maritime unions in September condemned the
inaction of the government on the issue. A mass meeting of waterside workers in Melbourne in October reasserted the resolutions of March and September and pressured the ALP Federal Executive over the issue. The meeting called for the immediate restoration of union preference and threatened a refusal to endorse Labor politicians and union disaffiliation from the Party to press its demands.

However there were a number of conditions which deflected the Scullin government's attention away from the waterfront. The coal strike, the onset of the depression and rising unemployment were all higher priorities for the government. However while R. Morris correctly argues that no legislative changes were made to the TWA by the Scullin government in 1930–31 the Labor government did amend the Conciliation and Arbitration Act (CAA) in the face of sustained employer opposition, a hostile Senate and an adverse High Court decision. The amendments gave the government a mechanism to grant preference to returned servicemen (sec.81A) and union members through the TWA regulations. The government duly issued numerous regulations in support of WWF demands. All were quickly rejected by the Senate. Thus it was not the lack of action by the Scullin government but rather the political and legal constraints arranged against it.

In April 1930 the government issued regulations specifying Melbourne pick-up places, notably Hogan's Flat. Although these were rejected by the Senate in May, the employers were forced to react. In consultation with London, the ASOF concluded that only permanent employment would 'safeguard' the position of the volunteers. Both were reluctant to move on this since it required an estimated 1,400 men in Melbourne and 500 in Adelaide. Although the number was reduced to 800 for Melbourne, Central Committee quickly abandoned the scheme and ordered an immediate reversion to the Shipowners' Compound at Victoria Dock for the Melbourne pick-up when the Senate's disallowed the regulations. The 500 permanent men were nevertheless retained in Adelaide, at £4 10s. a week, until July when "a heavy loss" was incurred by employers when there was a fall off in work.

In mid-year, the government held up TWA license renewals by the Navigation Department. In talks with shipowners Brennan informed them that licenses was now be issued with several conditions, including union membership, war service, and the length of service on the waterfront. The government then declared that licenses were no longer required. The license renewals combined with the decline in trade brought the first port strike since 1928. A two week strike in Adelaide referred to above, was the most significant example of the continuing instability in the industry.

In December 1930 the Government issued further regulations granting WWF members preference. The employers immediately mounted a High Court challenge, under advice from Robert Menzies. In a majority decision the High Court upheld the authority of the Federal government to issue preference regulations under the Act. The employers began a campaign against the government that included lobbying senators, contacting more than 130 employer associations and ensuring "that a steady stream of propaganda ...[was] kept up in the Press" against any changes by the government. Furthermore, Central Committee overcame its earlier reluctance in early 1930 to provide the Opposition's Latham with confidential information and in 1931 it was in constant contact with Latham, Sir George Pearce, Sir Hal Colebatch and other
prominent conservatives. These men co-ordinated Senate votes and provided assistance to shipowners on industrial and legal action.

Despite the High Court decision the Senate rejected the regulations four weeks later. The shipowners adopted the same policy as in the previous year - immediate reversion to normal practice. But on this occasion the legality of the Senate's action itself was challenged by the Government in the High Court after they were tested (and lost) by shipowners in April. Several weeks later the Court's split verdict went against the Government. The shipowners were in constant contact with legal advisers Menzies, Lewis and Ham, over the case and the situation over the employment of volunteers. Only days before the Court decision, on 12 May, were volunteers employed. A plea by SA Premier Hill not to employ volunteers in Pt Adelaide because of the adverse effects on local business and police protection costs was rejected by shipowners.

By this stage the Labor Government was increasingly frustrated. Brennan accused the shipowners of breaking their word on not employing volunteers and Scullin accused them of vindictiveness. Shipowners denied both accusations. Although new regulations were issued in late May, and where again rejected by the Senate, Cabinet now wavered over the advisability of further regulations. It nevertheless persevered with new regulations aimed at granting preference for WWF men and returned servicemen, under the CAA.

On no less than seventeen occasions from December 1930 to November 1931 the Senate rejected regulations issued by the government. In all cases preference for WWF men was the key objective. Additional provisions such as pick-up places in Brisbane (and exclusion of others), access to wharves (and the pick-up where it was on private property) and the limitation of continuous working time to 10 hours (subject to appeal to a Licensing Officer) were attempts to redress the worst waterfront conditions. Shipowners were careful not to attract prosecution when new regulations were issued, but they continued the policy of immediately reverting to the normal engagement of volunteers when the regulations were disallowed.

The government again halted the issuing of licences in June for the 1931-1932 year. Soon after licenses were restricted to WWF members and returned soldiers only. After extensive legal opinion, the shipowners decided, on 9 July, to test the new TWA regulations in court. The "SS Clan Murdoch" worked by volunteers with the Victoria Stevedoring Co. was chosen as a test case in late July. Central Committee was in constant contact with Senator Pearce, who continued to co-coordinate the Senate's rejection of the Government's TWA regulations. The provision for a 10-hour maximum working time (in any 24 hour period) in particular, meant that present labour strength was insufficient in most ports. In addition, shipowners enlisted the aid of AOTA in a renewed campaign against the government. Although the regulations were disallowed in the Senate on 16 October, the High Court decision went against shipowners. In dismissing the appeal, on 2 November, the Court again upheld the legality of the regulations. Central Committee was forced to concede that only returned soldier volunteers could be legally employed. Although it rejected WWF requests for negotiations in March after the first High Court loss, they agreed to negotiations in November.

At a conference on 11 November WWF representatives sought a national agreement in place of the award, the reinstatement of all Federation members to the waterfront and the introduction of the disc based rotary scheme used in Brisbane prior to the 1928 strike. All demands were
rejected. The employers continued to exclude Federation men in licensed ports. The employers felt under no obligation to concede any demands to the Federation, since the regulations were disallowed. Moreover they revolted to continue to support the Senate's actions in the future. Senators Pearce and Brennan argued that the employment of volunteers was not illegal despite the regulations, a view supported by legal opinion.187

The loss of the Federal election by the Scullin government less than two weeks later made continued resistance by shipowners unnecessary. The Scullin government's action of continually issuing regulations had little success beyond halting the employment of many volunteers for most of the year and generating "large" legal costs for shipowners.188 It did little to restore employment for Federation members. For example, wages for volunteers the first six months of 1932 were £26,212 compared to £14,449 1931 whereas WWF men received £29,159 and £30,262 respectively.189

Finally, attempts were made by the Scullin government to amend key features of the Conciliation and Arbitration Act. Abolition of penalty clauses and the wide-ranging and independent powers of joint conciliation committees were proposed. They were supported by unions and opposed by employers. The shipowners lobbied Nationalist MPs, wrote to the Prime Minister, conducted a Press campaign and closely liaised with other employer bodies to defeat the legislation through 1930.190 A compromise was needed to pass the legislation which included the abolition of the £1,000 fine for strikes and lockouts, but the powers of conciliation committees were weakened. It was to no avail as a High Court appeal found conciliation committees invalid. As noted earlier preference for returned servicemen was passed and used in a manner which frustrated shipowners. Although further amendments where proposed by Labor in May 1931 which again gave conciliation committees wide powers, these were decisively rejected by the Senate, 22 to 5.191 In a similar manner the NSW Lang government had attempted to legislate for the cancellation of the registration of all 'loyalist' unions formed from the 1917 strike and the granting of preference for other unionists in 1931. In March, the NSW Legislative Council stalled the Bill until September, when a Select Committee described it as "saturated with Soviet principles and reeking with flagrant injustices". In December the Council rejected a government move to reconsider the legislation, with a vote of 44 to 45.192

2. Transport Workers' Regulation and Waterside Employment Committee

The electoral defeat of Labor buoyed Central Committee which now felt that a reassertion of their commitment to the volunteers would be sufficient for support by the incoming Government. In reality of course the 'commitment' was heavily qualified by the "elimination of undesirables and inefficient men" which it believed could recommence. The task was handed to the state committees.193 Meanwhile, in early January 1932 Regulation Nos 144 and 145 were repealed by the new government and the shipowners immediately reverted to normal engagement conditions.194

Latham, now Minister for Industry, expressed a desire that a solution to the waterfront problem be found and government action may be forthcoming. The South Australian government, still facing endemic instability on the waterfront, eventually issued regulations it had threatened three years earlier. In January 1932, it issued regulations that gave WWF men preference. These were soon overridden by TWA regulations.195 The Federal government continued to urge shipowners to devise a scheme to settle waterfront labour organisation and industrial relations. Government officials were assigned to seek information at several ports, but shipowners were
cautious and closely monitored the officials. A decidedly unenthusiastic Central Committee informed Latham that no solution could be found to the position in Adelaide, but the search would nevertheless continue. While shipowners commented favourably on proposed government regulations, they proposed a scheme and met Latham on several occasions in the first half of 1932. Nothing was done. Negotiations between shipowners and WWF officials Turley and Mather in the second half of the year and into 1933 also ended in stalemate. The number of volunteers – the Federation wanted these men listed – and the procedure of recruitment of additional labour remained the main stumbling blocks. It was also clear to Turley that Latham's views placed "insuperable" barriers for any satisfactory settlement. The employers recognised that the cooperation of the WWF was vital but steadfastly refused to compromise on key aspects. The new Federal government did not undertake any action that weakened the TWA or the position of the shipowners.

At the state level, Queensland Premier Forgan-Smith assured the WWF leadership that assistance would be rendered where possible and advised it to re-register under the state system. Amendments to the Queensland Arbitration Act, granted preference to unionists, specifically WWF, and prohibited the use of the Brisbane employers labour bureau. However, in January 1933 the federal government issued TWA regulations designed to nullify this state legislation. Not only was the federal government keen on seeing a negotiated solution to the waterfront problem, but Arbitration Court Judge Beeby, in the 1932 award decision in March, also urged the parties to resolve the issue. The next year, on 8 Sept, Beeby noted that any resolution of the issue was "quite impossible" if shipowners continued to employ non-union labour in addition to the original volunteers given that the "union's objection to non-union labour ... is well founded" Turley immediately pressed again for a list the original volunteers from employers, who quickly contacted Latham. Three days later Central Committee resolved to approach the Court to re-open the case to air the "full facts". Moreover the idea of restricting labour through TWA licensing was again revived in discussions with Latham. Latham now appeared more sympathetic to the employers. He rejected a WWF demand for a single pick-up in Melbourne on the grounds of "friction" between the men. Yet he was keen to achieve "some permanent order and limitation on the number of men following the industry" but only alluded to removing the TWA from political control.

The federal government drafted new regulations which were reviewed by Central Committee in December 1933. The Committee opted to support what they saw as the no less "innocuous" TWA regulations to forestall any unfavourable Order by Beeby. The regulations proposed that joint Waterside Employment Committees at licensed ports place labour into first, second and non-preference categories for the pick up, and that licences be limited to the number as of 8 September, 1933 (the date of Beeby's volunteers decision). Yet the employers' still sought to maintain free selection in each class. Moreover, the state committee's resisted coverage under this system. Initially the Brisbane employers objected, since their bureau system operated in a similar manner without joint regulation, the classes or limitations. In practice all Queensland licensed ports would also be excluded since the Brisbane committee handled industrial relations policy for the whole state. The Adelaide employers also did not want to change the existing system. The WWF leadership initially learnt of the possible content of the regulations through the press. They favoured
some form of second preference list and limiting license numbers, but were unhappy with the proposals as finally revealed to them in late December.207

The final regulations, establishing the Waterside Employment Committee (WEC), were issued in March 1934 and were limited to Melbourne only. The WEC consisted of the licensing officer as chairman, two employer representatives and one WWF representative and one representing other licensed workers. In April the joint Committee granted 3,389 'first preferences' for men holding licenses on 8 September 1933, which grew to 3,506 at year's end as we shall see. Licenses issued after that date were endorsed as 'first' or 'second preference' by the committee's discretion, or a non--preference category, rather than automatically 'first'. Engagement was thus in the order of first, second and non--preference workers, with volunteers (under the Beeby definition) holding first preference as well as all WWF members.208 While Turley attempted to use the Melbourne WEC to advance WWF claims for more work the shipowners were able to reject any significant claims and were very confident that the regulations would not be extended to other ports, particularly when Robert Menzies became Attorney--General.209 Late in the year, employers became concerned that the actual number offering for work was about 2,300. Pressure on the government resulted in definitional changes to the scheme to enable more licenses to be issued, but at the same time they still debarred Federation men who had been excluded for more than six months or not 'continuously following' the work, from gaining a license. Moreover this change also meant that if non--union men joined the P&Cs they were more likely to gain a first preference place. This resulted in more P&Cs reported after 1933 than before in Table 12.7. The employers also ensured freedom of selection in each category.210 There was reluctant sentiment in the Federation that at least the WEC gave it some representation over decisions on licenses, unlike Brisbane and Adelaide where employers entire controlled the pick-up. Senator Lawson reported five years later that the despite attempts to extend the WEC system, especially to Pt Adelaide, "pressure, both political and industrial, prevented any such extension."211

In sum, the return of a conservative government was predicably fruitless for the federal WWF leadership's struggle to remove the yolk of Transport Workers' regulations and domination by the employers' labour bureaus in several major ports. Employer dissatisfaction with the allocation system of volunteers resulted in the reorganisation of the Melbourne WEC which allowed them to engage their own labour under the supervision of the Bureau Superintendent. But insufficient first preference Federation, P&C and non--union men offered for 'less remunerative jobs'. This 'inconvenience' was remedied by "the large number of second preference men always being available" when needed.212 In short, employers' maintained control of the labour market.

3. Summary

Thus from 1929 to the end of 1935 political action taken by the WWF was largely unsuccessful. Turley's comment to a fellow official in mid--1931, "I have been forced to do more crawling to politicians to get our members back on the job than I care to think about"213 was a strategy that brought little reward. The employers saw the Scullin and the NSW Lang governments come and go. The employers' reported the latter as the "most pleasing ... termination of the Lang regime in N.S.W." in May 1932.214 By the end of 1935 the employers had successfully defined the "principle that Government interference is undesirable"215 by shaping successive government's labour policy and regulation in respect to the waterfront, or by blocking regulation adverse to its
interests. The support the WWF gained from the Labor government, was itself severely limited by the Nationalist controlled Senate, other industrial and political problems and the depression. The union was unable to exert political influence or exercise sufficient industrial power to press its claims at the federal level. Where political action was favourable (as in SA, Qld, Victoria) the federal government simply nullified it. The employers effectively blocked all moves for a negotiated restructuring of the labour market and pursued a strong policy of extending managerial prerogative, labour intensification and division of the labour force through continued support for volunteers. The employers still used the arbitration system as a vehicle for the control of workers.

In a broader sense, the experience of activities in the political arena opened a greater awareness of politics for Federation members, especially a growing number of left officials. Second, in the context of the depression, economic conditions and political ideology were more closely linked in the minds of many. Finally, the lack of success in parliamentary politics made the search for alternative solutions and strategies more pressing.

V. Industrial Relations and Employment on the Waterfront

The final goal of the employers labour policy from 1927 was to break union job control and dismantle rotary schemes which encroached on employer authority in the employment relation. I have shown that although workplace industrial action continued over issues of the volunteers and job control the impact on employers was greatly diminished. Shipowners reported satisfaction with the significant decline in disputation after 1928. The weak position of the union and the employers' reliance on the award as a means of labour control meant that arbitration was a central arena through much of the 1930s. While Turley and the COM turned to the political arena the union also had to continue to face the employers in the industrial arena. This section examines the development of industrial relations to the mid-1930s.

The union's capacity to press industrial claims was greatly diminished after 1928, particularly any coordinated inter-port action. Yet the limited and spontaneous stoppages I have described earlier precipitated prosecutions before the Court. As in the case of the employers the attitude of the Court was shaped by these actions. The strong labourist ideology of the Federation leadership, reflected in the union's strong support for Federal Labor over the Lang NSW faction, was also seen in its continued support for Arbitration, despite criticism of its inability to grant a living wage or adequate conditions. Without any alternative, the delegates to the 1934 conference recognised that unilateral withdrawal from the Court would leave the PCWLU as the central body on the waterfront. The Federation was locked into the system.

The system provided the vehicle for a steady stream of prosecutions under its penalty clauses as well as TWA regulations. The employers' policy of using legal action where possible, adopted on 29 October 1928, was consistently put into effect. They not only prosecuted workers but also WWF officials that were proved to be promoting action in contravention of the award. The first penalty of this type under the Award was against a Sydney WWF branch official in March 1929. The Transport Workers' Act was also used against workers. In the six months after the end of the strike the licenses of twelve workers were suspended under the Act - eight in Melbourne, three in Adelaide and one in Newcastle. Legal prosecutions became a disciplinary mechanism directly against workers in the labour process.
In addition the federal award was also used by the employers as a method of marking and extending the limits of managerial authority. Appeals against BOR decisions, interpretations and variations became mechanisms to mark the limits of the award and cement employer control. Similarly the Federation used appeals and interpretations in an attempt to limit employer prerogative.

The capacity to accomplish this was enhanced by two main factors. In the first place terms and conditions were confined to the federal award. Informal local agreements were terminated by employers, the Queensland branches came under Federal jurisdiction and attempts by some branches to move to state awards failed. Second, the more integrated structure of port and state committees which reported to the Central Committee, facilitated consistent industrial policy, although the practice by local management and supervisors often did not comply with the policy, the coordination between levels did improve. Moreover the industrial weakness of the WWF left it few other avenues of action to address its industrial problems.222

1 The Issues of Arbitration

The PCWLU was a key instrument in the conduct of the 1928 strike. After the strike though Central Committee adopted a policy to maintain a hierarchical labour market structure. Foremost was the continued commitment to the volunteers, provided they worked efficiently. As I have shown above this policy was breached in practice, as non-union men were engaged and terminated according to other priorities in the licensed ports. The PCWLU gained a federal award on 8 August 1930, initially covering three states (excluded Sydney), which mirrored that of the Federation.223 Application by the PCWLU for independent variation of their award was strongly rejected by Beeby in June 1932 on the objection of shipowners and the WWF. The Court, Beeby adjudged, could not create "different conditions of employment of two bodies of men working side by side" given that the "purpose of that [P&C] award was to maintain equality of wages and conditions of all water-front labour".224 The two awards thereafter would vary in concert. The P&C union was nevertheless actively supported by shipowners. In Brisbane, shipowners permitted P&C officials to address workers and urge them to join the union on the promise to pay an entrance fee of 2s. (of the normal 30s.).225 Moreover bureau superintendent Lyons refused to pick up men not in a union. The effects of the TWA and the depression were felt in other ports. Men steamed down to the Sydney waterfront in search of work during the depression and the employers used men, known as 'snipers,' at their convenience. Moreover the Central Committee's stress on award provisions had the appearance of an even-handed policy for all workers, since the shipowners had been successful in shaping government policy on arbitration.

The loss of preference for the WWF severely limited its ability to press even minimum demands for equalisation of work. Applications for the reinstatement of preference failed in 1930 and in the 1932 award case when Beeby ruled that the employers preference to 'loyalists' was legitimate.226 Another application later in the year was also rejected by Beeby, who again called for a negotiated settlement of the issue of engagement and pick-up places.227 The 1936 Award similarly rejected preference as were further applications that year by both unions. In this case, Judge Dethridge determined that the definitional changes to the TWA regulations in 1934–5 effectively removed the Court's power to grant preference. For provided employers engaged
workers in order of first, second and no preference licenses, the Court could not privilege one group over another within each category.228

In view of the position of watersiders, whether Federation men or not, wage rates were secondary to employment. As I have shown, the effect of the depression and volunteers on the waterfront decreased the work available for the union. Add to this, employers favouring volunteers in licensed ports and the 'bull' system in others, resulted in a skewing of earnings in favour of a smaller section of the labour force. Moreover the Court showed less concern with the fate of surplus labour in the industry. It also cut wages for all awards in 1931 to assist the national economy. Finally, with shift and transfer provisions in the award and the employers policy to cut costs, pay issues were focused more on shift rates, travelling and waiting times and similar issues rather than the level of the hourly rate.

The variety of engagement practices was significant. The union resentment of the second pick-up handed down by the Court was compounded by the problems created by the employers' allocation of labour in bureaus or the open pick-ups. The employers developed a variety of mechanisms to manage these issues. In Adelaide the shipowners' Allocation committee dealt with balancing work between volunteers and Federation men. The employers gave volunteers first preference wherever possible. Thus these men initially earned about twice that of Federation men,229 and continued to earn more in later years despite the employers capping of their earnings and monitoring the distribution. The volunteers employed were enrolled at a 'depot' where "Misbehaviour has been visited with punishment imposed by the bureau committee; usually the delinquent is ordered to stand down for varying periods."230 The Brisbane bureau used a disc system numbered from one upwards. But not all men were admitted to the bureau. However the 400 or more Federation men (numbered from 1200 upwards) were not given equal preference which continued to be a source of conflict throughout the 1930s.231 The employers retained the right to confiscate discs at any time.232 Nevertheless, the Bureau superintendent Lyons used excluded Federation men as a defacto second preference group because the union often supplied over 100 men a day for work.233 In some North Queensland ports the employers adopted a contract system - based on a tonnage rate - using non-union labour. In these cases the Arbitration Court was of little assistance, given its attitude to the men. Beeby commented five years after the strike that the "industrial history of two or three ports justifies the exclusion of federation labour or work on contract systems which have been devised.234

In Sydney the men tramped along what became known as the 'Hungry Mile'. The long battle against the employers bureau in the wake of the 1917 strike and a number of changes in the pick-up places and procedures in Sydney was driven by the desire of the Sydney watersiders to avoid the bureaus. An Agreement was concluded in July 1929 to return to wharf gate pick-ups at those recognised prior to 10 September 1928.235 In practice Federation men were worked through the 'bull' system, but they were also supplemented by 'snipers' since the Sydney branch had closed its books. Snipers were non-union men picked-up after union men, ostensibly to fill labour shortages. But they often took bad jobs with obnoxious cargoes, which Federation men avoided where they could.236 Ironically there were only a small number of P&C men who worked mostly the intra-state trade. Newcastle employers used an allocation committee after the 1928 strike.
Chapter Twelve

2 Direct Negotiations: Employment and National Agreement

Beeby's call for a negotiated solution to these issues was based on several grounds; that ranged from the lack of link between wage levels and output, the use of the 30 hour divisor, over supply of labour to the wastage in standing–by time. He concluded in the March 1932 award case that the position on the waterfront was deteriorating. He identified a chronic 'oversupply' of WWF men, and suggested some scheme of weekly engagement and central work allocation or tonnage rate was needed. He alluded to the Liverpool system, because in his view "the present system of organization of casual labour, ... constitutes a social danger which calls for earnest attention."237 The union agreed. Turley approached the shipowners in November 1931 to negotiate a national agreement but was rebuffed.238 As noted above, the defeat of the Scullin government was greeted with relief by shipowners, and they did not consider they needed to negotiate with the WWF despite the problems on the waterfront.

By March though they were anxious to avoid regulation by the Court. Beeby's comments in the 1932 Award case triggered employers' proposals for the re–organisation of labour in major ports. In negotiations that followed the WWF succeeded in eliminating mention of preference for volunteers' from the August proposals, the COM refused to accept cuts in WWF membership that would flow from decisions of a joint Register committee of two employers, one PCWLU or volunteer and one WWF.239 The Federation wanted equal representation on committees, the exclusion of volunteers or P&Cs, procedures regarding any suspension of registration, equal rights to termination of the agreement in writing, and the volunteers to be limited to a 1928 list.240

Negotiations again began in mid–1933 when the federal leadership approached shipowners in April and May 1933.241 Central Committee chairman A. Elford was authorised to confer with the WWF, but nothing developed for over a year. Optimistically, WWF President Bill Mather reportedly threatened shipowners that the TWA would be used against them after Labor won the next election. Even the Court's decision on volunteers in September 1933 was limited to Central Committee's reluctant support Latham's Waterside Employment initiative.

In terms of a national collective agreement no progress was made for years. In the middle of 1934, six years after the strike, OSRA raised the issue and Central Committee assessed the level of support. In late September Industrial Officers Adams and Darbon were authorised to enter negotiations with Turley.242 Negotiations towards a national agreement proceeded for nine months. Key differences over working through smoke–ohs, transfer provisions, minimum engagement at Bundaberg and a proposed central council of review where largely overcome in February. The Bundaberg matter was delayed to June, and the final agreement for twelve months went to the WWF in July 1935.243 But the agreement was rejected by a vote of the WWF rank and file in September 1935. The parties reverted to their respective award Logs which were considered by the Court from January 1936.244

3 Boundaries of Industrial Relations

While preference and the regulation of engagement were central issues for the years examined here, the Federation struggled with other issues in the arbitration system. In each case, the employers were successful in containing the WWF.

As noted above the tension between the federal union leadership and state or branches was a continuing feature of the early 1930s. Brisbane, the Queensland branches and the Fremantle
lumpers attempted to break with the federal award and sought coverage under their respective state systems. The Queensland branches had been covered by a State Award for eight years and had been forced into Federal jurisdiction by the shipowners only weeks before the end of the 1928 award case. The Fremantle leadership on the other hand had harboured a degree of disaffection with the Federal Arbitration Court from the first Award. With a claim for higher overtime rate rejected in early 1916\(^2\) the leadership considered that a return to local agreements was likely to be of greater benefit to lumpers. In the 1920s, Lumpers' secretary Rowe argued that the branch could do better under a state award.\(^3\) Although it was an argument used in favour of disaffiliation, the trigger that saw the branch leave the Federation was over union finances in 1933.\(^4\)

The Queensland branches state award and registration was cancelled on an employers' application in November 1931.\(^5\) Several north Queensland branches, particularly Bowen, lobbied the Forgan-Smith government the following year for assistance. As I have noted above, amendments were made to the state Act and took effect in February. This prompted Bowen and Townsville to seek registration under the state Act in May. It was granted on 14 July, with registration under the name, Queensland Branch of the Waterside Workers' Union. It covered the fourteen branches and was issued on 25 August 1933.\(^6\) Recall that the TWA regulations issued in January prescribed pick-up places and this was an issue that the Queensland men wanted the State court to address. Acting on legal advice from Menzies, the shipowners successfully applied for an injunction in the federal Arbitration Court to restrain the state court.\(^7\) This successfully excluded the State court from authority over any matters covered by the federal award, leaving only isolated and marginal work for any State award to consider. Indications of a High Court appeal by the Queensland government and the WWF were never acted upon.\(^8\) In a similar manner, the Fremantle lumpers' action to gain coverage by the WA state industrial court was blocked by the shipowners. Each union member was listed as a respondent to keep the lumpers under the federal Award.\(^9\)

The injunctions handed down by Judge Dethridge in the Queensland award case however were positive in that they defined the boundaries of waterside work as covered by the Federal award. However as Turley pointed out, this did not amount to a determination that all such work had to be performed by WWF or PCWLU members. This would still require that the Arbitration Court grant preference to one or other of the bodies.\(^6\) As I have shown above the Arbitration Court refused to grant preference on numerous occasions and Dethridge later argued in 1936, that the TWA regulations removed the power of the Court to do so. Despite a narrower interpretation of the coverage of the TWA (covered workers only up to the placement of cargo on the wharf) no material improvement resulted for Federation men.\(^9\)

In addition to the issues of engagement and discipline, Beeby granted shipowners provisions for greater flexibility in the use of labour – in particular the introduction of shifts and transfer between jobs. These covered stages 5 and 6 of the labour process. The shift provision was to allow employers to roster workers for continuous operations and remove the incentive for workers to seek overtime rates for a normal work period by slowing down work or avoiding day work. It was hoped that better distribution of work would occur as well. However, employers used the provision to avoid paying overtime rates to day shift workers for a few hours work. Moreover, the shift provision was used to discharge some workers and engage preference men in their place. This
infringed the finishing rule and resulted in greater earnings inequalities and discontent amongst workers. Beeby was forced to admit that local variations "somewhat destroyed the original intention" and he varied the shift provision in 1933. They commenced at 6 pm rather than 5 pm and an early start provision was inserted where work commencing between 5 am and ordinary time at 8 am was to be paid overtime rates.

The transfer provision introduced in the 1928 award was designed to overcome work control through 'domestic rules' which curtailed "the right of employers to place, control and transfer their employees" necessary for efficiency. Beeby restated this principle in the 1932 award and again in 1933 – transfer was "to allow employers reasonable opportunities for the proper utilisation of labour without paying stand–by time, but not in conflict with the general principle of other clauses that men are not to be deprived of the right to secure employment on the pick–up of gangs for new jobs." The "restrictive nature" of the Queensland arrangements had to be removed, and provided workers "were reasonably protected from overstrain, the conduct of stevedoring operations should be left under the control of the employers of labour."

In similar manner to shifts, employers used the transfer provision to avoid engaging Federation men and providing more work for the preferred volunteers. When the COM attempted to set port manning levels for TWA regulations, Brisbane secretary Andy Brown remarked that the minimum should be 1,100 men, assuming "of course if the system of shifting men from job, to job, and ship to ship, is not exploited and abused to the benefit of the preference section." Turley agreed that the use of the transfer clause in shifting men to jobs and ships had a direct influence on the number of men required. In practice the Court's interpretation of the right to finish the original hatch was ambiguous. Beeby determined that the right to finish could not read as 'first to come, last to go', limited only by the employers' right to shorten gangs. In a later decision in 1932 Beeby again referred only generally to the balance between the employers' right to reasonable labour use and the workers' right to gain employment.

He appeared sympathetic to union grievances in unofficial visits to Queensland ports some weeks later. Yet, he was unwilling to alter what he saw as a critical component of management authority. Early in 1933, he found a Sydney employer's breach of the 'finish the job' trivial and fined the company only 10s. Paradoxically the decision curtailed the action of branches because it was seen as difficult to succeed or, members involved may be 'black–balled' at employer controlled pick–ups. Moreover, the engagement and allocation of men to specific jobs from their nominal gangs at the labour Bureau, was exploited by foremen to favour some and not others.

In particular the early starting practice referred was accompanied by confusion over the time of discharge from a job. The Brisbane WWF wanted men to stay in a gang position at engagement and the minimum payment for attendance. The early start provision checked abuse of shifts, but it did little to address transfer. Indeed the Court extended the provision to permit transfers between employers outside of pick–up hours in September 1933. Beeby believed the Brisbane bureau to be a model for the waterfront, thus the extension of transfer was consistent with this view. He wanted the system to work. At the same time, Beeby tightened the meaning of a job where a discharge required attending for a new pick–up. Yet, employers still adopted practices to circumvent the intention of the award. In a few weeks the Brisbane WWF complained of the lack of transport or payment of fares between jobs and other problems. Yet any complaint by a worker led to
suspension. When questioned Bureau superintendent Lyons claimed that the transfer decision granted him the power "to compel, or otherwise deal with an employee who fails to carry out his instructions." In conference with employers in 1934 the WWF complained of hundreds of non-union men hired at wharf gates for trucking and other work in contravention of Court decisions. But the federal union's response was poor. The 1934 conference of branches did not deal with industrial issues such as these, except to move to limit working time to a maximum of ten hours and support rotary.

The 1936 Waterside Workers' Award in April saw a small recognition of the poor conditions and employer practices on the waterfront. In particular, Beeby abolished shift work, citing the clear abuse of the provision since 1928. Employers had not used it to improve the organisation of labour – maintain continuity of operations, more equal allocation of work and reduction of strain on workers – but on the contrary, used it primarily to minimise wage costs. Beeby amended the transfer provisions to accommodate problems in Brisbane (cl.17(a)(i) and (ii)) but it remained a key provision for employer authority over the core of the labour process. Moreover, the award also abolished penalties for individual workers not members of the WWF, much to the chagrin of employers. Thus Fremantle workers could not be prosecuted as they were individual respondents to the award, rather than part of the WWF, or registered under the Act. Finally, the award made provision for the establishment of port conciliation committees and a National Council of Conciliation.

Finally, the dependence on arbitration was reflected in the pattern of industrial conflict. As I have shown resistance was confined to local issues, invariably limited to particular trades, vessels or wharves. Only the Fremantle men showed sustained port level resistance to provisions of the award. As I noted above the Fremantle lumpers, were able to resist employers in 1931. In the strike of wharf storemen Central Committee directed that volunteer labour be used if the lumpers refused to handle wool. But the WA State Committee reported that it was "extremely difficult to organise other labour", although another employers' committee in the storemen's strike had organised farmers.

Less than two years later after the break with the WWF in 1933, the lumpers addressed the long-standing objection to the second pick-up. Again the State Committee was directed by Central Committee to employ volunteers and proceed with the re-licensing of the port under the TWA. Although Fremantle shipowners supported the latter they felt that the situation was too unstable to pursue it and that the use of free labour was "impossible". Although shipowners proceeded with action under the federal award for "concerted action", they were forced to negotiate a compromise for the second pick-up. The lumpers "concerted failure" to attend succeeded in gaining an agreement in which only the number of men expected to be engaged in the afternoon were required to attend the pick-up and for only 15 minutes. The Fremantle lumpers took action over a number of issues (safety of mechanical equipment, provision of freezer clothing and others) which shipowners found difficult to counter.

Yet discontent remained in the port, fuelled by disputes over special rates, shift work, the introduction of mechanical bulk handling in wheat loading, and freezer clothing. Central Committee pushed for prosecutions they were seen as ineffectual and lumpers achieved victories on several issues. The collective refusal of lumpers to accept shifts from July 1934 saw vessels
remain idle after 5pm unless overtime rates were paid, which left the Award "inoperative" on this issue. The lumpers were however "doing good work" and Central Committee wished to avoid "drastic action".276 The Fremantle shipowners concluded that "all union members wholeheartedly determined not to revert to shift work rates which [they] have always considered inequitable."277 Approaches to the Attorney-General, Trades and Labour Council, the WA government and the ALP succeeded in getting the men to work to the award provided the issues of the second pick-up and shifts were discussed. Negotiations through the ALP were slow. Employers began starting shifts at 4.30 pm and paid the men the full rate.278 Thus early 1936 employers regularly paid overtime rates and ignored the shift provision in the Award. And as noted shifts were abolished in the 1936 Award.

In 1935 seamen took industrial action over a number of issues. Changes incorporated in their award handed down in November triggered a strike, against the recommendations of union officials. The Cooks' also went out, but returned before January. The employers established a labour bureau and by December all ships were manned by volunteers. Moreover to protect the volunteers, shipowners successfully applied to the Lyons government to bring seamen under the TWA licensing system for the main east coast ports. They were thus forced to take out licenses on their return to work in February 1936. Some 1,780 volunteers were employed, of which 265 men formed the Licensed Seamen's Association in March and applied for registration in the federal system.279 Importantly, for the first time the WWF refused to go out in support of the seamen. The Federation's industrial weakness and the TWA already covering waterside workers meant that the union was unwilling to risk further regulations against members in unlicensed ports, particularly Sydney. Thus the employers could report for 1936 that very few waterfront difficulties were experienced and indeed "the Waterside Workers' Federation having apparently accepted that the Volunteers have come to stay".280

VI. Summary and Conclusion

In this chapter I have examined the aftermath of the 1928 strike. Clearly this industrial loss significantly weakened the WWF, compounded by the effects of the depression. There are parallels and differences between the 1890s, 1917 and 1928. In each case the union undertook industrial action in the face of superior organisation by the employers, and on each occasion the union lost members, experienced financial pressures, and was disorganised. But after 1928 and during the depression saw the interstate and overseas employers achieve an increase in product market concentration, closer cooperation and from this a tighter federation institutional mode of market coordination than previously. Finally, while shipping companies moved towards closer integration of stevedoring operations, there was little technological investment materials handling, ports or ships. Thus, operational management remained reliant on many local, informal practices on the waterfront.

The significant increase in employer authority over the labour market that flowed from award changes and the Transport Workers' Act, allowed employers to maintain policies of cost minimisation, close labour control and discipline. Shipowners used the arbitration system to successfully exclude large numbers of WWF men, support a volunteer union and use non-union labour and thereby exercise significant control overall stages in the employment relation. The employers also successfully shaped the nature of government regulation.
Even where employers had direct regulation of the labour market and engagement (Stages 1, 2 and 3 of employment) imposed on them, through the Melbourne Waterside Employment Committee, they could report in 1936 that,

the Committee is proving useful, by controlling the supply of labor [sic] from time to time, it has taken away from the Waterside Workers' Federation the sole right (which, prior to 1928, was in the hands of the ...Federation) of deciding who should enter the waterside industry. The Committee was also responsible for having in the way of temporary suspension of First Preference imposed on waterside workers who had been guilty of misconduct.

The employers also reported that during the disputes of 1935 "it was noticeable that none of these occurred at the ports where an alternative supply of labour in the shape of volunteers was available."282

Despite these claims, labour process contingency still generated local resistance based on informal, solidaristic relations that crossed the boundaries of the workplace and community. The Fremantle case was an illustration. However, the mutualist moral economy of solidarism was increasingly recast by the political analysis of communism. After earlier periods as an official in Mackay,283 the communist Jim Healy returned to wharves from the Soviet Union. He was again elected to the Mackay TLC in February 1935. He actively supported striking Mt Coolan gold miners and local cane cutters in mid-1935, and was disgusted when Turley and the ACTU instructed WWF branches not to support the seamen's strike in December 1935. He actively supported the strike and raised funds and was soon re-elected Mackay branch President in early 1936.284 He moved to Sydney the following year with an eye on the WWF leadership. With the backing of communists in Sydney (Tom Nelson and Vigilant Officer Coghlan, who was the first communist elected in Sydney) Healy ran against Arthur Turley. His victory in October 1937 indicated the climate for change had arrived.285

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1 Bach, A Maritime History of Australia, p.339 states that interstate shipping ceased to be viable with WWI, only trades that could not be served by rail survived. Road then filled these functions in the 1930s; also D. B. Copeland, "Leading Problems of Australian Transport", The Economic Record, Vol 6 Aug, (supplement), 1930, pp.2-10
2 Report of the Overseas Shipping Conference 5 Sept 1929 (conference 4–6 Apr 1929), clause 4, APP, 1929, Vol 2, p.2192, note also that shipowners complaints concerning the level of port charges were addressed and a recommendation for appropriate action included in the Report, clause 6 and Appendix "D", pp.2192-2193,2199-2200; Bach, A Maritime History of Australia, ch.13, pp.285-307; J. B. Belgora, "Australian Overseas Shipping," Economic Record (Supplement), Vol 6, 1930. Also Tariff Board, Annual Report, to 30 June 1929, Illustrates, "It is,... now recognised that cheaper production follows from the pooling of resources in industries producing the same commodity. Wasteful competition may by this means be eliminated and concentration of effort be encouraged...The Board is of the opinion that this movement towards the more efficient organization of industries should be prosecuted with vigour," APP, Vol 2, 1929, p.2521 [emphasis added]. The Board had inquired into the Navigation Act that year.
4 Recall that from 1889–1890 to 1901 the average size of vessel rose from approximately 450 tons to over 1,000; see Table 7.2 for the combined averages, also Table 7.3; for average of each class of vessel see, ASOF, Report for Year 1930, Appendix "D" p.38 and Report for Year 1940, Appendix "D" p.23
5 ASOF, Report for Year 1930, and Report for Year 1940 ANU/NBA E217/98, 108. While there were more changes in the overseas trade, this too was well behind world changes as British companies dominating the Australian run were relatively slow to innovate, Henning and Trace, 'Britain and the Motorship'.
6 ASOF, Report for Year 1930, Appendix "E" p.39 and Report for Year 1940, Appendix "E" p.24
7 Bulley, British Shipping and Australia, p.99 argued that the introduction of these vessels lowered on-boat labour costs. The MV "Manoora" (ASSCo) MV "Duntroon" (MSSCo), MV "Kanimbla" (McDwraith's), MV "Babinda", MV "Bingera" (AUSNCo) were the main investments from 1930 in diesel powered motor vessels.
8 Louis outlined the investment as the economy slowly recovered, but confused a few vessels with the state of the fleet as a whole and merely accepted the shipowners' assertion that the "Australian Fleet was the most modern in the world," L. J. Louis, "Recovery from the depression and the seamen's strike 1935-6," Labour History, No 41 Nov, 1981, pp.74-76, quote on pp.74-75
9 Qld Government, Royal Commission on Transport, Transcript of Evidence, 4 Vol, 29 Jul 1936 – 12 Jan 1937, Qld State Archives, ROY/35-38 [hereafter RO on Transport (1936–37)]
10 Bulley, British Shipping and Australia, pp.178ff
11 Lawson Report (1939), pp.29-30, made several recommendations that employers provide facilities, including toilets for Hobart.
Part 12 of the Transport Workers Act 1929

29 ASOF.

14 Basten Report

Central Committee of Oversea and Interstate Shipping Companies, "Coastwise and overseas shipping 4,056 workers (males and females) and loading and discharging vessels, 543 clerks (M & F) were 

Basten Report 

Central Committee of Oversea and Interstate Shipping Companies, Report on the Australian Sugar Industry, 11 Sept 1952, p.34, APP, 1951-52; see Daryl R Hull, The Impact of Major Technological Change on Industrial Relations in the Australian Stevedoring Industry, 1950-1972, Ph.D thesis, Department of Industrial Relations, School of Economics (University of New South Wales, Sydney, 1976) for a discussion of this section of the industry. Men refused to use equipment from late 1930s.

M. Tull, "Blood on the Cargo: cargo handling and working conditions on the waterfront at Fremantle, 1900–1939", Labour History, No 52, 1987, pp.15-28, largely taken from Tull, The Development of the Port of Fremantle, ch.5 esp. pp.172-181, data from Tables 5.1 and 5.2, pp.177,179. Note labour costs did rise (to 81.7% in 1926-27) and fall (to 66.3% in 1931-32), and expenditure did rise for equipment, in the intervening period. However, labour as a variable cost declined as an effect of the decline in activity. The long-term relation of investment deteriorated.


Rail containers used overseas could not be adopted, see RC on Transport (1936-37), p.1358

Basten Report (1952) p.15 [emphasis added]

Managers in shipping and loading and discharging vessels; calculated from Commonwealth of Australia, Census, 30 June 1947, Vol 2, codes 560,565,570 Table 1, code 210, Table 11, codes 220, 300, Table 4, pp.944-945,1421,1422-1423

Indeed the economy–wide ratio was approximately 1:75. However more than half of managers were in wholesale and retail trade, farm management and hotels. With this in mind the actual ratio was higher for manufacturing, transport and finance, see Commonwealth of Australia, Census, 30 June 1947, Vol 3, p.203.

Occupational code 500 (foreman – defined as employed in loading and discharging) also includes 282 foremen in shipping, a proportion of whom were waterfront foremen. Moreover 20 waterfront workers identified themselves as employers and were thus likely to be foremen, see Census, 30 June 1947, Vol 2, items 45,46, Table 2, p.1346.

Coastwise and overseas shipping 4,056 workers (males and females) and loading and discharging vessels, 543 clerks (M & F) were employed, Census, 30 June 1947, Vol 2, occupational code 300, Table 4, p.1423. Most clerks in water transport were shipping clerks handling the administrative functions associated with bills of lading, other freight documents, insurance and so on, working in shipping offices and not in contact with freight as such.

Central Committee of Oversea and Interstate Shipping Companies, Constitution, Central Committee, Minutes, 6 Dec 1929, pp.211-215

Not all the bracketed figure are branches, some were the only union office. However the point remains the same.

Despite the rise in non–union labour during the 1920s, union density was very high in these industries.


Lockwood reports that in Melbourne by the end of 1934 many watersiders were earning enough to provide for their families in reasonable comfort, Ship to Shore, p.335

WWF Conference, Minutes, 22 June 1934, p.23, WWF, Federal Office, ANU/NBA T62/3/1

ASOF, Report for Year 1928, p.20, ANU/NBA E211/96

Part III cl.12 of the Transport Workers Act 1929

No 3 of 1929, amendment to Transport Workers Act 1928, sec.I.5 gives definition of waterfront worker; Cl.12 para. (1) (a)-(e),(2)-(7), Commonwealth Acts, Vol 27, 1929, pp.6-7 [emphasis added]

The data reported in Table 12.7 are estimates, however they have been cross–checked from a number of sources (as indicated) to provide information on this key point.

Except the short term effect of post WWI seamens' disputes and recession, see Appendix Table A12.1 for detailed membership numbers and sources

see evidence of R. West (Bris WWF sec.), Transcript of the Lawson Report (1939), 14 Mar 1939, pp.9-10, WWF, Federal Office, ANU/NBA Z55/Box 33

73 WWF men were recruited in Nov 1933, but the Brisbane 'branch did not have anything to do with the selection of these members', J. Marshall to Turley, 25 Nov 1933, they were selected by Bureau Supt Lyons, J. Marshall to Turley, 11 Dec 1933, all Brisbane Correspondence, WWF, ANU/NBA T62/8/175

Figures of men admitted were 1928 (469), 1934 (71), 1935 (2), 1936 (11), 1937 (3), 1938 (19), 1939 (23), totalling 598, evidence R. West, Transcript of the Lawson Report (1939), 14 Mar 1939, pp.9,11, WWF, Federal Office, ANU/NBA Z55/Box 33; Marshall, Minutes of WWF Federal Conference, 1937, p.12, Sydney Branch, ANU/NBA Z248/Box 53; Brisbane ICWE given approval for 100 men in 1933 (resulted in 71 in 1934), Central Committee, Minutes, No 3, 3 Nov 1933, p.174

It is difficult to assert that all these men were permanently excluded from the industry as the union rules permitted inter–port transfers. A small proportion of men may have gained work in other ports. But in light of the depression the vast majority of 1,100 men would have left the industry. Not surprisingly transfers became a key issue for many ports.

COM, Minutes, 4 July 1934, p1, WWF, Federal Office, ANU/NBA T62/3/1. In reality far less men were actively working.

Minutes of WWF Federal Conference, 1937, p.13, Sydney Branch, WWF, ANU/NBA Z248/Box 53

Qualitative accounts of Melbourne have been provided by Lockwood, Ship to Shore, chs. 39-41, pp.312–335 and Lowenstein and Hills, Under the Hook, pp.64ff.

Eleven ports total of 11,175 men actively seeking work with demand of 8,415. Volunteers in Melb, Bris, Pt Adel. and Newcastle taken as 1,500 CAB, Vol 31, 1932, pp.30,32

Under the Act only workers covered by State awards were eligible, The Unemployed Workers Insurance Act (Qld), ss.2,5, The Queensland Statutes, Vol 12, 1922-23, pp.10073,10078

WWF membership of Queensland ports in 1927 was 3,640 (see Table 12.8 above).

Central Committee, Minutes, No 2, 2 Feb 1931, p.121; No 3, 3 Feb 1931 p.121

In 1933–34, 113 waterside workers were paid a total of £405 and in Gladstone 37 were paid £79 in sustenance. Eleven Ath Annual Report on Operations of the Unemployed Workers Insurance Act, 2 Nov 1934, Table 9, QPPS, 1934, Vol 2, p.14; Bowen earnings figures submitted to Queensland Arbitration Court, indicated that 31 members earned nothing or less than £10 for the year, Registration File No40, Earnings, Year to 31 Dec 1932. In 1933 Bowen and Gladstone had approximately the same number of WWF members, although Bowen had a greater membership to the mid–1920s.

The figures for the average number of free labourers employed (550 a week) was £5 10s.11d. and for the average number of WWF men (938 a week) it was £2 17s. a week, RRC on Waterfront (1930), p.27
Central Committee, Minutes, No 1, 20 May 1929, p.169; data for several weeks in Dec 1930 show differences of up to 400% in Adelaide, reports also from other ports, eg Central Committee, Minutes, No 2 23 Sept, p.103, 11 Nov 1930, p.106, 22 Jan 1931, p.117, 219 Feb 1931, pp.120,128; No 3, 8 Aug 1932, p.82.

74.62% of the work. Central Committee, Minutes, No 2, 25 Feb 1931, p.132.

Burcheil appealed for food or money, Central Committee, Minutes, No 1, 21 June 1929, p.177.

Central Committee, Minutes, No 2, 25 Feb 1931, p.132; No 3, 6 June 1933, p.143.

Reported by Williams, The Years of Big Jim, p.36.

ASOF, Report for Year 1922, p.l3, ANUNBA E817/100, reports that fell (1927-8 to 1932) from 5.88 pence/ton to 2.02 in Fremantle, 1.32 p to 0.14 p/ton in Melbourne (after falling from 24.6 p/ton in 1920 after police patrols started in 1921. Newcastle fell from 1.6 p to 0.4 p/ton (1931) in Newcastle, ASOF, Report for Year 1921, p.12, ANUNBA E817/99 (Note figures for Fremantle differ in 1931 and 1932 Reports).

General Secretary's (Turley) report, WWF, COM, Minutes, 28 Oct 1935, ANUNBA T62/1/2. Turley reported in the text that the membership had fallen from 20,000 to 15,000 from 1928 to 1933, the exact loss of members put at 8,256. Fremantle excluded as it withdrew from the WWF.

Based on four assumption; 1) estimate refers only to WWF, ignoring reported (and unlikely), estimates of PCWLU membership of 70 to 75 volunteers; 2) the estimates of the number of volunteers in licensed ports reported in Table 12.7. 3) the labour strength proposals for licensed ports by employers in the years immediately before 1934, and 4) in most other ports some people were not members of the WWF. If the latter assumption is dropped union density was approximately 76-78%.

Commonwealth of Australia, Census, 1933, Vol 2, pp.1556-1557. Lowenstein and Hills, Under the Hook, pp.69,71,80 give examples of men who left the industry for other work (Charlie Morgan, Tom Hills, Jim Smith and others); eg. case of David Basford transferring from PPSA, I. Marshall to Turley, 30 Dec 1933, Brisbane Correspondence, WWF, ANUNBA T62/81/5

I. Brown to Turley, 18 Sept 1931, Brisbane Correspondence, WWF, ANUNBA T62/81/4; I. Turley to Marshall, 31 July 1933, Brisbane Correspondence, WWF, ANUNBA T62/81/5

COM Minutes, 6 July 1934, WWF Federal Office ANUNBA T62/1/2; actually 14,058 10s 3d, Minutes of Conference of Branches, 28 June 1934, WWF, Federal Office, ANUNBA T62/3/2; Sydney later paid its arrears, I. Turkey to Marshall, 3 Aug 1934, WWF, Brisbane Correspondence, T62/81/5.

The Fremantle branch withdrew in mid-1933 as the culmination of a number of long standing issues. I. Fox (Fremantle Sec) to Turley, 16 May 1933, WWF, Federal Office, Fremantle Correspondence, ANUNBA T62/11/6.

Qld conference held 28-29 July 1932 in Mackay, Ogden (Townsville) Sandham (Mackay) were key advocates of localism; see Central Committee, COM, Minutes, 21 Dec 1932, WWF, Federal Office, ANUNBA T62/1/2, also COM, Minutes, 11 Nov 1932, WWF, Federal Office, ANUNBA T62/1/2. I. Brown to Turley, 9 Aug 1933, teleg. Brown to Turley, 24 Feb 1933, Brisbane Correspondence, WWF, ANUNBA T62/81/5.

WWF, COM, Minutes, 10 Nov 1932, WWF, Federal Office, ANUNBA T62/1/2.

Healy, Brief History of the Australian Waterfront, p.60

Support for Maritime and Land Transport Alliance or Federation, WWF, Conference of Branches, Minutes, 22,25,26 June 1934, pp.10-13,27-41,46, WWF, Federal Office, ANUNBA T62/3/1 Also resolutions for payment of dues.

I. Turley to Marshall, 27 July 1934, WWF, Brisbane Correspondence, ANUNBA T62/81/5.


I. Turley to Marshall, 15 Aug 1934, WWF, Brisbane Correspondence, ANUNBA T62/81/5.

eg Brisbane rejected change to Rule 7(a) re state executive to appoint state representatives to the COM, teleg. Marshall to Turley, 6 Sept 1934, WWF, Brisbane Correspondence, ANUNBA T62/81/5.

Quotation from Tom Hills, Lowenstein and Hills, Under the Hook, pp.68,80 [emphasis added].

Central Committee, Minutes, No 1, 14 Feb 1929, p.152(b)

State Committee reports detailed that 300 of the original volunteers (694) “had dispersed” by Feb 1929 and 100 additional men had been recruited, Central Committee, Minutes, No 1, 14 Feb 1929, pp.153(a)

RRC on the Waterfront (1931) p.25, quote p.28 [emphasis added]. The employers argued that they were committed to men recruited after the end of the strike because of the intimidation.

I. see of Newcastle Chamber cited in Central Committee, Minutes, No 2, 15 May 1931, p.171.

A complaint that £3,000-4,000 was leaving the Port community was made at the conclusion of the strike.

Reports to the Royal Commission, with a “large part of the purchasing power ...[of] wharf wages” going out of the locality, RRC on the Waterfront (1931) p.29


Adviser 14 May 1931

Ace 6 May 1929

see Hills and Lowenstein, Under the Hook, pp.75-76 for description of this type of community-based action.

RRC on the Waterfront (1931) p.19

Central Committee, Minutes, 5 Feb 1935, p.46

In Adelaide, I. C. Gowie (Dalgety manager) to London, 6 Sept 1930, in Documents, Dyer, S. W., “Business reaction to waterfront unrest in the great depression”, International Journal of Social History, Vol 20, 1975, p.111; for Melbourne, Lockwood cites a list of volunteers, compiled by the Melbourne branch, which appeared to have approximately 30% non-British workers, see Ship to Shore, ch.34, pp.275-281


If Palmry and Beaconsfield are added, the proportion residing in five suburbs rises to over 87 percent. Some 94% of lumpers lived in only 9 suburbs, all close to the waterfront. In contrast 1.7 of the 28 suburbs listed in the Fremantle members addresses had only 1 and 7 members, calculated from Schedule “B” of the 1936 Federal Waterside Workers Award, CAPE, Vol 36, 1936, pp.133-151.

For example J. W. Andrews (Jr and Sr) lived at 109 Queen Victoria St, Fremantle; G. and W. Anscombe both lived at 25 Zenobia St, Palmyra; J. and W. Bally at 80 Mary St, Fremantle and so on, CAPE, Vol 36, 1936, pp.133-151; MacIntyre, Militant, p.72 describes the process of intergenerational recruitment in Fremantle through the reciprocal preference between the dockers and lumpers. Similar reciprocal preference operated between coal workers, painters a dockers and waterside workers in other ports.


In reference to the dockers, MacIntyre, Militant, p.75, notes that in the interwar period the growth of suburbs around Fremantle widened residential patterns and weakened community/work solidarity. He correctly cautions an over reliance on this in analysing casualism.

Minutes of Conference between JCWE and FCWLU, 13 June 1933, p.5 in Brisbane JCWE Minutes, p.65 ANUNBA E817/73
Rechter, The Strike of Waterside Workers, pp. 48-49. Ironically the strong influence of labourist syndicalism a decade or so earlier was an important factor in the lower efficacy of traditional informalism.

Over 6400 was owed by 'non-scab' ports. Mackay, Bundaberg, Bowen and Innisfail were in arrears, I. Turley to Marshall, 29 Nov 1933, Brisbane Correspondence, WWF, ANU/NBA T62/1/4.


Quotation from ASOF, Report for Year 1929, p. 4, ANU/NBA E217/97; also ASOF Report for Year 1930, ANU/NBA E217/98, "It is very gratifying to note that the efficient work performed by the volunteers has been maintained..." (p. 4.)

Work rate data reported in CAR, Vol 1932, pp. 26-28; quotation at p. 28; Some raw data on Brisbane work rates were reported to WWF in Melbourne; coastal vessels (inward and outward) 25 tons/hr; sugar discharge "SS Bopple" 40 tons/hr, "SS Baralba" 50 tons/hr; av. overseas sugar load ships 32 hrs; general cargo discharge overseas 32 tons/hr and so on, I. Gilbert to Brown, 10 Nov 1931, Brisbane Correspondence, WWF, ANU/NBA T62/4/14.

CAR, Vol 1932, pp. 26-28; Beeby noted that only in Sydney (and only to a minor extent) did "oil-driven trucks" contribute to the increase in throughput.

W. Baldamus, Efficiency and Effort: An Analysis of Industrial Administration, (Tavistock, London, 1961)

eg. I. Turley to Caddern, 17 Sept 1931 states that he gets "repeated complaints of undue strain and proposes that clauses 12E, 14G and 14E(1) & (2) of the Melbourne Agreement be struck out. Melbourne Agreement, ANU/NBA T62/101; Guest concludes that the subjective assessment of effort is a primary measure, David Guest, "Have British Workers Been Working Harder in Thatcher's Britain: A Re-consideration of the Concept Effort", British Journal of Industrial Relations, 28.3, 1990, pp. 310-312.

Term was used in Sydney to describe the speed up of work, Gaby, The Restless Waterfront, p. 57.


Disability classification was part of the reform of the waterfront introduced by the Stevedoring Industry Commission during WWO.

R. Macqueen, Report on the Medical Examination of Waterside Workers with Disability Cards, ANU/NBA T62/1/2 (1943). Gaby who was a Sydney foreman through most of the 1930s commented that "No one was the worse for a good day's work," a view clearly contradicted by medical evidence, The Restless Waterfront, p. 58.

1911 and 1921 under the casual era, 1947 and 1958 under the SIC and ASIA respectively which included registration and decasualisation (through an attendance payment system) in 1958 figures.


2. The employers employed not to recruit older volunteers, and also dispensed with inefficient volunteers on several occasions. Note also that more than 10 years after the strike, WWF officials estimated that the average age of the look-out waterside workers in Brisbane who still wanted to return to the industry (a list of 270 had been prepared by the branch) was about 40 years old, one member was only 33 years old. This suggests that the employers targeted younger members in the vetting process in 1928 as this number of workers represented a high proportion of younger workers in 1928, evidence of Healy and West, Transcript of the Lawson Report (1939) 14 Mar 1939, p. 19, WWF, Federal Office ANU/NBA T55/Box 33.

Lawson confirmed the closing books increased the average age of WWF members, Lawson Report (1939), p. 6; Hills noted also that closing the books in Melbourne pushed men into the P&C, under the Melbourne (WEQ preference system, Lowenstein and Huls, Under the Hook, pp. 80-81; Richardson, "Dole Queue Patriots," p. 145 describes the Port Kembla situation.

Note that these ports were the only ones that submitted this data.

3. Also see, Gaby, The Restless Waterfront: p. 11 and Tull, "Blood on the Cargo", pp. 23-26, although the latter reported a fall in the 1936-37 data.

4. These estimates are based on estimates of members, initially on reported WWF membership, see Table 12.8. Note accident and mortality rates here are estimates based on: 1927 Registrar returns, 1933 Census figures and the Sept 1933 TWA licences have been used to estimate the labour force. I have assumed that the 1927 WWF membership, less 10% may be used for 1928-29 (to account for declining economic activity and then the strike). This figure is decreased a further 10% per year to the low point of the depression (1931) then increased by 10% per year as slow recovery began. I have compared the 1933 Census and the Sept 1933 registration figures – the difference (1196) is used as an adjustment factor, between the WWF membership returns and the actual labourforce. This factor is discounted by 100 per year to account for the decrease in non-WWF labour on the waterfront through the 1930s, as the Lawson Report reported 400 non-union labourers in Brisbane at the end of the decade. An additional 200 outside of Brisbane is assumed. Given that the 1934 was likely to have been only marginally inflated, the rates calculated on these figures were probably higher.


5. The employers appeared not to recruit older volunteers, and also dispensed with inefficient volunteers on several occasions. Note also that more than 10 years after the strike, WWF officials estimated that the average age of the look-out waterside workers in Brisbane who still wanted to return to the industry (a list of 270 had been prepared by the branch) was about 40 years old, one member was only 33 years old. This suggests that the employers targeted younger members in the vetting process in 1928 as this number of workers represented a high proportion of younger workers in 1928, evidence of Healy and West, Transcript of the Lawson Report (1939) 14 Mar 1939, p. 19, WWF, Federal Office ANU/NBA T55/Box 33.

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7. ICWE (Brisbane), Minutes, 21 Mar, 26 Apr 1932, p. 14, 22, ANU/NBA E217/73. The Commissioner later withdrew the discount for prompt payment of premiums as in 1933, the ICWE, decided protest was unproductive as while wage rates had fallen, "the claims for compensation probably are as great" Minutes, 7 Aug 1933, p. 67, ANU/NBA E217/73.


10. The committee requested that details of breaches be forwarded to Melbourne, Central Committee, Minutes, 31 Aug 1931, p. 7.

11. Clearly not all action was reported, but it was likely to better than in less turbulent times, e.g. in the latter part of 1930, Committee time was taken up with concern about the new Scullin Government and no discussion of disputes took place.


13. 92 members of the WWF were fined £1 with £1/- costs each and the Secretary had agreed to observe the award, ICWE (Brisbane), Minutes, 2 Feb 1934, p. 3, p. 4 (74 of Minute Book, ANU/NBA E217/73; Central Committee, Minutes, No 4, 3 July 1934, pp. 6-7.

14. Preference for WWF was part of the Charter conditions. The three companies holding the freight contracts - McIntyre, McDonald, BHP and Scott Fell - the first refused to concede consignee (ie SA Govt) control over choice of labour, Central Committee contacted BHP (who had used only WWF men in Melbourne) and could do nothing about Scott Fell & Co which was outside the ASOF and was antagonistic to the monopoly, Central Committee, Minutes, No 2, 16, 26 May 1930, pp. 51, 54.

15. Central Committee, Minutes, No 2, 21 June, 18 July 1930 pp. 61, 64, 75.

161 Central Committee, Minutes, No. 2, 1 Sept 1930, p.89

118 Talks reported in Central Committee, Minutes, No. 2, 28, 29, 30 Aug, 1, 3, 8, 10, 16, 17, 19, 20, 23, 24, Sept 1930, pp.83, 85, 86–90, 92, 94–95, 98–100, 102–104; Advertiser, 28, 29 Aug, 1–24 Sept 1930

117 Although the employer’s wages data for periods in 1931 and 1932 indicated that WWF members did get more than half of aggregate wages paid, Central Committee, Minutes, No. 3, 8 Aug 1932, p.81

120 Central Committee, Minutes, No. 2, 22 Jan 1931, p.119; 15 June 1931, p.183

121 Proposals of Maritime Conference for Special Provisions to be Inserted in the CCAA, Minutes, No. 2, 22 June 1934, p.6 (p.80 of Minutes Book), ANU/NBA E217/73

122 This did not include free labour employed in North Queensland ports, which was about 230 during the strike. These figures fell in many ports, eg Townsville (initially 40) returned to normal. Overall less than 200 were employed in North Queensland, giving a total of approximately 4,500.

123 WWF, COM, Minutes, 30 April 1929, ANU/NBA T62/1/2

124 Lockwood, Ship to Shore, pp.252–255 argues that Hogan’s allusions to federal government’s use of agents provocateurs implies that such agents existed. A contrary view is that this story may have been a method of distracting the state government from the role of the federal government and shipowners in the strike.

125 Central Committee, Minutes, No. 1, 14, 16 Jan 1929, pp.137,138

126 Central Committee, Minutes, 23, 24, 25, 31 Oct 1928, pp.96,99,100,110

127 Lockwood, Ship to Shore, p.273

128 Central Committee, Minutes, No. 1, 17 Dec 1928, 14 Feb 1929, pp.132,153 respectively.

129 Central Committee, Minutes, No. 1, 26 Feb 1929, p.155; figures reported three years later indicated 79 men admitted of which only 41 were still working in 1932, Minutes, No. 3, 10 Feb 1932, p.57

130 Central Committee, Minutes, No. 1, 1, 7, 9 Nov, 17 Dec 1928, pp.122,144,132. Reported to Com. Comm. that 500 WWF men leaving the union and the Adelaide committee was granted conditional approval (on 19 Nov) to enrol these maried men and returned servicemen for second preference. However the union was only contemplating setting up another body to apply for state registration (as the volunteers union was reportedly doing), interview with S. Garrison, cited in Cumow, Shall We Strike, p.92

131 It had advised state committees not to engage in negotiations, Central Committee, Minutes, No. 1, 12, 27, 29 Oct 1928, pp.80,104,105

132 The conference was on 18 Dec 1928, Central Committee, Minutes, No. 1 11, 13 Dec 1928, 7, 14, 29 Jan, 6, 11, 24 Apr, 27 May 1929, pp.130,131,134,137,145,158,165,167,171; ASOF, Minutes, No. 11, 15 Jan, 18 June 1929, pp.233,284, ANU/NBA E217/11

133 Reported by the ACTU that 5,500 WWF men were unemployed in Jan 1929, ACTU, Minutes, 3 Jan 1929, p.417, ANU/NBA N21/16. Given the estimated numbers of volunteers (noted above) employed on the waterfront this figure was an underestimate. Turley reported to the Federal COM that 6,000 WWF men were unable to ‘meet thefr obhigations’, WWF COM Minutes, 11 April 1929, p.1, ANU/NBA T62/1/2. The figure was higher especially as the depression had more effect. I put the figure at some 7,500.

134 Latham to CC, referred to in Central Committee, Minutes, No. 1, 29 Jan 1929. (pillage had in fact fallen markedly.)

135 Yates of the Attorney-General’s department inspected ports in early Jan and Latham requested a memo outlining the position on the waterfront, Central Committee, Minutes, No. 1, 14, 24 Jan pp.136,142

136 1. Elford to Latham, 22 Jan 1929, Papers of Sir John Latham, cited in Morris, “Maritime Labour and the TWA”, p.5. Central Committee instructed companies to keep records of the rate of work as early as 24 Sept 1928, Central Committee, Minutes, No. 1, 24 Sept 1928, pp.43,45


139 Central Committee, Minutes, No. 1, 26 Feb 1929, p.153

140 Central Committee, Minutes, No. 1, 25 Feb 1929, p.154

141 Turley approached employers a many occasions, WWF, COM, Minutes, 9,13 Apr 1929, ANU/NBA T62/1/2

142 Meeting with Latham on 16 April in which he expressed sympathy over the demoralisation of the pick-up, WWF, COM, Minutes, 17 Apr 1929, p.3; ANU/NBA T62/1/2

143 Control of the Waterfront, n.d. (c.May 1929) Proposals re repel of TWA, WWF, Federal Office, T62/61/3

144 From an OSRA Interport conference, Central Committee, Minutes, No. 1, 27 May 1929, p.172

145 Anderson was Chairman of the British company. Orient SNCo., Central Committee, Minutes, No. 1, 24 Apr, 6 May 1929, pp.167,162

146 Note that the shipowners saw the TWA as covering both sea-going and shore-based workers; Central Committee, Minutes, No. 1, 6,27 May, 21 June, 12 July, 5,8,9 Aug. 9 Sept 1929, pp.151,172,178,185,186–189,197. The also conferred over the Joint Committee plan. It was not until the 1935 strike that regulations were issued by the government.

147 See Age, 31 July, 1 Aug 1929. The written proposal made no mention of the action of volunteers.

148 WWF, Federal COM, Minutes, 17 April 1929, ANU/NBA T62/1/2. There was discussion over the method of setting tonnage rates, with the union favouring an independente tribunal established by the government and Anderson an industry based tribunal. It was noted that a similar scheme operated in Seattle in the USA. Also I. Anderson to WWF received COM Minutes, 27 April 1929, ANU/NBA T62/1/2

149 see discussions re: L. Latham to COM, 8 May, 1. PM Bruce to COM, n.d., meeting with Latham 13 May, WWF, COM, Minutes, 9,10,11, 12 May 1929, ANU/NBA T62/1/2

150 Central Committee, Minutes, 15 June, 4 July 1929, pp.176,180

151 Turley and G. Moates (Gen Pres, Marine Stewards Union) to 5 other unions, 10 July 1929, WWF, Federal Office, ANU/NBA T62/2/1

152 They were backed up by state bodies and a Commonwealth Maritime Disputes Committee.


154 Central Committee, Minutes, No. 2, 10,21,22 Jan, 24 Apr, 11 June 1929, pp.138,139,141,167,175,178


157 WWF, COM, Minutes, 23 Oct 1929 ANU/NBA T62/1/2;

158 Conference was held on 6 Dec with Brennan attending, Central Committee, Minutes, No. 1, 3,5,6 Dec 1929, pp.207–210

159 Note from WWF, COM n.d. (c. Dec 1929), Proposals to repeal of TWA, WWF, Federal Office T62/61/3

160 Applied to correspondence from Early Page, Central Committee, Minutes, No. 1, 5 Dec 1929, p.206

161 Central Committee, Minutes, No. 1, 20 Dec 1929, p.216. Since no volunteers were employed in Fremantle little immediate benefit in terms of membership was gained for the WWF.
Although, according to legal opinion this was only the case under certain circumstances, that is in the interregnum period between the
Central Committee, Minutes, No 2, 1 Apr 1930, p.29; earlier in the year the shipowners had requested that Turley put any request in
writing, Minutes, No 2, 15 Jan 1930, p.17.

Legal opinion obtained from Menzies, Ham, Lewis and at least 4 other prominent legal practitioners or scholars. Central Committee,
1931, pp.28-29,30,33

The wage rate was reported to be £4/9/- a week as well.

AustraUan Stevedoring and Shipping Labour under the TWA” p.22

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The 10 hour regulation was introduced Regulation No 101, cl.5 6 Aug,
1931, p.257.

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1931, p.257.
Preference was under Sec 54 of the Queensland Act; negated by Statutory Rules No 12 of 1933 (28 Jan), Commonwealth Statutory Rules, 1933, p.113; ASOF, Report for the Year 1933, pp.3-4, ANU/NBA E217/101; Central Committee, Minutes, No 3, 9, 20 Dec 1931, 23 Jan 1932, pp.111,114,117; JCWE (Brisbane) Minutes 16 Dec 1932, p.55; JCWE, Tenth Annual Report, 23 Jan 1933, pp.4-5, JCWE, Minutes, p.57, ANU/NBA E217/73; WWF, COM, Minutes, 31 Oct 1932, WWF, Federal Office ANU/NBA T62/1/2
207 to CC, Central Committee, Minutes, No 3, 28 Feb 1933, p.129; CAR, Vol 31, 1932, pp.32-33, also p.300
208 Application to insert definition of volunteer, No 182 of 1933, CAR, Vol pp.534-535
209 Central Committee, Minutes, No 3, 12 Sept 1933, p.160
211 Central Committee, Minutes, No 3, 7,11,13,14 Dec 1933, pp.182,183,187,188. This was not included until mid-1934.
212 Turley to Marshall, 23,25,29 Nov, 22 Dec 1933, Brisbane Correspondence, WWF, ANU/NBA T62/8/1/5; WWF, Conference of Branches, Minutes, 28 June 1934, p.56 WWF, Federal Office ANU/ABL T62/3/1
213 Central Committee, Minutes, No 4, 14 Aug, 5,16 Oct, 1934, pp.9,23,25
215 Motion to reluctantly support WEC in other ports lost on tied 10 all vote, WWF, Conference of Branches, 28 June 1934, pp.57-59, WWF Federal Office ANU/NBA T62/3/1; Lawcom Report (1939), p.5
216 ASOF, Report for Year 1936, p.15, ANU/NBA E217/106
217 Turley to Caddeia 30 July 1931, WWF, Federal Office, Correspondence Melbourne Branch, ANU/NBA T62/101/1
218 ASOF, Report for Year 1931, ANU/NBA E217/98 and Report for Year 1932, p.5, ANU/NBA E217/100
219 Principle agreed by all Central Committee members in decision to shape proposed WEC regulations, Central Committee, Minutes, 7 Dec 1933, p.182
220 Big labourist Brisbane secretary A. Marshall commented to Turley that the "employers' Servile Agents" controlled the national parliament, 1 Marshall to Turley, 5 May 1933, Brisbane Correspondence, WWF ANU/NBA T62/8/1/5
222 Turley's motion emphasising "every support" of the ALP, urging members to "vote for and assist our candidates [sic] in every way possible," also Turley's motion in support of arbitration, WWF, Conference of Branches, 27 June 1934, 22 June 1934 pp.50,17-20, WWF, Federal Office ANU/NBA T62/3/2
223 Policy was reiterated on 8 November, Central Committee, Minutes, 29 Oct, 8 Nov 1928, pp.107-124. Example of action were; an application for cancellation of license of waterside worker arrested in Melbourne for attacking free labourers, application against Newcastle men for refusal to move vessel; men not working with free labour in Melbourne; breach of award in Adelaide, 29 Oct, 2 Nov 1928, 29 Jan 1929 pp.105,107,115,146
224 The union fined member White for working cargo as directed by the employer, but contrary to union safety rules on sling loads. The Court determination cleared White (who had obeyed a legitimate direction of the employer) but fined the branch £10 plus costs, for an unlawful attempt to limit the sling load. CAR, Vol 27, 1928-29, p.789, costs were £5 5s.
225 Central Committee, Minutes, No 1, 8 April 1929, p.160
226 The no of applications for awards, variations and interpretations was 590 in 1931, 353 in 1930, 202 in 1929, ASOF, Report for the Year 1931, p.15, ANU/NBA E217/99
227 Covered Victoria, SA, NSW, CAR Vol 29, 1930, pp.345-386. Objections regarding registration in 1927 and coverage were dealt with in this decision.
228 CAR, Vol 31, 1932, p.327
229 Telegrams. Brown to Turley, 3,6 Feb 1931, Brisbane Correspondence, WWF, ANU/NBA T62/8/4/1
231 CAR, Vol 31, 1932, p.504
232 CAR, Vol 36, 1936, pp.388-389
233 RBC On the Waterfront (1931), p.27-28
234 RBC On the Waterfront (1931), p.29
235 Conference between Representatives of JWCE and WEC, Minutes, 31 May 1933, p.3, attachment JCWE, Minutes, p.62, ANU/NBA E217/102
236 Fig the cases of arbitrary confiscation of discs, M. Foley. M. Brown to Turley 3 Jan 1929 Brisbane Correspondence, WWF, ANU/NBA T62/8/3/1; R. Kelly and when questioned by the WWF the employers replied they had "no further need of Mr Kelly's services". M. Brown to Turley, 20 June 1930, also "members who have opened their mouths on the job [to complain] have their pink tickets taken from them and they are now not admitted to the picking up shed" 1. Tyrrell to Turley, 21 July 1930, Brisbane Correspondence, WWF, ANU/NBA T62/8/4/1
238 CAR, Vol 32, 1933, p.535
239 Memorandum of Agreement, WWF (Sydney Branch) and OSSRA and others, 18 July 1929, CAR, Vol 28, 1929-30, p.1247; variation of award, cl 17(a) CAR, Vol 28, 1929-30, pp.466-467
240 Gaby. The Restless Waterfront, pp.60-64
241 CAR, Vol 31, 1932, pp.29-33, quote p.33
242 Central Committee, Minutes, No 3, 31 Nov 1931, p.27
244 WWF, COM, Minutes, 26,27,28,29,31 Oct 1932, WWF Federal Office, ANU/NBA T62/1/2
245 Central Committee, Minutes, No 3, 11 April, 9 May, 1933, pp.139,140
246 Central Committee, Minutes, No 4, 3 July, 28,31 Aug, 18,24 Sept 1934
243. On smoke-obs, employers conceded a penalty rate of 1½ 2/1d. p.h.; on transfer provisions they agreed that only for one shift, and between ships as well as jobs, Bundaberg employers abandoned the minimum 2 hours and accepted the Burns times; and clauses for the proposed review committee were finalized in February, Central Committee, Minutes, No 4, 29 Oct 1934, 1.5,26 Feb, 11 June, 4 July 1935 pp.27.43,45,51,66,68

244. 1. Turley to CC, 30 Sept 1935, Central Committee, Minutes, No 4, 13 Oct, 30 Dec 1935, pp.84,92


246. 1. Rowe to Morris 26 Aug 1925

247. 1. Rowe (sec. FWI) to Turley (Gen. Sec. WFW) 26 Aug 1925, cited in Tall, "Blood on the Cargo", p.18

248. In addition the branches had failed to comply by not submitting lists of members and officers, 3 Nov 1931 Queensland Industrial Gazette, 24 Dec 1931, p.538. 1. Turley to Brown, 28 Sept 1931, Brisbane Correspondence, WFW, ANU/NBA T62/8/1/4

249. A. Brown, Queensland Report to WWF, COM, Minutes, 21 Dec 1932, p.1, WFW, Federal Office ANU/NBA T62/1/2; objections from JCWE, CRA, PCWLU, the FSPU and AWU, Registration Application No. 141 of 1933, 25 Aug 1933, Queensland Industrial Registry issued under the Industrial Conciliation and Arbitration Act, 1932; Brisbane JCWE, Minutes, 31 Mar, 2 June 1933, pp.60,64, ANU/NBA E217/73; Central Committee, Minutes, No 3, 9 May, 24 July 1933 pp.140,151

250. Central Committee, Minutes, No 3, 29 Sept 1933, p.169, also contact with Latham 30 Aug 1933, p.159; 3 Nov 1933, p.174; CAR Vol 32, 1933, p.596

251. The Old WFW registration was cancelled in 1947, File No 222 of 1947, Queensland Government Gazette, 14 April 1947; an award covering work at Bergl (Aust) Ltd, in Bowen was also blocked by a federal injunction and further applications were rejected, ASOF, Report for Year 1934, pp.19–20; 1. Turley to Marshall, 10 Nov 1933, Brisbane Correspondence, WFW, ANU/NBA T62/8/1/5


253. 1. Turley to Marshall, 10 Nov and 30 Nov 1933 also 1. Marshall to Turley, 4 Nov 1933, Brisbane Correspondence, WFW, ANU/NBA T62/8/1/5


255. Par 7 (D) of the award nominally gave workers the right to finish a job albeit under the direction of the employer, numerous examples of shift infringements, 1. Brown to Turley, 24 May, 1932, p.5; 1. Brown to Turley, 12 July 1932 (several examples); 1. Turley to Brown, 18 July 1932, "quite evident that the employers ... are exploiting the shift and other clauses." 1. Brown to Turley, 25 Aug 1932, in Brisbane Correspondence, WFW ANU/NBA T62/8/1/5

256. CAR Vol 32, 1933, p.531


258. 1. Brown to Turley, 3 April 1932; 1. Turley to Brown, 9 April 1932, Brisbane Correspondence, WFW, ANU/NBA T62/8/1/5


261. More than 100 men hired, esp. for wool work, trucking in sheds and on wharf; Burke's av. 5 a week, AUSNCo 15/wk, Howard Smiths 15, Beachy was on holiday in north Queensland.

262. WFW against North Coast SN Co., on 13 Feb, decision 13 Mar, 1933, Brisbane Correspondence, WFW, ANU/NBA T62/8/1/5

263. see eg. 1. Brown to Turley, 25 Aug 1932, Brisbane Correspondence, WFW, ANU/NBA T62/8/1/5. The award specified two hours, but employers often refused to pay for short periods.

264. Decisions on definition of discharge and extension of transfer, CAR, Vol 32, 1933, pp.531,536 respectively


266. Marshall to Turley, 8 Jan 1934, Brisbane Correspondence, WFW, ANU/NBA T62/8/1/5

267. More than 100 men hired, esp. for wool work, trucking in sheds and on wharf; Burke's av. 5 a week, AUSNCo 15/wk, Howard Smiths 15, Patricks 18, ASSCo 15, Moreton Bay Steved. Co. 5 totally 73 for that should be WFW work, 1. Marshall to Turley, 11 Aug 1934, WFW, Brisbane Correspondence, ANU/NBA T62/8/1/5


269. CAR Vol 36, 1936, pp.102,103

270. ASOF, Report for Year 1936, pp.3,11, ANU/NBA E217/104

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272. Central Committee, Minutes, No 3, 26 Nov 4,7,8 Dec 1931, pp.33,38,40,42, quote at p.40

273. Central Committee, Minutes, No 3, 3,8,28 Feb, 6 June 1933, pp.120,123,129,142; CAR Vol 32, 1933, pp.292–294 [emphasis added]

274. CAR Vol 32, 1933, pp.292–294, quote at p.292


276. Central Committee, Minutes, 6 Dec 1934, p.35

277. telegr. reported in Central Committee, Minutes, 24 Dec 1934, p.38

278. Central Committee, Minutes, 7 May, 26 Aug, 16 Sept 1935, pp.59,75,79

279. Regulations covered all seamen in Sydney, Melbourne, Pt. Adelaide, Brisbane, Newcastle and Townsville, ASOF, Report for Year 1935, pp.3,13–14,16–18. Shipowners saw this as "the biggest defeat [of the SUA] in its existence" (p.18); idem, Report for Year, 1936, pp.19–20, ANU/NBA E217/104

280. ASOF, Report for Year 1936, p.16 ANU/NBA E217/104

281. ASOF, Report for Year 1936, p.16 ANU/NBA E217/104

282. ASOF, Report for Year 1935, p.5 ANU/NBA E217/103

283. Williams, The Years of Big Jim, pp.10–19

284. Williams, The Years of Big Jim, pp.24–25

285. Of the 9665 votes cast, Healy (3385) was the first past the post, Turley received 2656, and the rest to other candidates, Williams, The Years of Big Jim, pp.36–39; WFW, Federal Conference, Minutes, 1 Nov 1937, p.76, Sydney Branch, ANU/NBA, Z248/Box 53
Part 5

Chapter 13
Conclusion: Industrial Authority, Organisation and the Labour Process

I. Stevedoring and the Labour Process

I stated at the beginning of this thesis that much of the Australian and overseas research on stevedoring rested on the explanatory role of antagonistic worker attitudes. Such attitudes are accorded an independent causal role or deterministically generated by the central features of the industry - they self-select, are outsiders, misfits, criminals, hold antagonistic attitudes to authority or similar psychological characteristics. Alternatively, the uncertainties of casualism, competitive hiring, insecurity from technological change, or other characteristics of the industry are claimed to engender similar psychological attributes, which are then accorded a central explanatory role. Most studies record the twin evils of, disorganisation and inefficiency in production, and turbulence and conflict in industrial relations, particularly in Anglophone countries.

Such studies point to endemic features of the industry which remain in many countries, despite sustained attempts by key players - the state, employers and unions - to reform the industry. The problem areas of production and industrial relations have persisted. Reported successes, as in many European or American West Coast ports, attract criticism from another quarter - of an over reliance on excessive state intervention, tolerance of union power or other undesirable features. On this basis they are rejected, again predominantly in Anglophone countries.

Research based on the labour process perspective has been influenced, with few exceptions, by the work of Braverman and has largely focused on the post-WWII period. Linked to technological change, this approach generally concludes that stevedoring work has been degraded and/or deskilled and employers have regain workplace control in the industry in the face of earlier worker successes. Thus the position of the modern waterfront worker differs little from that of an unskilled factory worker. A broader research perspective that has been influenced by, but not committed to labour process theory, draws similar conclusions concerning work relations and content. Yet at the same time these writers point to areas of joint control of the labour process or indeed, direct union control.

The theoretical framework developed in this study (set out in chapter two) elaborated an amended labour process approach. The core dynamics of capital accumulation rest on structural relations, and from this the model accords greater explanatory weight to economic organisation and patterns of industrial authority in the structure of work relations. In other words, in examining
capitalist economic imperatives, authority dynamics and organisational patterns of production, and regulatory and the labour market institutions, are important.

Marx's conception of the transition from formal to real subsumption of the labour process under capital sought to encapsulate fundamental societal changes within a single conceptual scheme - the relations of human labour and social value, or the labour process to economic dynamics. Marx tied organisational change to the structure of the labour process and the relation of necessary and surplus labour time within the capitalist value form. This formulation represented for Marx, an historical move of capital from the manufacturing phase to modern industry or from formal to real subsumption of the labour process. Braverman re-interpreted this as a move from simple to complex technology and from workers' control to capitalist control, linked to the loss of the unity of conception and execution. This loss of skill by direct workers undermined their authority. Management captured control of economic organisations and the labour process in monopoly capitalism.

The framework used in this study indicated a greater role for organisational forms in the transition to real subsumption and, the role of authority in work and industrial relations was more complex. Here significant weight is accorded to changes in the organisational context, the position of the stevedoring industry and the role of industrial authority in the workplace and in regulatory institutions. In this framework worker 'attitudes' - conceived here as normative systems - were tied to the demands of the labour process and employer strategy, but also to social authority outside the workplace. The next section presents a review and summary of the empirical analysis and argument. Finally, section three turns to the implications of the study for the questions it addressed and the theoretical development.

II. An Overview of the Analysis and Argument

1. Pre-Industrial Phase: British Legacy and Australian Experience

In chapter three key features of the pre-industrial organisation of shipping and stevedoring were set out, focusing on the period 1600-1800. This chapter established a base of social, economic and authority relations which were later shaped by capitalist pressures. The partnership model owning ships was deeply embedded in social rank and existing forms of commercial activities. It was centred on the individual ship, with shares held by merchant and social interests of equivalent social status. The productive role of ships was subordinated to the economics of trading profit rather than industrial profit. State sanctioned mercantilist regulation created monopolies for trading 'companies', that regulated the activities of ships and excluded outsiders. Shipping operations themselves were directly under the authority of ship masters whose social and commercial position was close to the merchants. Masters operated as agents, linked by commercial incentives to owners, rather than as employer-employee. They had legal responsibility for stevedoring, and much routine stevedoring work was done by seamen. In established ports shore based labour developed it was regulated in a similar manner to merchants, with rights of monopoly, exclusion and internal regulation. Corporate 'Fellowship' status was granted to casual porters in London to provide a service to merchants.

Operational authority was also devolved to porters, where senior and master porters held key positions in the workplace. The importance of these structures for the argument here, lies in the
authority of direct workers and traditional masters over work methods, work organisation and labour organisation. The core of industrial authority lay in workgroup experience and competencies embedded in traditional informal work methods. This system declined after 1800. Labour monopolies were dismantled as new waterfront dock companies emerged (from large scale warehousing) and shore-based technological change occurred. Yet the informal basis of authority remained, albeit encased in a newly emerging set of structures.

At this time, 1788 to 1850 that Australia was established as a penal colony. Early colonial development was restricted by the imposition of British mercantilist shipping policy. Combined with the distance, size and nature of the colony it was not surprisingly that the development of colonial shipping and stevedoring was limited. But the practical demands for water transport in communication and freight meant that shipping was a key economic activity in the colonies. It closely followed the British pattern of shipping – merchant domination of partnerships but not operations – as it developed in the nineteenth century.

Chapter Four outlines early colonial stevedoring, which was performed by a variety of labour, and employers – seamen, convict labour, free wharf labourers, stores and warehouse workers and so on. By the 1820s it was likely that some men followed wharf labouring and established continuous market attachment. This grew haltingly, due to fluctuations in shipping, economic activity and the influence of convictism over succeeding decades. Up to the 1850s stevedoring organisation and employment displayed a discontinuous organisational structure. Employment was dispersed across different types of employers, as was the control of labour, resulting in the absence of detailed control-systems. Informal authority over direct workers was generated and sustained within workplace relations, based on customary methods and practices. Workers’ experience of control varied by employer, but nevertheless they adapted to new technology and scale of operations, as workers did in Britain. Successive waves of dock development broke traditional state regulation of labour in Britain, but informalism survived, based on the strength of communal ties and absence of detailed labour control-systems. In Australia informalism flowered under the peculiar conditions of the Australian colonies for a short period in the decades after 1850.

2. Shipping Revolution and Stevedoring Expansion

Chapters Five and Six outline shipping and stevedoring between the 1850s and 1890 when the goldrushes and the ‘long boom’ of economic growth underpinned shipping expansion. Convict labour was discontinued. Stevedoring stabilised in larger ports as the company structure came to dominate colonial shipping in place of traditional partnerships. As a result shipping was increasingly structured by the capitalist economic demands of production as common carriers, thereby changing the context of stevedoring. The use of steamships intensified industrialisation of shipping via the tendency to a coordinated organisational structure. Stevedoring was increasingly seen as a cost and even an obstruction to the continuity of shipping production.

The informalist pattern of labour organisation after the 1850s was built on this expanded shipping industry. Greater volume of shipping and larger sailing ships raised demand for stevedoring skills. Greater waterfront employment, occupational recognition, direct contracting, stabilisation of waterfront communities, and benefit societies all combined in the decades after the gold rushes to establish an informalist pattern of industrial authority and industrial relations.
'Unskilled' wharf labourers followed craft workers in aspiring to occupational position, stability and status via the formation of trade Societies. However, the industrialisation of shipping simultaneously undermined the conditions of informalism. By the 1880s economic and work pressures on stevedoring from shipping companies outstripped the capacity of informalist work relations to absorb change. Demands for lower costs and faster throughput, added to employer demands for control over operations that inevitably challenged customary work and authority relations. Therefore the 'labour question' emerged. Collective labour came to rely on Society work rules to maintain customary work conditions.

The industrial conflict of the later 1880s and 1890 centred on the struggle over work control and industrial authority. The Society claims for social respectability was transformed into a union defence of work control. The custom-based industrial and moral role of informalism was broken by the 1890 defeat. State arbitration was advocated by many union leaders, although it took a decade or more for it to be generally adopted. But here formal authority, by its nature, cut across the moral imperatives of the informal group. Societies were perforce transformed into industrial unions, more in name than practice. Chapters Seven to Twelve chart the implications of the long period of transition from the informal to formal authority relations in stevedoring.

3. Stevedoring in Transition - Coordination, Unionisation & Formal Industrial Relations

Chapters Seven and Eight examine the organisational structure of shipping and stevedoring in the aftermath of the 1890 strike. Three key points emerged. First, the shipping industry stabilised with the capitalist company structure and a stable labour force. A small number of shipping companies dominated the industry and they moved towards an integrated organisational structure. The labour force age profile was no longer skewed to younger workers, there were fewer sources of employment, and workers resided in established waterfront areas. Second, the dominant employers established a federation industry organisation or institutional mode. The ASOF came to control the freight market through the 'Collins' pool arrangements. This limited technological development in shipping and industrial development of stevedoring. The latter was more closely integrated into the organisational structure of shipping, but operated on a cost–plus basis. Work methods remained manual. Third, the employers' labour policy was increasingly coordinated.

The employers coordination of labour policy, and the product market, however, rested on an unstable foundation. The continued dependence on labour intensive work methods sustained the role of informal relations at the local level. The resultant clash of principles, between the formal industrial relations system and informalism, focused conflict on work control. The tension between the nature of industrial authority under formal industrial relations and informalism, sustained at the local level, is woven through the remainder of Parts III and IV.

Chapter Eight examined changes in the labour process including occupational and authority relations in the workplace. While administrative staff and management systems grew, labour control in stevedoring remained almost exclusively dependent upon the direct control of foremen on the wharf, up to the end of the 1930s. The supervisory ratio was approximately 1:40, which made detailed supervision difficult in a dispersed labour process. Therefore foremen were forced to depend on informal relations, particularly the 'bull system', which weakened the standardisation of integrated company labour policies and clashed with formal rule-making.
Unionisation and industrial relations developed under these conditions from 1900 to WWII. Chapters nine to twelve focus on phases in this period. Nine examines the initial period of national unionism and industrial relations after the 1890s depression to the progressive moves to federal arbitration. Chapter Ten focuses on the experience of the first federal award during WWI. Chapter Eleven turns to union politics and industrial relations up to the 1928 strike, and Chapter Twelve looks at the aftermath of the strike.

These chapters chart the uneven processes of formalisation, moving from the initial emergence of collective bargaining to federal arbitration and the fate of informalism to the end of the depression. The nature of the labour process, internal company organisation and continuing tension between local and federal unionism combined to see continuing instability in stevedoring industrial relations. These organisational conditions provided the industrial space for the politicisation and radicalisation of solidarism. The local workgroup and community basis of solidarist action was both weakened and strengthened. Dependent on an amalgam of syndicalism, socialism, industrial unionism and direct action, it developed a significant radical ‘job control’ dimension, particularly in Queensland. But the federal and port leadership embraced a labourist perspective, which sat uneasily with the workplace autonomy and direct action that were part of the emergent radicalism. This tension remained unresolved during the 1920s. While ‘job control’ action secured industrial advances, albeit within the arena of arbitration, WWF organisational shortcomings were sharply exposed in the 1928 strike. Greater employer coordination and cooperation, culminating with the establishment of the Central Committee in 1927, saw methodical planning inflict an historical defeat on the WWF in the wake of the Beeby award of September 1928. Employers excluded thousands of workers, isolated WWF branches and supported alternative unions with a framework provided by the conservative Bruce government’s coercive Transport Workers’ Act.

Chapter twelve details the aftermath of the strike loss for the union. By 1935 the union remained in a weak position. With the aid of the Transport Workers’ Act, the economic effects of the depression and superior federal organisation the employers reconstructed the labour market and the pick-up through the use of volunteer labour. The short period in office of the Scullin Labor government proved fruitless for the union. The WWF remained severely weakened until WWII.

In this context communist leaders emerged. The election of Jim Healy as General Secretary in 1937, and later other communists, marked a new epoch for the union and the industry which lie beyond the scope of this thesis. Briefly, the communists built a new organisational discipline, more closely aligned to the demands of a formalised industrial relations system. The shape of union ideology, waterfront politics and industrial relations was thereby transformed. The focus of organisation switched from the local industrial sphere to the societal – from traditional sectionalism to political transformation – as the new leadership channelled solidarism and direct action into the service of broad industrial and political aims. It welded centripetal forces generated from the practical experience of the labour process which underpinned spontaneous direct action, to industry wide, national regulation of the industry. WWII propelled the WWF leadership into the new regulatory framework, based on joint regulation enforced by the State, under the Stevedoring Industry Commission from 1942. Not surprisingly, the leaders immediately focused on two key aspects, regulating the structure of the labour market and regulating workplace authority. With the
SIC in place the post-war period saw decasualisation, attendance payments, holiday and sick pay and later permanent employment.

III. The Australian Stevedoring Industry and the Labour Process

This study thus points to a number of conclusions. The key question addressed is the relationship between the shape of work organisation and the production process and industrial relations in the Australian stevedoring industry? It may be answered in three parts covering each of the following areas: firstly, examining the nature of work, how it changed and what were the effects of work organisation in stevedoring, secondly, linking this with the broad conditions and organisation of the industrial production process in water transport, and thirdly, by examining the combined effects these factors on the pattern of industrial relations.

1. Work and Work Organisation

Surprisingly the core of tasks, jobs and processes remained largely unchanged over the period 1800 to 1935. There were three key exceptions; first, the nature of the materials used for stevedoring equipment on ship and shore for work tasks, second, the source of motive power and third, the resultant increased scale of operations. Steel replaced wood in ship construction, wire cables replaced hemp ropes for rigging gear and steam and electric power replaced much of the muscle power in seamen's and stevedores work. Yet these changes did not reconstruct the labour process. Rather, new materials and power sources permitted larger packaging and larger load sizes which still remained dependent on significant manual labour input. To be sure, powered lifting gear did the bulk of lifting, but manual labour was still required for short moves around the hook, moving in the hold and sheds, trucking and stacking - all handling larger, heavier and more dangerous cargoes. These new materials and technology raised the scale of production.

The larger scale expanded aggregate demand for labour, albeit unevenly. The need for many core competencies grew, some traditional and peripheral skills atrophied, while demand for newer coordination competencies was created. The distribution of these changes contributed to the rationalisation and intensification of a largely traditional labour process. In short, technology altered the context of operational stevedoring but did not 'reconstruct' the labour process.

It may be concluded that the influence of technology or scientific management in terms of task, job or process design - that is, job design and work organisation - was largely absent in the Australian stevedoring industry from the 1880s to 1935. The deskilling thesis has marginal application. The skill mix altered, resulting in a larger proportion of 'unskilled' workers, but widespread deskilling was not evident. Ever present labour process contingencies provided the material conditions for the exercise of many competencies, although, with only a few exceptions, wharf labouring work was deemed to be unskilled throughout the period examined. What was of greater importance was the effects of the organisation of stevedoring production and its linkage with shipping.

2. The Labour Process and the Production Process

A key change in the shape of stevedoring resulted from the relationship between the labour process and production process in water transport. A key focus of this study has been the organisational impact of deepening capitalist imperatives on shipping and stevedoring. The separation of discrete labour processes and analysis of their linkage to the production process as a
whole, provides a framework to view of the progression of organisational changes. Studies of stevedoring from the labour process perspective have adopted a manufacturing model, focusing exclusively on existing labour processes. This already had the potential of employers control over the workplace. The nature of factory production, defined as production using the flow-line principle based on machinery, subsumes the work organisation into a seamless web of production.

In contrast, the water transport industry is naturally geographically dispersed and the production process cannot be located in a single location as a seamless web. The linkages of labour processes depend upon the shape of the organisational capacities of the inter-modal component economic unit(s) as much as the technological/skill basis of production. That is process integration is as important a material force in production as its technical base. Such organisational capacities emerged from the shape of the markets in freight, commercial services, stevedoring, storage, and other transport modes which were themselves shaped by technological, legal and regulatory contexts. These conditions shaped the development of water transport from the a discontinuous organisation to coordinated, and finally, to an integrated company structure, as well as the technological development in sea-going shipping. Looking at each shipping company, the integration of functions in terms of the command and control of production was incomplete. This study has identified the role of the industry's institutional mode, that is the federation pattern of market coordination, in this conclusion. Shipping companies shaped the development of Australian stevedoring through a less than thoroughgoing integration with shipping. A key capitalist dynamic in stevedoring came from shipping, rather than the endogenous transformation of the stevedoring labour process. Put another way the organisational configuration of labour processes critically shaped production.

Thus Marx's conclusion that the effects of capital vary by industry, and that existing labour processes may be transformed into 'external departments' of production is illustrated in this case study. While the absorption of stevedoring into shipping took place progressively over the period covered here, full integration was not achieved – it remained 'uncoupled' or 'relatively autonomous'. The federation coordination of the freight market partially insulated the waterfront from market pressures. In contrast, as I will conclude in the next section, employer policy sought to maximise market pressures in the labour market. Thus I can conclude that the labour process perspective is enriched to the extent that critical organisational conditions of production are considered and their link the immediate process under examination.

3. **Labour Process, Industrial Authority and Industrial Relations**

The final aspect of the study was the examination of industrial relations on the waterfront in light of the above conclusions. At first sight industrial relations appear characterised by conflict and disruption. There is little doubt that the material conditions of the labour process – its contingent nature, need for workgroup cooperation, low level of mechanisation and dependence on manual labour competencies – plus labour market insecurity – made key contributions to this poor record on the waterfront.

But many other industries and workplaces over the period covered here had similar characteristics, but did not display unstable industrial relations. I have argued that the pattern of industrial authority is a key factor on the waterfront. The transition from an informalist pattern to a
formal pattern of industrial relations was more problematic and extended than in many other industries. Three sets of conclusions flow from this.

In the first place the managerial command and control structure was incomplete. Although as the water transport industry moved from a discontinuous to integrated organisational structure, local centres of authority were converted into direct employment. Shipmasters and contract foremen stevedores were of key importance in this regard. However with negligible investment in technology saw the industry rely on the extensive expansion of the existing stevedoring labour process. In turn this depended on informal methods of workplace control. But with large supervisory ratios and undeveloped integrated control—systems only resulted in instability because of the unresolved tension between informal practices and the formal system of employment and industrial arbitration.

Looking at this conclusion more carefully, several contradictory dimensions emerge. Whereas the diffuse informal work control centred on the workgroup suited the discontinuous structure, it was unsuited to a formal industrial relations system. Under capitalist imperatives, the authority of contractors and later company foremen became arbitrary direct control. The instability in authority could not be contained by the initial development of collective bargaining. Arbitration offered some protection for workers aspirations and rights but the system was increasingly used by employers as a mechanism of labour control. Contestation over work control increasingly took the form of job control, which emerged as a key issue in the twenty years after the first federal award was handed down. Finally, employers continued to rely on structuring the labour market to maximise its disciplinary effects on workers in the labour process.

The second conclusion from the examination of industrial authority focuses on labour organisation. Looking at the organisation in the labour process, the workgroup was a critical institution in informalism (despite the peculiar Australia constraints of convict labour, underdevelopment and small size). After the 1850s it was clear that work rules and control sprang from local solidarist norms, founded on work methods, organisation and long standing skills. Work methods were generally accepted by all employers of waterfront labour. But as management systems gained authority over the workplace (particularly after 1890) the authority of workgroups declined markedly. Work control demands by waterside workers consequently were painted as anachronistic, disruptive and dangerous. This engendered the pattern of endemic instability and conflict.

Outside the workplace initial collective organisation took the form of small societies. Closely linked to workgroups, societies were also wedded to social and moral norms located by social rank. This was a key enabling condition for the maintenance of solidarist norms in the workplace. Wharf labourer societies could provide little more than minimal benefits and soon operated as trade unions. Like workgroup authority, local societies became increasingly unsuited to the developing company form of capital. After the 1890s, modern trade unionism — seen as continuity of collective representation of the industrial position of workers — took root on the waterfront. However the functioning of modern trade unions itself requires a centralisation of authority over policy and action. Thus the tensions of local solidarist norms and general union policy was replicated within the WWF. The tensions between sectional localism and the federal
WWF pervaded union organisation and contributed to a critical union weakness over the period examined in this thesis.

The tension encompassed the ideology on which union strategy was to be formed. The generalised moral basis of solidarist norms – the customary standard – was marginalised by 1900. The federal WWF leadership of politicians adopted a labourist strategy. This was soon challenged by the remnants of solidarism, that were increasingly politicised by various strains of radicalism, based on a syndicalist strategy of industrial workers' control. This collapsed in the wake of the 1928 strike defeat. In its wake union strategy was reshaped by new conceptual and organisational ideas of communism. The election of communists – especially Jim Healy in 1937 – to the union leadership opened a new phase in union organisation, that lies outside the scope of this thesis. It can be concluded that internal union tensions in the process of transition to formal industrial relations contributed to instability on the waterfront.

The third conclusion in relation to industrial authority returns to the nature of the labour process and labour market. As I have shown, the structure of the labour process was largely unchanged and the dependence on arbitrary control increased, which generated fertile conditions for labour action. However, as the balance of authority moved to employers they sought the institutionalise their control by use of labour bureaus and thereby entrench the labour market hierarchy. This too was a source of conflict and instability, given the critical importance of hiring for authority in the workplace.

IV. Stevedoring and Labour Process Theory

In conclusion, this study of the Australian stevedoring industry has highlighted several issues in labour process theory. In the first place, the marxian model of the transition from formal to real subordination of the labour process is best conceptualised as a transformation of organisational linkages and relations, and the reconstruction of work in the labour process, rather than only the latter. Thus the capitalist dynamic is the tendency to reconstruct the production process at a number of levels – industry, organisational and workplace – which operate at an uneven rate of development. The rate of development is critically linked to their historical conditions of existence – authority, regulatory, cultural, normative, locational and political have been key factors explored in this study.

The second conclusion follows, that a simple focus on the labour process is limiting at best. A analytical understanding of the structure and change of a particular labour process can only be advanced by the investigation of its conditions of existence. Accordingly, the third theoretical conclusion is that even the analytical separation of structure and action is at best provisional, since institutional structures are causally shaped and changed through the mediation of social action. It has been argued in this thesis that the social conceptualisation and normative basis of power are critical elements in causality and mediation. In contrast the final conclusion is that the strength of the labour process perspective lies in the centrality of the dynamic link between the materiality of practical experience and the societal conditions which constitute, reproduce and change practice.
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### Appendix

**Table: A3.1 Formation of London Gangs**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Work</th>
<th>Name/Place</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1822</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>Bow Creek gang</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1827</td>
<td>carrots</td>
<td>sign of Marquis of Granby and the Punchbowl, St. Katherine Street</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1829</td>
<td>wheat and peas</td>
<td>Kings Victualling Office</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1829</td>
<td>salt</td>
<td>3 gangs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1834</td>
<td>seeds</td>
<td>Old Swan Stairs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1835</td>
<td>coal</td>
<td>Greenwich</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[1820s]*</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1838</td>
<td>fruit</td>
<td>3 gangs, Puddledock &amp; legal quays, Hungerford market</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1848</td>
<td>apples</td>
<td>Brewer's Quay</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Time from which gang work was used in practice in square brackets.


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**Table: A3.2 Vessels Size and Employment, New South Wales 1801**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Service</th>
<th>Tonnage/type</th>
<th>Men employed</th>
<th>Vessels operations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>Govt.</em></td>
<td>60/brig</td>
<td>Commander</td>
<td>surveying</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2 officers</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>14 petty &amp; able seamen</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>56/brig</td>
<td>Master</td>
<td>transporting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1 officer</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>6 able seamen</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>40/schooner</td>
<td>Master</td>
<td>surveying</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2 officers</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>5 able seamen</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>11/sloop</td>
<td>Master</td>
<td>transport grain, coal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3 men</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Private</td>
<td>6/n.g.**</td>
<td>2 men</td>
<td>n.g.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>14</td>
<td>6 men</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>12</td>
<td>n.g.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>31</td>
<td>6 men</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>11</td>
<td>3 men</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>16</td>
<td>3 men</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>8</td>
<td>2 men</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>11</td>
<td>50 (not incl. officers)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Only details for these govt. vessels are given. Also 2 long boats, 3 pinnaces, 3 small boats, and 1 large flat
** Not given

Table: A3.3 Private vessels, Size, Owner and Operations, 1804

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tonnage</th>
<th>Owner(s)</th>
<th>Operations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>38</td>
<td>Kable &amp; Co</td>
<td>Bass Straits, Hawkesbury &amp; Coal Rivers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31</td>
<td>Kable &amp; Co</td>
<td>ditto</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24</td>
<td>Kable &amp; Co</td>
<td>Bass Straits etc</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30</td>
<td>John Palmer Esq</td>
<td>Bass Straits, Hawkesbury &amp; Coal Rivers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30</td>
<td>John Palmer Esq</td>
<td>ditto</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28</td>
<td>John Palmer Esq</td>
<td>Bass Straits etc</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>John Palmer Esq</td>
<td>Hawkesbury</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Thomas Raby[Reiby?]</td>
<td>Hawkesbury and Coal Rivers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Thomas Raby [ditto]</td>
<td>ditto</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>William Miller</td>
<td>ditto</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26</td>
<td>Simeon Lord</td>
<td>Bass Straits, Hawkesbury &amp; Coal Rivers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>Andrew Thompson</td>
<td>Bass Straits etc</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>Andrew Thompson</td>
<td>ditto</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>37</td>
<td>Andrew Thompson</td>
<td>ditto</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Samuel Chace</td>
<td>Bass Straits etc</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Joshua Smith</td>
<td>Hawkesbury and Coal Rivers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>Hibbs &amp; Smith</td>
<td>ditto</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>Inch &amp; Williams</td>
<td>ditto</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>John Cavenaugh</td>
<td>ditto</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Ward &amp; Eaton</td>
<td>ditto</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>John Grono</td>
<td>Hawkesbury and Coal Rivers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>Jonathon Griffiths</td>
<td>ditto</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

23 vessels (av. 19.6 tons)

Source: derived from HRA, I, 5, p.771; listed in J. S. Cumpston, Shipping Arrivals and Departures Sydney 1788–1825, p.68

Table: A3.4 Private vessels, Size, Owner and Employment, New South Wales, 1806

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tonnage</th>
<th>Men employed</th>
<th>Tons per man</th>
<th>Owners</th>
<th>Operations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>Andrew Thompson</td>
<td>Hawkesbury trade</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>Andrew Thompson</td>
<td>Straits, skinning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3.6</td>
<td>G. Blaxcell</td>
<td>Hawkesbury</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>160</td>
<td>n.g.</td>
<td>n.a.</td>
<td>McArthur &amp; Blaxcell</td>
<td>(Spanish prize)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>185</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>7.4</td>
<td>Kable &amp; Co</td>
<td>whaling</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>5.1</td>
<td>Kable &amp; Co</td>
<td>skinning (seal)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>45</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7.5</td>
<td>Kable &amp; Co</td>
<td>ditto</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5.2</td>
<td>Kable &amp; Co</td>
<td>ditto</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6.2</td>
<td>J. Palmer &amp; Co</td>
<td>skinning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>J. Palmer &amp; Co</td>
<td>ditto</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5.3</td>
<td>J. Palmer &amp; Co</td>
<td>Hawkesbury</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6.0</td>
<td>Morley, Watkins &amp;</td>
<td>Hawkesbury &amp;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2.3</td>
<td>Raby &amp; Mills</td>
<td>Newcastle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>Benjamin Peate</td>
<td>Hawkesbury</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5.0</td>
<td>Jones &amp; Smith</td>
<td>Hawkesbury</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5.3</td>
<td>Inch &amp; Co</td>
<td>Hawkesbury</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>5.8</td>
<td>J. Nichols</td>
<td>skinning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6.6</td>
<td>J. McArthur Esq.</td>
<td>Hawkesbury &amp; N'tle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>Bryan Agan</td>
<td>Hawkesbury</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: derived from HRA, I, 5, p.771, listed in Cumpston, Shipping Arrivals and Departures Sydney 1788–1825, p.68
### Table: A3.5 Private vessels, Size, Owner and Crew, 1800–1810 (in sealing)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Vessel Name</th>
<th>Tonnage</th>
<th>Men employed</th>
<th>Tons per man</th>
<th>Owner(s)</th>
<th>Source: compiled from Margaret Steven, <em>Merchant Campbell 1769–1846</em>, (Oxford University Press, Melbourne, 1965) Table, p.111 and Hainsworth, <em>Builders and Adventurers</em>, p.77,85</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>Diana [Surprise]</em></td>
<td>24</td>
<td>n.g.</td>
<td>n.a.</td>
<td>Kable &amp; Co</td>
<td>* Steven presents the table as vessels employed in the sealing industry, but from the returns of vessel movements in Cumpston many were used for cargo transportation as well</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Endeavour</em></td>
<td>31</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>5.1</td>
<td>Kable &amp; Co</td>
<td>+ Steven's figure is the official one and Hainsworth uses Underwood's records which show 75 tons.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Governor King</em></td>
<td>(75) 38</td>
<td>n.g.</td>
<td>n.a.</td>
<td>Kable &amp; Co</td>
<td># These vessels are listed by Hainsworth but not by Steven for the Kable/Underwood and Lord partnership</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Contest</em></td>
<td>45</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7.5</td>
<td>Kable &amp; Co</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>King George</em></td>
<td>185</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>7.4</td>
<td>Kable &amp; Co</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Marcia</em></td>
<td>26</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5.2</td>
<td>Simeon Lord</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Nancy</em></td>
<td>40</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>8.0</td>
<td>Andrew Thompson &amp; S. Lord (sold to Kable &amp; Underwood 1804)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>#Commerce</strong></td>
<td>225</td>
<td>n.g.</td>
<td>n.a.</td>
<td>Lord, Kable &amp; Underwood</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>#Star</strong></td>
<td>119</td>
<td>n.g.</td>
<td>n.a.</td>
<td>Lord, Kable &amp; Underwood</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>#Santa Anna</strong></td>
<td>260</td>
<td>n.g.</td>
<td>n.a.</td>
<td>Lord, Kable &amp; Underwood</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>#Sydney Cove</strong></td>
<td>282</td>
<td>n.g.</td>
<td>n.a.</td>
<td>Lord, Kable &amp; Underwood</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>John</strong></td>
<td>n.g.</td>
<td>n.g.</td>
<td>n.a.</td>
<td>J. Palmer</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Edwin</strong></td>
<td>16</td>
<td>n.g.</td>
<td>n.a.</td>
<td>J. Palmer</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>George</strong></td>
<td>28</td>
<td>n.g.</td>
<td>n.a.</td>
<td>J. Palmer</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>John II</strong></td>
<td>31</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6.2</td>
<td>J. Palmer</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Fly</strong></td>
<td>13</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>J. Palmer &amp; Co.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Hope</strong></td>
<td>20</td>
<td>n.g.</td>
<td>n.a.</td>
<td>Thompson &amp; Lord</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Hawkesbury</strong></td>
<td>18</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>Thompson &amp; Lord</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Speedwell</strong></td>
<td>18</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>Thompson &amp; Lord</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Good Intent</strong></td>
<td>11</td>
<td>n.g.</td>
<td>n.a.</td>
<td>Samual Rodman Chace</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Raven</strong></td>
<td>14</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2.3</td>
<td>Raby &amp; Wills</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Governor Hunter</strong></td>
<td>35</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>5.8</td>
<td>J. Nichols</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>22</td>
<td>78</td>
<td></td>
<td>(av. 67.5)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
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</table>
Table: A3.6 Colonial vessels by size and ownership, New South Wales, 1814

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tonnage</th>
<th>Master</th>
<th>Owner(s)</th>
<th>(Occupation*)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>R. Thompson</td>
<td>J. Griffiths</td>
<td>(boat-builder)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>J. Warner</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40</td>
<td>James Miller</td>
<td>G. Blaxcell</td>
<td>(merchant)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>80</td>
<td>P. Goodenough</td>
<td>G. Blaxcell</td>
<td>(ditto)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>136</td>
<td>R. S. Walker</td>
<td>G. Blaxcell</td>
<td>(ditto)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>100</td>
<td>Robert Mason</td>
<td>W. A. Loane</td>
<td>[trader]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>J. Morgan</td>
<td>A. Martin</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Joshua Hayes</td>
<td>J. [Joshua?] Palmer</td>
<td>(dealer)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>86</td>
<td>W. Rook</td>
<td>J. [James] Underwood</td>
<td>(owner)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>58</td>
<td>Theo. Walker</td>
<td>I. Nichols</td>
<td>[trader]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>37</td>
<td>George Winny</td>
<td>I. Nichols</td>
<td>[ditto]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>120</td>
<td>Edward Watson</td>
<td>Govt. vessel</td>
<td>n.a.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>William Stewart</td>
<td>William Stewart</td>
<td>(master mariner)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Joshua Murrell</td>
<td>O'Berne &amp; Marshall</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>100</td>
<td>J. Grono</td>
<td>J. Grono &amp; J. Benn</td>
<td>[master]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>William Hough</td>
<td>Thomas Ivory</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>S. [Solomon] Wiseman</td>
<td>S. Wiseman</td>
<td>(mariner/dealer)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>n.g.</td>
<td>S. Wiseman</td>
<td>(master/dealer)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>Alexander Lorraine</td>
<td>G. Crosley</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>186</td>
<td>Losco Jones</td>
<td>J. [James] Underwood</td>
<td>[shipwright &amp; boatbuilder]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(owner)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>n.g.</td>
<td>Brian Overand</td>
<td>Govt. vessel</td>
<td>n.a.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>42</td>
<td>James Brown</td>
<td>George Brown</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>53</td>
<td>Robert Murray</td>
<td>John Redmond</td>
<td>(chief constable)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>136</td>
<td>n.g.</td>
<td>Campbell &amp; Co</td>
<td>(merchants)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>N. Thompson</td>
<td>R. Campbell</td>
<td>(merchant)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>119</td>
<td>William Shelly</td>
<td>James Birne</td>
<td>(merchant)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Peter Hibbs</td>
<td>Peter Hibbs</td>
<td>[master]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>R. Windsor</td>
<td>[William] Russell</td>
<td>(carpenter)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>[Owen] Doran</td>
<td>(dealer)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>T. White</td>
<td>W. Adler</td>
<td>(owner)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>John Brown</td>
<td>A. McKellog &amp;</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>John Brown</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>80</td>
<td>J. Thompson</td>
<td>S. Lord</td>
<td>(merchant)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>T. [Thomas] Johnson</td>
<td>T. Johnson</td>
<td>(dealer &amp; chapman)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>James Munro</td>
<td>James Webb</td>
<td>(boat-builder)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>John Collins</td>
<td>Charles Walker</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>H. Major</td>
<td>H. Major</td>
<td>[master]</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

33 vessels 33 owners/part-owners
(2 govt.) av.52.1 tons

* Taken from returns of bonds paid 1810-19 in round brackets. Where vessels were registered for bonds before 1814 (with different owners) the 1814 owners do not appear on the bond list. Occupation taken from other sources, primarily *Builders and Adventurers*, edited D. R. Hainsworth, in square brackets.

### Table: A3.7 Occupation of Owners and Bondsmen, New South Wales 1810–19

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group*</th>
<th>Occupation</th>
<th>Owner Shares</th>
<th>(%)</th>
<th>Bondmen (excl. owners)</th>
<th>(%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I</td>
<td>Dealer (chapman/victualler)</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>(31.4)</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>(32.4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Merchant</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>(21.6)</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>(23.5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Company [merchant+]</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>(2.0)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II</td>
<td>Master mariner</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>(5.9)</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>(3.0)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Chief constable</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>(4.0)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Gentlemen/Esq.</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>(4.0)</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>(3.0)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>HM Dockyard</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>(1.4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Husbandman</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>(1.4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III</td>
<td>Boat-builder</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>(9.8)</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>(3.0)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Carpenter</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>(2.0)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>(1.4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Limeburner</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>(2.0)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Blacksmith</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>(2.0)</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>(3.0)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sailmaker</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>(2.0)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Brewer</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>(3.0)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sawyer</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>(3.0)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Printer</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>(1.4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Shoemaker</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>(1.4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Baker</td>
<td>0</td>
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<td>1</td>
<td>(1.4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mason</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>(1.4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Not given+</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>(13.7)</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>(16.2)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Owner Shares</th>
<th>(%100.4)</th>
<th>Bondmen</th>
<th>(%#99.9)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>51</td>
<td>68</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Classification broadly as follows I, commercial occupations; II 'middle class' occupations of similar income, supervisory function and status, assuming the dockyard occupation and farmer attract similar income; III craftworkers although some eg. the emancipist boat-builder Jonathan Griffiths owned a profitable business. It is likely that many of the craft workers were small masters.

+ It is likely that many of these men were merchants/dealers

# Rounding error

Source: derived from returns to the Naval Officer, 1810–1819 listed in Cumpston, *Shipping Arrivals and Departures Sydney, Sydney 1788–1825*, pp.162–64
Table: A3.8 Oversea vessel size, and manning, Sydney, NSW, 1810

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tonnage</th>
<th>No. of Guns</th>
<th>Crew size</th>
<th>Category (Tonnage)</th>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Tons per man</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>627</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>75</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>522</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>&gt;500</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6.9</td>
<td>8.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>403</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>31</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>348</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>61</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>348</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>40</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>340</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>60</td>
<td></td>
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<td>66</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>300</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>300–499</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>24.1</td>
<td>6.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>10</td>
<td>25</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>268</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>17</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>258</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>27</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>258</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>27</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>240</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>32</td>
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Total (av.245.4) 29 100.0

* calculated on ships where manning figure is given

Source: complied from Cumpston, Shipping Arrivals and Departures Sydney, 1788–1825, pp.71,73
### Table: A3.9 Overseas vessels: Size, Guns and Manning, Sydney 1820

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Source: compiled from Cumpston, *Shipping Arrivals and Departures Sydney, 1788–1825*, pp.119,121,123–24
Table: A3.10  Total Overseas Shipping Entered and Cleared Australia* 1822 to 1860

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* multiple recording excluded by estimation prior to 1904

Table: 3.11  Company Formation NSW 1817–1846 (Number and Industry group)

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Table: A3.12  Shipping Company Formation, Australia, 1828–1860

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<td>formerly HRSPA</td>
<td>(Kolsen 1959:12)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Australian and Tasmanian Steam Navigation Company</td>
<td>2.1836</td>
<td>NSW &amp; Tas</td>
<td>didn’t appear to trade</td>
<td>(Kolsen 1959:14)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North &amp; South Shore Steam Bridge Company</td>
<td>2.1838</td>
<td>local Sydney Harbour –NSW</td>
<td>did not trade</td>
<td>(Kolsen 1959:14)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Illawarra Steam Packet Company</td>
<td>5.1839</td>
<td>local south coast –NSW</td>
<td>approached by proposed BrisbaneWater Steam Packet Coy and formed the GSNCo</td>
<td>(Kolsen 1959:14)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brisbane Water Steam Packet Company</td>
<td>c.8.1839</td>
<td>local Gosford–Sydney –NSW</td>
<td>never formed joined ISPco to form GSNCo</td>
<td>(Kolsen 1959:14; McKellar 1977:5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>British &amp; Australian Steam Navigation Company</td>
<td>2.1839 (1838)</td>
<td>overseas –NSW</td>
<td>company then to be formed in London, but did not trade due to recession</td>
<td>(Kolsen 1959:14; Bach 1955:5)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Table: 3.12 (cont)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Company</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hunter River Steam Navigation Company</td>
<td>8.1839</td>
<td>local N’tle – Syd -NSW</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New South Wales Steam Navigation Company</td>
<td>3.1840</td>
<td>overseas UK- Aust -NSW</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Australasian Steam Navigation Company</td>
<td>1840</td>
<td>local/coastal – NSW</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hobart Town-Launceston, and Pt Phillip Company</td>
<td>6.1840</td>
<td>coastal esp. after the gold rush –TAS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tasmanian Steam Navigation Company</td>
<td>1840-</td>
<td>coastal esp. after gold rush –TAS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Penrith Nepean Bridge Company</td>
<td>1850</td>
<td>local Sydney – NSW</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clarence River Steam Navigation Company</td>
<td>1850</td>
<td>local north coast –NSW</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Australasian Steam Navigation Company</td>
<td>6.1851</td>
<td>coastal –NSW                                        named HRSNCo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Launceston Steam Navigation Company</td>
<td>1852</td>
<td>local Tas –TAS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hunter River New Steam Navigation Company</td>
<td>1852</td>
<td>local N’tle – Syd –NSW</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moreton Bay Steam Navigation Company</td>
<td>5.1852</td>
<td>coastal Bris – Syd –QLD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Howard Smith</td>
<td>c.1852</td>
<td>local Melb–Geelong –VIC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tasmanian Steam Navigation Company</td>
<td>1852-53</td>
<td>coastal Tas–Melb–Syd –TAS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kiama Steam Navigation Company</td>
<td>1853</td>
<td>local south coast –Syd –NSW</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shoalhaven Steam Navigation Company</td>
<td>1853</td>
<td>local south coast –Syd –NSW</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sydney and Melbourne Steam Packet Company</td>
<td>12.1853</td>
<td>coastal Syd–Melb</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northern Tasmanian Coast Steamship Company</td>
<td>1853-54</td>
<td>local Launceston &amp; N–West –TAS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>James Paterson</td>
<td>1854-55</td>
<td>coal merchant partnership coastal N’tle–Melm –VIC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>East Coast Steam Navigation Company</td>
<td>11.1855</td>
<td>local Hobart – East Coast –TAS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Launceston and Melbourne Steam Navigation Company</td>
<td>1857</td>
<td>coastal L’ton –Melb –TAS</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Notes:*
- Sept 1840 name changed to ASNCo
- could not get subscribers dissolved July 1841 [formerly HRSNCo – renamed 1851]
- reformed 1852
- dissolved 1857
- failed to trade (attempted to challenge ASNCo)
- liquidation July 1856
- coal merchant partnership coastal N’tle–Melm –VIC
- local Launceston & N–West –TAS
- coal merchant partnership coastal N’tle–Melm –VIC
- local Hobart – East Coast –TAS
- local N’tle – Syd -NSW
- local north coast –NSW
- local Sydney – NSW
- local north coast –NSW
- renamed HRSNCo
- local Tas –TAS
- local N’tle – Syd –NSW
- coastal Bris – Syd –QLD
- local Hobart – Huon –TAS
- local south coast –Syd –NSW
- local south coast –Syd –NSW
- merged to form ISNCo
- taken over by GSNCo 1857
- merged to form ISNCo 1858
- liquidation July 1856
- local Hobart – Huon –TAS
- local Hobart – Huon –TAS
- local Hobart – Huon –TAS
- local Hobart – Huon –TAS
- local Hobart – Huon –TAS
### Table: A5.1 Shipping Company Formation, Australia 1861–1900

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Company</th>
<th>Month &amp; Year Formed</th>
<th>Trade &amp; Routes &amp; main colony operated</th>
<th>Progress of Co.</th>
<th>Source</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gippsland Lakes Navigation Company</td>
<td>1864</td>
<td>local Gippsland - Melb - VIC</td>
<td>became GSNCo</td>
<td>(Bull and Williams 1966:26)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gippsland Steam Navigation Company</td>
<td>1865</td>
<td>local Gippsland - Melb - VIC</td>
<td>formerly GLNCo</td>
<td>(Bull and Williams 1966:29)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gerringong Co-operative Steam Ship Company</td>
<td>1870</td>
<td>local south coast - NSW</td>
<td></td>
<td>(Pemberton 1979:81)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eastern &amp; Australian Mail Steam Company Limited</td>
<td>5.1873</td>
<td>overseas Qld &amp; NSW - UK - UK</td>
<td>Aust Co formed E&amp;ASSCoLtd</td>
<td>(Hardwick 1980:119)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manning River Steam Navigation Company</td>
<td>1873</td>
<td>local north coast - NSW</td>
<td>ceased operation 1881</td>
<td>(Pemberton 1979:85)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mount Gambier Steam Ship Company</td>
<td>1870s</td>
<td>local S–E SA - SAust</td>
<td></td>
<td>(Pemberton 1979:36)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Portland Steam Navigation Company</td>
<td>1874</td>
<td>local West Vic - Melb - VIC</td>
<td></td>
<td>(Pemberton 1979:48)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adelaide Steam Ship Company</td>
<td>1875</td>
<td>coastal Adel - Melb - SAust</td>
<td></td>
<td>(Bach 1976:190; Pemberton 1979:36)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>McIwraith &amp; McEacharn</td>
<td>1875</td>
<td>coastal Qld - London - VIC</td>
<td>Aust company later formed</td>
<td>(Bach 1976:190)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Coast Steam Ship Company</td>
<td>11.1875</td>
<td>local York Pen - Adel - SAust</td>
<td></td>
<td>(Pemberton 1979:37)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spencer Gulf Steam Ship Company</td>
<td>6.1876</td>
<td>local Spencer Gulf - SAust</td>
<td></td>
<td>(Pemberton 1979:37)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shellharbour Co-operative Steam Navigation Company</td>
<td>c.1876</td>
<td>local south coast - NSW</td>
<td></td>
<td>(Pemberton 1979:81)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Table: 5.1 (cont.) Shipping Company Formation, Australia 1861–1900

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Company</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Huddart-Parker and Company</td>
<td>1876</td>
<td>coastal VIC</td>
<td>formed from Huddarts merchants &amp; brokers est. 1852, T.J. Parker, agent est. 1854 (Bach 1976:190)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Newcastle Steam Ship Company</td>
<td>1876</td>
<td>local N'tle-Syd NSW</td>
<td>merged with HRNSNCo 1892 to form the N&amp;HRSCo (Pemberton 1979:78–9; McKellar 1977:44 and Abbott 1943:76–77 put the formation at 1880)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Portland and Belfast team Navigation Company</td>
<td>1877</td>
<td>local West Vic VIC</td>
<td>wound up 1895 bought by B&amp;KSNCo (Pemberton 1979:48)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lakes Navigation Company</td>
<td>1877</td>
<td>local Gippsland Melb VIC</td>
<td>liquidation in 1890, became SSBCo (Bull and Williams 1966:29,34)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eastern &amp; Australian Steam Ship Company Limited</td>
<td>1880</td>
<td>overseas UK and Eastern trades NSW</td>
<td>formed from E&amp;AMSCo Ltd liquidation June 1894 reformed as second E&amp;ASSCo Ltd (Hardwick 1980:122)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Queensland Steam Shipping Company</td>
<td>1881</td>
<td>coastal QLD</td>
<td>Merged with ASNCo 1886 (McKellar 1977:50)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Belfast and Koroit Steam Navigation Company</td>
<td>1882</td>
<td>local West Vic VIC</td>
<td>taken over by Howard Smith 1939 (Pemberton 1979:49)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Western Australian Steam Navigation Company</td>
<td>1884</td>
<td>overseas/local F'tle-N-W ports Singapore WAust</td>
<td>(Pemberton 1979:29)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sale Steamboat Company</td>
<td>1890</td>
<td>local Gippsland Melb VIC</td>
<td>formerly LNCo. liquidation 1929 (Bull and Williams 1966:34)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North Coast Steam Navigation Company</td>
<td>1891</td>
<td>local north coast NSW</td>
<td>renamed CR&amp;MSNCo (Bach 1972:12)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Newcastle and Hunter River Steamship Company</td>
<td>1.1892</td>
<td>local N'tle-Syd NSW</td>
<td>amalgamation of HRNSNCo &amp; NSSCo to 1956 when became Southern Shipping CoLtd (Abbott 1943:77; Pemberton 1979:79–80)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eastern &amp; Australian Steam Ship Company</td>
<td>7.1894</td>
<td>overseas Aust East NSW</td>
<td>reformed of first E&amp;ASSCo Ltd; taken over by AUSNco 1919 (Hardwick 1980:122,124)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Melbourne Steamship Company</td>
<td>[1884]</td>
<td>coastal VIC</td>
<td>formed by coal interests from 1854 (Bach 1976:190)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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Graph: A3.1 Total Overseas Vessels Entered and Cleared, Australia 1822–1860

Table: A4.1 Population of Australian Colonies, Convicts & Ex-convicts in the popn. and workforce 1788–1850 (percent)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>(1) Popn.</th>
<th>(2) Percent Convict &amp; Ex-convict</th>
<th>(3) Percent Convict &amp; Ex-convict of potential male labourforce*</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1788</td>
<td>859</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1790</td>
<td>2,056</td>
<td>89.5</td>
<td>88.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1795</td>
<td>3,466</td>
<td>85.8</td>
<td>91.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1800</td>
<td>5,217</td>
<td>85.8</td>
<td>93.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1805</td>
<td>6,950</td>
<td>82.5</td>
<td>94.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1810</td>
<td>11,566</td>
<td>76.9</td>
<td>92.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1815</td>
<td>15,063</td>
<td>73.1</td>
<td>89.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1820</td>
<td>33,543</td>
<td>79.7</td>
<td>94.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1825</td>
<td>52,505</td>
<td>74.8</td>
<td>90.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1830</td>
<td>70,039</td>
<td>71.0</td>
<td>87.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1835</td>
<td>113,354</td>
<td>61.4</td>
<td>82.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1840</td>
<td>190,408</td>
<td>46.3</td>
<td>71.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1845</td>
<td>279,148</td>
<td>35.7</td>
<td>61.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1850</td>
<td>405,356</td>
<td>28.9</td>
<td>51.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* defined as males aged 12.5 to 59 years

Source: compiled from Tables 1, 4 and 8, N. G. Butlin, White Human Capital in Australia 1788–1850, Working Papers in Economic History, No.32, (RSSS, Australian National University, Canberra, 1985) pp.4,13,19
Table: A4.2 Civil Status New South Wales (excl. Tasmania) selected years

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Total Population</th>
<th>Convicts</th>
<th>Percent of Convicts</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1788</td>
<td>1,035</td>
<td>736</td>
<td>71.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1805</td>
<td>6,968</td>
<td>2,077</td>
<td>29.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1819</td>
<td>26,026</td>
<td>9,986</td>
<td>38.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1828</td>
<td>36,600</td>
<td>17,092</td>
<td>46.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1835</td>
<td>70,000</td>
<td>29,182</td>
<td>40.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1841</td>
<td>83,086</td>
<td>22,016</td>
<td>19.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1846</td>
<td>112,573</td>
<td>9,921</td>
<td>5.8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Table: A5.1 Total Overseas Shipping Entered and Cleared Australia* 1840 to 1905

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Vessels</th>
<th>Total (Net) Tonnage</th>
<th>Average (Net) Tonnage</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Vessels</th>
<th>Total (Net) Tonnage</th>
<th>Average (Net) Tonnage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1840</td>
<td>915</td>
<td>277,335</td>
<td>303</td>
<td>1873</td>
<td>3,159</td>
<td>1,609,067</td>
<td>509</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1841</td>
<td>900</td>
<td>278,758</td>
<td>309</td>
<td>1874</td>
<td>3,153</td>
<td>1,728,269</td>
<td>548</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1842</td>
<td>862</td>
<td>232,837</td>
<td>270</td>
<td>1875</td>
<td>3,437</td>
<td>1,914,462</td>
<td>557</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1843</td>
<td>736</td>
<td>183,427</td>
<td>249</td>
<td>1876</td>
<td>3,295</td>
<td>1,863,343</td>
<td>565</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1844</td>
<td>629</td>
<td>155,654</td>
<td>247</td>
<td>1877</td>
<td>3,157</td>
<td>1,930,434</td>
<td>611</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1845</td>
<td>735</td>
<td>164,221</td>
<td>223</td>
<td>1878</td>
<td>3,372</td>
<td>2,127,518</td>
<td>630</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1846</td>
<td>888</td>
<td>211,193</td>
<td>237</td>
<td>1879</td>
<td>3,344</td>
<td>2,151,338</td>
<td>643</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1847</td>
<td>1,033</td>
<td>245,358</td>
<td>237</td>
<td>1880</td>
<td>3,078</td>
<td>2,177,877</td>
<td>707</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1848</td>
<td>1,182</td>
<td>305,840</td>
<td>258</td>
<td>1881</td>
<td>3,284</td>
<td>2,549,364</td>
<td>776</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1849</td>
<td>1,137</td>
<td>355,886</td>
<td>313</td>
<td>1882</td>
<td>3,652</td>
<td>3,010,944</td>
<td>824</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1850</td>
<td>1,300</td>
<td>425,206</td>
<td>327</td>
<td>1883</td>
<td>3,857</td>
<td>3,433,102</td>
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<tr>
<td>1851</td>
<td>1,576</td>
<td>515,061</td>
<td>326</td>
<td>1884</td>
<td>4,315</td>
<td>4,064,947</td>
<td>942</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1852</td>
<td>1,896</td>
<td>844,243</td>
<td>445</td>
<td>1885</td>
<td>4,052</td>
<td>3,999,917</td>
<td>987</td>
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<tr>
<td>1853</td>
<td>3,364</td>
<td>1,490,422</td>
<td>443</td>
<td>1886</td>
<td>3,790</td>
<td>3,853,246</td>
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<tr>
<td>1854</td>
<td>3,781</td>
<td>1,744,251</td>
<td>461</td>
<td>1887</td>
<td>3,454</td>
<td>3,764,430</td>
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<tr>
<td>1855</td>
<td>3,239</td>
<td>1,449,657</td>
<td>447</td>
<td>1888</td>
<td>3,933</td>
<td>4,464,895</td>
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<tr>
<td>1856</td>
<td>2,669</td>
<td>1,195,794</td>
<td>448</td>
<td>1889</td>
<td>3,897</td>
<td>4,460,426</td>
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<tr>
<td>1857</td>
<td>2,842</td>
<td>1,530,202</td>
<td>538</td>
<td>1890</td>
<td>3,363</td>
<td>4,150,027</td>
<td>1234</td>
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<tr>
<td>1858</td>
<td>2,607</td>
<td>1,378,050</td>
<td>528</td>
<td>1891</td>
<td>3,778</td>
<td>4,726,307</td>
<td>1251</td>
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<tr>
<td>1859</td>
<td>2,759</td>
<td>1,403,210</td>
<td>508</td>
<td>1892</td>
<td>3,432</td>
<td>4,239,500</td>
<td>1236</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1860</td>
<td>2,464</td>
<td>1,228,518</td>
<td>490</td>
<td>1893</td>
<td>3,046</td>
<td>4,150,433</td>
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<tr>
<td>1861</td>
<td>2,466</td>
<td>1,149,476</td>
<td>466</td>
<td>1894</td>
<td>3,397</td>
<td>4,487,546</td>
<td>1321</td>
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<tr>
<td>1862</td>
<td>2,917</td>
<td>1,389,231</td>
<td>476</td>
<td>1895</td>
<td>3,331</td>
<td>4,567,883</td>
<td>1371</td>
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<tr>
<td>1863</td>
<td>3,378</td>
<td>1,564,369</td>
<td>463</td>
<td>1896</td>
<td>3,309</td>
<td>4,631,266</td>
<td>1399</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1864</td>
<td>3,344</td>
<td>1,537,433</td>
<td>459</td>
<td>1897</td>
<td>3,279</td>
<td>4,709,697</td>
<td>1436</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1865</td>
<td>3,005</td>
<td>1,317,934</td>
<td>438</td>
<td>1898</td>
<td>3,222</td>
<td>4,681,398</td>
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<td>1866</td>
<td>3,378</td>
<td>1,470,728</td>
<td>435</td>
<td>1899</td>
<td>3,356</td>
<td>5,244,197</td>
<td>1562</td>
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<td>1867</td>
<td>2,927</td>
<td>1,227,679</td>
<td>419</td>
<td>1900</td>
<td>3,719</td>
<td>5,894,173</td>
<td>1584</td>
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<tr>
<td>1868</td>
<td>3,080</td>
<td>1,350,573</td>
<td>438</td>
<td>1901</td>
<td>4,028</td>
<td>6,541,991</td>
<td>1624</td>
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<tr>
<td>1869</td>
<td>3,107</td>
<td>1,472,837</td>
<td>474</td>
<td>1902</td>
<td>3,608</td>
<td>6,234,460</td>
<td>1727</td>
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<tr>
<td>1870</td>
<td>2,877</td>
<td>1,381,878</td>
<td>480</td>
<td>1903</td>
<td>3,441</td>
<td>6,027,843</td>
<td>1751</td>
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<td>1871</td>
<td>2,748</td>
<td>1,312,642</td>
<td>477</td>
<td>1904</td>
<td>3,700</td>
<td>6,682,011</td>
<td>1805</td>
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<tr>
<td>1872</td>
<td>2,788</td>
<td>1,380,466</td>
<td>495</td>
<td>1905</td>
<td>4,088</td>
<td>7,444,417</td>
<td>1821</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* multiple recording excluded by estimation prior to 1904

Graph A5.1 Total Overseas Vessels Entered and Cleared, Australia 1840–1905

Source: Data from Table A5.1
Table: A12.1 Membership of the WWF, Brisbane Branch, 1901–1937

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Source</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1901</td>
<td>429</td>
<td><em>Ninth Census of Queensland</em>, Mar 1901, p.214 (only indicates number of waterside workers)</td>
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<tr>
<td>1902</td>
<td>500</td>
<td>J. Healy <em>Brief History</em> (1948), p.2</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>434 (559)</td>
<td>Membership Book Qld Branches 1902–1948, (559) number actually counted, est. approx 125 names pasted over, thus total of 559, ANU/NBA T62/38</td>
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<tr>
<td>1912</td>
<td>1304</td>
<td><em>Brisbane Courier</em>, 2 Feb 1912 p.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1914</td>
<td>1318</td>
<td>Membership Book Qld ANU/NBA T62/38</td>
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<td></td>
<td>1319</td>
<td>ANU/NBA T62/37/5/1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1917</td>
<td>1202</td>
<td>WWF Membership 31 Dec 1917, ANU/NBA T62/37/5/3</td>
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<tr>
<td>1918</td>
<td>1062</td>
<td>Membership Book Qld ANU/NBA T62/38</td>
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<tr>
<td>1919</td>
<td>1100</td>
<td>J. Dawson to Morris 26 June 1919, ANU/NBA T62/8/1/1</td>
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<td>1920</td>
<td>788</td>
<td>returns to Qld Industrial Registrar, Registration File No.82</td>
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<tr>
<td>1921</td>
<td>1300</td>
<td>J. Dawson to Morris, 24 Feb, 12 May 1921, ANU/NBA T62/8/2</td>
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<td>1281</td>
<td>J. Dawson to Morris 6 June 1922, ANU/NBA T62/8/2</td>
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<td>1922</td>
<td>1266</td>
<td>Registration File No.82</td>
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<td>1286</td>
<td>J. Dawson to Morris 6 June 1922 ANU/NBA T62/8/2</td>
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<td>1923</td>
<td>1480</td>
<td>Registration File No.82</td>
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<tr>
<td>1924</td>
<td>1478</td>
<td>Registration File No.82 and WWF Membership 31 Dec 1924, ANU/NBA T62/37/5/5</td>
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<td>1927</td>
<td>1673</td>
<td>Registration File No.82</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1680</td>
<td>J. G. Dawson to J. Morris, 7 Apr 1928, ANU/NBA T62/8/1/3</td>
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<tr>
<td>1928</td>
<td>1650</td>
<td>Is. A. Brown to J. Morris, 24 &amp; 29 Aug 1928, 1200 financial and 500 outstanding members, ANU/NBA T62/8/1/3</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(1394)</td>
<td>I. A. Brown to A. Turley, 15 Dec 1930, with the actual financial membership at the end of 1928 ANU/NBA T62/8/1/3</td>
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<tr>
<td>1929</td>
<td>1650</td>
<td>Registration File No.82 note on the file of phone call to WWF Brisbane, 31.3.30, 268 financial and 1382 unfinancial members</td>
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<tr>
<td>1930</td>
<td>361</td>
<td>I. A. Brown to A. Turley, 15 Dec 1930, financial members to 30 June 1929, ANU/NBA T62/8/1/3</td>
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<tr>
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<td>311</td>
<td>I. A. Brown to A. Turley 15 Dec 1930, financial members to 31 Dec 1929 ANU/NBA T62/8/1/3</td>
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<td>1932</td>
<td>190</td>
<td>30 June ANU/NBA T62/8/1/3</td>
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<td>95</td>
<td>31 Dec ANU/NBA T62/8/1/3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>161</td>
<td>I. W.H. Tyrell (ex V.O.) to Turley, 21 Jul 1930, financial membership to 30 June 1930, ANU/NBA T62/8/1/3</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>250</td>
<td>I. R. Phillips (Exec. member, Bris.) to Turley, 25 Aug 1930, membership to 30 June 1930, ANU/NBA T62/8/1/4</td>
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<td>1933</td>
<td>280</td>
<td>I. A. Brown to A. Turley, 12 Jul 1932, financial members to 30 June ANU/NBA T62/8/1/5</td>
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<td>309</td>
<td>30 June ANU/NBA T62/8/1/5</td>
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<tr>
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<td>556</td>
<td>I. A. Brown to A. Turley 30 Nov 1933, 521 financial members and 35 part paid; but only 380 permitted to attend the pick-up, ANU/NBA T62/8/1/5</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>579</td>
<td>I. A. Marshall to A. Turley, 2 Aug 1934, stating that this was the 1933 membership, of which 557 paid federal dues, ANU/NBA T62/8/1/5</td>
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<td>660</td>
<td>return to the Qld Industrial Registrar, Registration File No.141, 31 Dec</td>
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<td>1934</td>
<td>600</td>
<td>Registration File No.141, 31 Dec, return indicates 159 members were not in possession of an employers disc and 15 have left the industry</td>
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<td>1935</td>
<td>477</td>
<td>Registration File No.141, 31 Dec, financial members</td>
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<tr>
<td>1936</td>
<td>438</td>
<td>Registration File No.141, 31 Dec, pencilled note of approximate number</td>
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<tr>
<td>1937</td>
<td>647</td>
<td>Registration File No.141, 31 Dec</td>
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</table>