THE CHRISTCHURCH TRAMWAY STRIKE, 1932

Mary-Ann B. Graham.

A RESEARCH ESSAY

Completed in partial fulfilment of the
Degree of Master of Arts
and Honours in History
in the
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* * *
What was characteristic was that people kept on keeping on with these terrible conditions; agitating, talking, standing on deputations, waiting in queues, until finally, as a group, as a society, they could stand it no longer. I remember the women at Dunedin lying on the tramlines in final desperation as a gesture against authority and then the riots breaking out in all the centres. This was the explosion of people who could no longer stand the terrible strain on their social inheritance. They just burst forth in uncontrolled anger just to smash...it wasn't a matter of hooliganism or criminality, it was the revolt of the people.’ 1

Although the possibility of such outbreaks in Christchurch (as experienced in Auckland, Wellington, and, to a lesser extent, Dunedin) was always kept in mind, there was no serious trouble.’ 2 ...(the) 'strike passed virtually without incident.' 3

Most historians agree that the Auckland, Wellington and Dunedin riots of early 1932 were spontaneous outbreaks of rage by a people driven to take desperate measures against the conditions of the Depression. Yet little mention is made, and indeed known of, the so-called Christchurch 'riots' which occurred at the same time. The Christchurch demonstrations arose out of the Tramway Strike which followed the horrifying Auckland riot of a fortnight previous. Although there were no scenes of rampaging unemployed, running amok through the streets breaking windows and looting goods, a man was fatally injured during the Christchurch demonstration and incidents of violence on a smaller scale did occur. Curiously,
these incidents served to restrict further outbreaks
of incendiary violence in the city, rather than to
encourage it. Why was this so? What factors
operating in Christchurch at the time of the Tramway
Strike prevented the dispute from expanding into an
uprising on the scale of that of Auckland, or Wellington,
or Dunedin? Does the relative absence of social dis-
ruption indicate that Christchurch was united rather
than divided by its depression experience?

The essay will attempt to answer this question in
the light of the condition of the unemployed in
Christchurch at the time. It will look at the origins
of the Tramway dispute and the events which happened
within the city itself as a result of the Strike.
Secondly it will investigate why the strike did not widen
into a mass demonstration against established law and
order as a result of dissatisfaction with the Coalition
Government's economic policies. A final conclusion
will follow a brief summary of the events following the
Tramway Strike.

The general Depression is treated only in so far as
it impinges directly upon the tramway situation.
Similarly, the brief sketch of the state of the New Zealand economy in the years preceding 1932 is intended only to indicate some of the dissatisfaction felt by those unemployed who were victims of the Government's ineffective handling of the situation. It does not pretend to be a detailed commentary on the political and economic circumstances surrounding the recession. Similarly, the essay is concerned only with the Christchurch disturbance in 1932. References to the Auckland, Wellington and Dunedin riots of the same year will be mentioned only in relation to the corresponding situation in Christchurch.

* * *
The most forcible impact of the Depression was felt by the thousands of working men and women who lost their jobs through the malfunctioning of a world-wide economic system. Out of one and a half million people in New Zealand in February 1932 over 45,000 were registered unemployed. * By mid May the number had grown to 52,451. 6 In March the Coalition Government had contributed to the increase in the number of unemployed workers by cutting the Public Works Expenditure Budget to an excess of 75%. The expenditure in 1931 - 32 on Public Works and Highways had been six million pounds sterling. In 1932 - 33 it was to be reduced to one million, two hundred and thirty-four thousand. 7 The effect of this was the dismissal of thousands of Public Works servants from their employment. Also in March, ostensibly to avoid a large reduction in employment, Coates, Minister of Public Works, announced that the 'whole of Public Works (would be put) on a purely relief basis until such time as conditions improve'. 7 This reduced the funds available for the existing scheme and relief scheme * (which had been introduced by the

.../5

* The No. 5 Scheme provided relief work for all unemployed male wage-earners in the country. It began on 9 February 1931. The local authority, to which each Scheme was responsible, paid the cost of materials, supervision, tools and transport for the work. The Unemployment Board refunded all wages up to 14/0 a day. Above that limit the local authority was liable for wages.

* In May 1932 the population of New Zealand was approximately 1,587,000. 4 Ninety-one thousand of these people were official residents of Christchurch. 5
Government in February 1931), which worsened the already bad living conditions in the existing relief camps, and limited the relief wages paid to the men to that of starvation wages.

A further blow hit Public Service employees when civil service wages were reduced by 10%, a measure which first occurred in April of the previous year. The 10% wage cut was followed by an amendment to the Conciliation and Arbitration Act. The amendment made compulsory conciliation and voluntary arbitration legal. This act was received with cries of outrage in union circles as it removed the onus from employers to compromise by negotiation over industrial disputes. With no law enforcing them to accept arbitration, the employers were in a strong position to resist demands placed upon them by the trade union movement. As we shall see this was to have an important effect on the outcome of the Tramway dispute.

Charitable relief for unemployment in these early years of the Depression was provided by a variety of organisations - from the State's Unemployment Relief Board to the relief system run by the Hospital Boards and local City Councils, through to Church assistance and individual acts...
of generosity and benevolence. But the level of widespread poverty and distress was still dangerously high in Christchurch in early 1932. At the Christchurch Mayor's relief depot there were over 10,000 people applying for aid each week. Unemployment relief work being offered to single men was limited and demonstrations were held regularly in the city to complain against the Government's inability to cope with the ever-worsening economic situation. The numbers of men who were out of work continued to grow.

In the midst of these conditions a dispute between the Christchurch Tramway Board and the Tramway Employees' Union led to the Tramway Strike of May 1932. On 25 January, the Board's Secretary, Frank Thompson, wrote to the Secretary of the T.E.U., E Snow, suggesting that the Union accept a rationing scheme to avoid the laying-off of Union members. The system, which was to last only until 31 March, involved the loss of one day's work for each man every three weeks. If accepted by the Union it would, the Board said, make it unnecessary to dismiss fourteen motormen. These men would otherwise have become surplus staff when their holidays became due on 1 April. The Board hoped that absences through sickness, resignations, and other causes would make it possible then to absorb the whole of the men 'unless the position was affected by...
changes in traffic conditions'.

The Union agreed to the request, on the understanding that the scheme would last only until 31 March. It felt that, despite its obvious disadvantages, the rationing scheme was preferable to the loss of employment for the fourteen men concerned. However, on 1 April, the Board put forward a new proposal before the Tramway Employees' Union (T.E.U.). It suggested that, to avoid dismissals of men, the present rationing scheme should be continued until 8 June, when a new industrial agreement was to be made. The Union rejected this proposal. Snow accused the Board of abusing the present rationing scheme by laying off more men than was necessary, thus saving money at the expense of the tramway employees. His suggestion was that in the meantime the Board arrange the dates of the annual holidays, due in September, so that the surplus men could be kept employed. The Union would then discuss the question of a shorter working week when the Agreement expired in June. It could not accept the present rationing scheme because of the heavy burden of high taxation and low wages already suffered by the men.

The Chairman of the Board, E H Andrews, in turn
rejected each of the Union's alternatives. He maintained that the Board could not alter the holiday arrangements because it would mean that the annual holidays of the whole staff, usually spread over the whole year, would have to be taken in the first half of the year. It would mean that at the end of six months the eight men employed to relieve men away on holidays would have nothing to do. This would increase the number of men to be dismissed to nineteen. Andrews countered the Union's suggestion that shorter working hours be introduced by pointing out that the financial effect of this would be the same if the present surplus men were kept on and paid although there was no work for them. Anxious to reduce its expenditure at a time of falling revenue, the Board declared it could not accept the Union's idea. It's final decision was that if the T.E.U. did not agree to continue the rationing system until the date of the new industrial agreement, the tramway staff would be reduced.

On 27 April, twelve motormen were dismissed by the Tramway Board on the grounds of retrenchment. Nearly all the men dismissed were Senior men. One man had worked for the Board for seventeen years. Three other men had been in service for ten years. Jock Mathison, President of the T.E.U.,
was included as one of the men dismissed. The Board expressed its regret for a course of action 'which would have been avoided if the Union had agreed to continue the rationing scheme.'

The T.E.U. took the Board to task over two issues. Already angry with the Board's dishonouring of the agreement it made with the Union over the length of time the rationing scheme would extend, Snow claimed that the twelve men dismissed were examples of victimisation. He believed that the men had been sacrificed by the Board in its desire to save money and prevent further decreased profits.

A special meeting was held by the Union at the Trades Hall on Sunday 1 May. About two hundred T.E.U. members (out of a total of 383) attended the meeting to vote in a secret ballot whether to go out on strike or continue the rationing scheme until 8 June. The vote was 106 to 68 in favour of strike action. Two notable voters against the decision to strike were J. Barr, former Vice-President of the T.E.U. and T. Armstrong. Both men were later strong supporters of the Union during the strike.

The Tramway Strike began on 4 May and lasted for thirteen days. Attempts to reach a settlement, before the outbreak of the Strike, failed when the Board, refusing to
reinstate the twelve men dismissed, called for volunteer workers to man the trams. Advertisements for 'scab' labour, as it was termed by the Strikers, appeared in the three leading newspapers on 3 May. Those attracted to the Board's offer were mainly unemployed men who had had previous experience working on trams. They were personally assured by both the Board's General Manager, Frank Thompson, and Traffic Manager, W. Dick, that the Board's offer was for permanent positions.

Initially, the Mayor of Christchurch, Dan Sullivan, M.P., Deputy-Mayor, J.K. Archer, and J.M. McCombs, M.P. acted as intermediaries between the Tramway Board and the T.E.U. representatives in attempts to settle the dispute. They were unsuccessful, with both sides failing to compromise over the rationing scheme and the re-employment of the twelve men discharged from service. It was not until 6 May, when a proposal made by Bishops West-Watson and Brodie, respective members of the Anglican and Roman Catholic Churches in Christchurch, that the two parties meet to discuss a settlement of the strike, was accepted by the Board that significant steps were taken to reach a compromise.

From the beginning, the Tramway Board was well-organised to cope with the strike. The recruitment of voluntary .../11
labour, plus the thirty-nine loyalists who refused to join the other Union Employees out on strike, enabled the Board to maintain a satisfactory day transport service for the public. The day after the strike began, the night-service was withdrawn as a precaution against sabotage and was not reintroduced until the dispute was settled. Immediate measures were taken to protect the Tramway Board's tramsheds from damage, with the police and the Board cooperating together. Before the strike began, the Superintendent of Police, D.J. Cummings, announced that picket-action by the strikers would be met with action by the police. Despite these precautionary moves, Earnest Andrews, Chairman of the Tramway Board, stated that he personally did not anticipate any violence from the strikers: 'The tramway employees themselves were not the type to indulge in violence'.

* * *

The first day of the strike was quiet and orderly. Although many of the unemployed workers present in the city
were accepted by the Board as volunteer employees there were no incidents. 16 The Press felt that at the tramway depot,

'there was considerable good-humour among the men watching and good-natured bantering with police parties showed that the men out on strike were not in any way anxious to cause disturbance.' 17

The T.E.U. was anxious to reassure the community that it was not its intention to incite disorder against the Board. J. Barr soothed public fears with his confident statement:

'The people of Christchurch can rest assured that the strike will be conducted in a peaceful manner. There will be no hooliganism, and we are determined to maintain the good name of the Christchurch tramwaymen'. 18

Events on the following day, however, indicated a turn for the worse. The first trams to leave the depot on Moorhouse Avenue for the Opawa run were stopped by raiders who pulled the pole off the overhead wire and sabotaged the fuseboxes. On the Sumner line, near Heathcote, an apparent passenger caused the motorman to stop the tram. Fifteen men, with coat collars pulled up and hats pulled down, suddenly appeared, seized the control handle and interfered with the switch. They sped away on bicycles. 19
The trolley bus route to north New Brighton had portions of its line strewn with nails. 20

Further trouble seemed likely when a fuse blew out a tram on the corner of Colombo and Gloucester Streets later in the same afternoon. A crowd of about five hundred people gathered at the scene, blocking Gloucester Street and cheering out at the tram against W. Dick, the Traffic Manager, who was on board. The crowd quietly dispersed, however, after the tram left. 21

By the end of the following day, Friday 6 May, twenty-three arrests had been made after 'one of the most uneasy and eventful days that Christchurch had known for years'. 22 That morning about three hundred men attempted to interfere with the running of the early trams at the depot. A scuffle broke out when a large contingent of regular and special police moved in to beat back the men. The crowd was armed with iron bars and stones but weapons confiscated during the fracas included 'a large club, a cartwheel spoke carefully finished and fitted with a leather wrist grip, a poker, and an axe-handle'. 23 The special police, already recruited from the local community by Superintendent Cummings, acting upon a Government order to prevent such disturbances occurring, were outfitted with steel helmets and wooden...
batons. Sixteen men were arrested. During the rest of the day the city was patrolled by constables and heavy numbers of Specials. Ironically, it was the presence of the Special police in the city which caused a serious uprising in Cathedral Square in the same afternoon. The T.E.U. had organised a silent demonstration march from the Trades Hall in Gloucester Street to the Square. About four hundred unemployed men and women joined the march when it reached the Square and broke into loud singing of 'The Red Flag'. Tramcars were subjected to booing, hoots and jeers. Trouble began when a constable was hit by a member of the crowd. As the crowd swarmed towards the incident outside the Post Office, police tried frantically to keep the people moving. Clashes with the crowd were frequent, and batons were used to try to keep the demonstration under control. Seven arrests were made. It was later estimated that the crowd numbered about 4,000 people. In the early hours of the following morning, eight men were arrested when they ambushed a Riccarton tram. They were later charged with the intent to sabotage.

Feelings were running high in Christchurch following these events. It was amidst this tension that various Church representatives joined together to try to bring about a settlement between the T.B. and T.E.U. Bishop West-Watson...
and Bishop Matthew Brodie were the leading mediators in the negotiations which followed between the two disputing parties. Agreement foundered over a new issue once the Strike was under way, namely the position of the new men employed by the Board to replace those on strike. The T.E.U. demanded that these men be dismissed as a prelude to negotiations over the rationing scheme. The Board flatly refused on the grounds that it believed it owed a responsibility to the new men to ensure that their jobs were permanent. The Board's condition to the Union that the new men must be considered as part of the staff in any future rationing scheme was rejected by the Union. The deadlock between the two sides seemed insurmountable.

The conference set up by the mediators included P. Hally, Conciliation Commissioner, who was called in to help break the deadlock. Agreement was eventually reached over the setting up of an independent Tribunal, with three representatives from each side. A. Donnelly, a local lawyer and member of the Queen's Counsel, was elected Chairman of the Tribunal. E.H. Andrews, G. T. Booth and W. Hayward were the Board's representatives. The Union elected H.T. Armstrong, M.P., J. Mathison, and A.T. Boanas as its delegates. The Tribunal was set up under the Labour Disputes Investigation Act, 1913, as was expressly requested by the Tramway Board.
The Board entered a special plea that the Tribunal give every consideration to the claims of the employed voluntary men. 33

The Tribunal sat on 12 May. 34 Five days previous to this, only one day after the Cathedral Square disturbance, serious rioting broke out in Lancaster Park at the end of a local football match. The game was being played between two local teams, Merivale and Christchurch Rugby Football Club Senior A. It was known among the crowd that the latter team included three members who were recent recruits of the Special police force. Consequently, the usual moderate sized crowd had swelled to several thousand people, out to express their anger against the three renegade football players.

The match itself had no interruptions but the end of the game was greeted with loud booing and catcalls. As the crowd left the Park, a large number of spectators congregated on Ferry Road and waited for the tram, which was to carry passengers away from the area, to appear. As soon as it arrived, the tram was greeted with a barrage of stones and bricks from the mob. The driver was hit by a flying brick and died a week later of the injuries he sustained.

The Christchurch football team was hastily bundled into
a Black Maria as the spectators stormed the field, intent on seizing hold of the renegades; Cottrel, Manchester and Hart. The crowd was wildly incensed at the presence of the three Special police on the field and the situation would undoubtedly have been worse if the team had not been quickly removed by the police. Tension was high and a menacing atmosphere of violence remained over the city the following few days. This was enhanced by the sight of tramcar windows protected by fine wiremesh netting to guard against flying objects. On 8 May the plate-glass windows of Hurst and Drake Ltd. premises were smashed by a stone and the windows of Bell Cycle and Motor Company suffered the same fate.

Particular animosity was generated towards those Union members who refused to join their fellow members out on Strike. A Strike Committee had been officially formed as soon as the strike began, and one of its objects was to deal with 'those men opposed to the Union's attitude'. Unofficial acts of recrimination were carried out against the loyalists and 'scabs'. They were subjected to threats of harm towards their wives and families and many a 'scab' was 'roughed up' as he was returning home after a late shift or going to man the trams early in the morning. Homes and premises of the 'scabs' were damaged by flying stones and painted slogans of
abuse. The strikers' wives staunchly supported their husbands, fathers, and sons in their stand against the Board and were as antagonistic towards the 'scab' element as their menfolk. As one of the volunteers said, 'The trammmies' missuses are the worst. They make you feel uncomfortable just with their looks.'

* * *

Tension within the community began to dissipate in the second week of the Strike. There was a notable lessening of hostility towards the T.B. and its associates, and even the continued presence of the Specials patrolling the city failed to induce further confrontations with the authorities. Satisfactory proceedings with the one-man Tribunal continued apace with the reduced heated emotion in the city. The main issue the Tribunal faced was to settle the question of the future of the new men employed by the Board. F. Thompson, General Manager of the Board, presented the Board's case. The T.E.U.'s case was presented by its Secretary, E. Snow. Statements were heard from the Chamber of Commerce, the twelve men who had been originally dismissed from the Board's employment, from the voluntary employees, and representations from the loyalists.

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The decision made by the Chairman of the Tribunal, A. Donnelly, was announced on 17 May. He ruled that the Board should select for permanent employment sixty of the new men. The rest of the staff was to be made up of the men out on strike, including Mathison, President of the T.E.U. The charges of victimisation made by the union were dismissed except in the case of Mathison, which charge Donnelly ruled could not be proved. As to the question of the rationing system Donnelly ruled that the Board ration the available work among the whole of the future staff, including the extra men in temporary employment.

The strike was officially called off on May 17, after both sides agreed to accept the decision of the Tribunal.

* * *

Ingredients for incendiary violence were present in the Tramway Strike. The two main confrontations with the police, on 6 and 7 May respectively, clearly showed the bitterness generated among union sympathisers against the 'scab' element and temporary police force. Mathison
later admitted that it would have taken little encouragement for the crowd on both occasions to express its hostility towards the Board's cohorts by more serious measures than in fact took place. The word 'victimisation', too, was as emotive in industrial disputes in 1932 as it is in the present day, and the Board's loud denials of the charge of victimisation laid against it by the Union failed to erase suspicion in many people's minds.

The T.B.'s refusal to abandon its plan for the rationing system was regarded by some as a blatant challenge to the T.E.U. to defy the Board's authority. Yet the Board had good reasons for its determined attitude not to maintain surplus staff. At the time of the Tramway Strike the Board was facing severe financial difficulties. Indications of a decline in revenue had been detected as early as 1928 after a peak year in 1927. The economic depression plus increased competition from motor-vehicles, motor-cycles and, in particular, bicycles, in the early 1930's made serious down-turns in the Board's financial intakings. The decline was only gradual until 1931, then 'the run down became a rapid one'.

This serious decline in revenue had a direct effect on the Board's dealings with the T.E.U. over the issue of continuing the rationing system. The following figures show
the fall in income from 1927 to 1932 and the corresponding
decline in operating expenses as the Board tried desperately
to reduce its expenditure 42 (See graph over-leaf)

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<tr>
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<th>1927</th>
<th>1928</th>
<th>1929</th>
<th>1930</th>
<th>1931</th>
<th>1932</th>
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<tr>
<td>REVENUE</td>
<td>290,658</td>
<td>285,117</td>
<td>276,689</td>
<td>264,249</td>
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<td>218,890</td>
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<td>OPERATING EXPENSES</td>
<td>210,897</td>
<td>210,897</td>
<td>205,368</td>
<td>196,522</td>
<td>189,813</td>
<td>149,134</td>
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There was a significant decline in the number of
passengers using the tram service. Bicycles numbered about
45,000 in Christchurch in early 1932. 43 Motor-vehicles
followed a close second in competition with the tram service
as the following statistics show:

CHART SHOWING THE NUMBER OF REGISTERED MOTOR VEHICLES
IN THE POSTAL DISTRICTS OF THE FOUR MAIN CENTRES IN
NEW ZEALAND IN 1932

<table>
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<tr>
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<th>Estimated pop. of postal districts</th>
<th>Registrations of motor vehicles</th>
<th>Registrations per 1,000 of pop.</th>
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<tr>
<td>Auckland</td>
<td>329,000</td>
<td>20,986</td>
<td>64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wellington</td>
<td>195,000</td>
<td>12,623</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Christchurch</td>
<td>190,000</td>
<td>15,342</td>
<td>81</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dunedin</td>
<td>135,000</td>
<td>7,285</td>
<td>54</td>
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N.B. Postal districts are larger than metropolitan districts

.../22
GRAPH TO SHOW
TRAMWAY BOARD'S FALL IN
INCOME AND OPERATING EXPENSES, 1927 - 1933.
YEAR ENDED MARCH 31st 1933

YEAR ENDED MARCH 31st 1933
In comparison with the tramway systems of Auckland, Wellington and Dunedin, the Christchurch Tramway Board suffered a handicap of 27%, 25% and 56% respectively. 44

Various measures were undertaken to help reduce expenditure. Operating expenses were curtailed down to the smallest detail. In August 1930 the Press reported a decision made by the Works and Traffic Committee of the Tramway Board:

'Where streets in which tramway poles are placed under legislative authority, are widened leaving the tramway pole in an exposed position, it was the Board's custom in its prosperous days to move back the poles at its own expense. Latterly the Board has charged half the cost to the local body creating the danger. As the result of legal advice and in view of need for economy, the Committee has notified all local bodies they must pay full cost in future.' 45

Despite its concern over losses in revenue, the Board steadfastly refused to increase its fares. Such a drastic measure, it believed, would be unpopular with the public, particularly at a time of economic downturn. The Board realised that such a move could inadvertently increase, rather than decrease, the reduction in passenger use of the trams.

The Interest and Sinking Fund charges itemised by the Board were on fixed rates. This was a serious handicap
to the Board's efforts in reducing expenditure in this direction, and it was not until Government legislation relaxed the rules governing fixed interest rates in 1934 that the Board was able to overcome this problem.

Throughout 1931 and early 1932 the difficulty of cutting costs continued. In May 1931 the Board introduced a 10% cut in wages in line with the 11.2% decrease in the cost of living since 1928. Despite the savings gained from this, the Board was still faced with a large deficit. The situation grew progressively worse as the effects of the depression deepened within the country. Mid 1931, Frank Thompson, General Manager of the Board, left for an overseas survey to observe how other cities ran their tramway services and to see if any lessons in thrifty business management could be gained. In his absence, the Board continued to try to defray expenses. Unproductive mileage was trimmed to a bare minimum and expense items continued to be carefully examined. In October 1931, H.J. Jarman, Acting-General Manager of the Board in Thompson's absence, voiced his despair when he said:

'I cannot suggest any further reduction. Since 1927 the clerical work has increased, there are more tickets issued to conductors, and the sales of concession tickets have increased. No 5 scheme work and wage cuts have also
increased clerical work and there is always routine work to be carried out in a large business like the Tramway which cannot be dispensed with'.

A fortnight later the report from the Works and Traffic Committee stressed an 'urgent need for economy'.

By December 1931 the Tramway Board's revenue had dropped from a surplus of five hundred and seventy-three pounds in March 1930 to a deficiency of one thousand and seventy-nine pounds. It was estimated that by March 1932 the overall deficiency in income would be ten thousand pounds.

In the light of these financial difficulties plaguing the tramway service since before 1930, it is hardly surprising the Board viewed the idea of saving expenditure by the rationing scheme with a certain degree of enthusiasm. Yet it did take pains to emphasise that the system was to avoid the dismissal of surplus men in the Traffic department. Concerned for its economic viability, the Board was nevertheless aware of its responsibility towards its employees. Unfortunately it found to its cost that it was hard to balance the two.*

* The T.B.'s confrontation with the T.E.U. can be traced back to the final months of 1931. As a measure to reduce its expenditure, the Board was successful in receiving a special Order in Council governing the statutory number of conductors required when trailers were being run. Formerly the Board was compelled to have two conductors when one or two trailers were being run. The alteration required the Board to supply only two conductors when two trailers were run. This resulted in the dismissal of twelve conductors, made redundant by the new measure. The move was deplored by the T.E.U. and it was only with extreme reluctance that the T.E.U. agreed to the Board's new rationing scheme the following January.
Any strike action involving employees of a public service as the Tramway Board's employees was to inevitably affect the local community. The people of Christchurch were directly involved in the strike through the alternative arrangements made by the Board to maintain its usual services. The public was involved in the dispute in other ways too. The men employed by the Board to replace those employees on strike were Christchurch residents, mostly unemployed, who in most cases had had previous experience in driving trams. The voluntary tramwaymen were aware of the attitude held by some members of the public that they were lowering their principles by accepting employment from the Board. Some retaliated in defence. As one man said, 'If you had a wife and several children to keep with winter on you and a pile of debts, would you strike or would you work?'

This attitude did little to erase the derision and scorn directed towards the 'scabs'.

The Special police force were regarded with similar contempt by union sympathisers. With their steel helmets and wooden batons, the temporary police were dubbed 'The Tin-Hat Brigade' as an uncomplimentary title. Their role in the Tramway Strike was not a savoury one. Contemporaries are
near unanimous in their description of the composition of the 'Tin-Hat Brigade'. It was largely made up of farm labourers and business employees. Many of these men were afraid to disobey the orders of their employer to join the volunteer police force in case they faced dismissal. Members of local football clubs reinforced the number of recruits. There is no evidence to prove that university students volunteered their services in the Special force.

As volunteer police, the Specials were subjected to threats and abuse from the aggressive faction in the strike. Two serious demonstrations during the strike, in Cathedral Square and, a day later, at Lancaster Park, were sparked off by intense antagonism towards the 'scabs' and 'Tin-Hat Brigade'.

* The role played by university students was small in the strike. This is confirmed by J. Mathison who addressed a meeting at the university union on 9 May to explain the case of the T.E.U. He asserts that the students expressed 'warm sympathy' for the strikers. On 10 May E.H. Andrews, the Board's Chairman, also spoke to the students, outlining the position of the T.E.U. in the dispute. He later commented to Mathison that it had been 'a dreadful experience'. Mathison himself claims that Andrews was booed from the moment he started till the moment he finished. 
With anger expressed against the voluntary tramway employees and Special police force by the T.E.U. and its supporters, the question of why this hostility did not lead to a major riot needs to be answered. Why did the unemployed in Christchurch not take advantage of the tramway strike to give vent to their anger and frustration against government mishandling of the economic situation? The reply could be that the plight of the Christchurch unemployed had not reached the levels of Wellington and Auckland. It is the validity of this answer that will be dealt with in the following pages.

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The unemployed in Christchurch in early 1932, had several avenues to which they could turn for relief from their poverty. The Mayor of Christchurch, Dan Sullivan, Labour M.P. for Avon; the Unemployed Workers Union (U.W.U.), and Relief Workers Union (R.W.U.); charitable organisations and the relief systems run by the churches and Hospital Board each sought to help the unemployed in its own way. The existence of a Labour City Council and its readiness to listen to the grievances of the jobless helped to reassure the people that the local authorities were aware of their difficulties. The Council provided part-time relief work for single and married men who were without employment. To its credit, the Council won some important concessions in its battles against government decrees which it considered hindered rather than helped the situation facing the unemployed. Its fight over refusing to reduce the standard wage rates for relief workers is a case in point. By 1932 all local bodies in New Zealand were facing a chronic shortage of funds which were desperately needed to maintain vital relief services.

Incapacitated by Government delay in introducing effective economic legislation to counter the effects of the economic recession, the Unemployment Board reduced the level of monetary grants made to local bodies. This
served only to worsen the situation. Reaction by the local authorities in three main cities was predictable. The Mount Roskill Road Board in Auckland suddenly found its subsidy cut to four hundred and thirty-five pounds from its previous allowance of one thousand pounds to one thousand three hundred pounds per week. Inadequate funds forced the Wellington Unemployment Committee to reduce relief workers' hours early in February 1932, as the only possible alternative to cutting men off its payroll. The Dunedin Unemployment Committee, similarly handicapped by financial difficulties, found itself unable to provide work for single men.

The Christchurch City Council faced the same problems. In the week ending 7 March the council saw a sixty-six pound reduction in the allocation from the Unemployment Board for relief work than was allocated the week before. In spite of this, the Council refused to lower the standard rates of pay to relief workers. As Ian Sullivan justly remarked:

'Not only have we paid the full standard rate of wages to our permanent employees and made provision for payment of full standard rates to the relief workers employed by the Council, but we have also succeeded in reducing the rates payable by ratepayers. Further than that, the Council has again and again contributed in cash to the Mayor's fund for the relief of distress'
Following the Dunedin and Auckland riots in January and April, a ban was placed on public meetings in most main centres throughout the country. In Christchurch the City Council decided there was no need to impose this ban. It was of the opinion that any activity which diverted the attention of the unemployed was welcome provided the meetings remained orderly. The Council even went so far as to assist the organisation of public meetings by erecting a light in the yard at the rear of the municipal buildings so gatherings could be held.

Dan Sullivan was sympathetic to the hundreds of families without money or jobs in the city. Much of his time outside official duties was spent helping bridge the gap between those who had and those who had not in the Depression. Every Sunday evening he would arrange a concert in the Civic Chambers to entertain the local community. He frequently assisted the needy with contributions out of his own pocket and urged others to follow his example. P.J. Oakley, in his thesis, 'The Handling of Depression Problems in Christchurch, 1928 - 1935' emphasises this point when he draws attention to the Mayor's donation of the price of twenty bags of coal (5/- 6d) to the Coal and Blanket Fund when it was in debt.
The Christchurch City Council had previously indicated its sympathy for labour in industrial disputes when it gave unanimous support to the strikers in the Waimakariri Relief Workers' Strike, March 1932. The dispute arose over the meagre wages offered to the men by the Unemployment Board. The workers maintained that a weekly wage of 37/- 6d was not sufficient to support a man and his family when the costs of accommodation, food and transport to and from the relief camp were expected to come out of the weekly wage also. The camp was established by the Waimakariri River Trust which financed the purchase of tools, material, overhead costs, payment for cooks and general supervision. The Unemployment Board was responsible for the payment of wages, in line with the normal procedure for all approved relief projects. Already angry over the 37/- 6d rate for forty hours weekly work, the relief workers were further enraged by a Government announcement that the wage tax would increase to 1/- in the pound. They declared it unreasonable for the authorities to expect the men to subsist on meagre wages, away from their homes and families, with no prospects of being able to supplement their income with odd jobs. Encouraged by the Unemployed Workers Movement (a reformist unemployment organisation which crusaded for the 'demands of the workers'), the Waimakariri River Trust relief workers went out on strike on 24 March.
The men received a significant amount of sympathy from large numbers of the community. They were boosted by donations of money and pledges of support from local organisations including the Christchurch branch of the Alliance of Labour, the N.Z.L.P. and the U.W.M. The City Council granted permission for a street collection to be held by the relief workers' Strike Committee on 4 April.

Attempts to extend the Waimakariri Strike into a general strike against Government policies are significant when related to the theme of this essay.

On 5 April at a meeting of unemployed men at the Trades Hall presided over by E. Snow, Secretary of the T.E.U., the decision was passed to widen the scope of the Strike. It was suggested that the Waimakariri dispute be enlarged into a focal point of dissatisfaction against all anomalies in the relief system. The recent introduction of the idea of rural allotment schemes was particularly unpopular with unemployed workers, for similar reasons for the objections to the Waimakariri relief camp scheme.

The decision was enthusiastically supported not only
by the unemployed relief workers present at the meeting, but was also by a delegation of relief workers from Stewart's Gully relief scheme who had decided to join the strike. The serious turn in the situation was later put into words in a statement released by the Waimakariri Relief Workers' Strike Committee: "The Waimakariri men regard the dispute with the Trust as only the first engagement in a struggle which will embrace all the relief workers in New Zealand, and probably employed workers as well." 64

The strike lasted for ten days. When a compromise was reached with the River Trust the dispute was declared settled and any plans to widen the scale of the strike were abandoned. Nevertheless, the threat had raised its ugly head and the civil authorities and unemployed alike who were involved in the Relief Workers' Strike had realised the potential of militant action inherent in the situation. Hungry and destitute, many of the unemployed men and women in Christchurch could look forward only to increased poverty and the prospects of a long cold winter. When the Tramway Strike later broke out, the T.E.U., City Council, and Tramway Board were all aware of the necessity not to encourage or provoke any unnecessary tension or conflict within the situation. They needed only to look
back to the recent events in the Waimakariri relief workers' strike to see the importance of this.

The Labour Christchurch City Council was staunchly upheld by the sole Labour member of the conservative Tramway Board in its sympathy for labour struggles. Mrs E.R. McCombs was consistent in her encouragement of the T.E.U.'s stand against the Board. So too was H.T. Armstrong, member of the Independent Labour Party in Christchurch. His attack against Government action in abolishing compulsory arbitration was particularly pertinent to the strike situation as the Amendment contained no compulsion to employers to initiate settlements in industrial disputes. The Labour sympathisers were unwavering in their criticism of the Board's uncompromising attitude to negotiations with the T.E.U.

The Board was unpopular too, with Labour supporters over its gain of Government sanction suspending the clause requiring tramdrivers to be certified motormen. They held that the Board's knowledge of Government permission to employ uncertified motormen gave it unnecessary power to resist the T.E.U.'s demands.
In its criticism of both the Government's inept handling of the unemployment situation, and the Board's intransigent attitude over the tramway dispute, the Labour organisations in Christchurch provided vocal outlets for the dissatisfied and discontented in the community. Rosslyn Noonan, in her thesis, 'The Riots of 1932', cites this point as one of the major reasons why the tramway strike did not widen into a general attack against social disruption.

The unemployed had other, legal channels through which they could express the anger they felt against the anomalies in the economic system.

The Unemployed Workers' Union played an important part in controlling the unemployed during the period of the Tramway Strike. Led by Jock Mathison (President of the T.E.U.; Secretary of the Industrial Union of Workers, and Vice-President of the Christchurch Socialist Party), the U.W.U. sought to divert the attention of unemployed workers from acts of violence or radical agitation. During the strike the U.W.U. collaborated with the T.E.U. in order to organise activities for those out of work. Every morning, five days a week, members of the U.W.U. met at the Trades Hall where they were provided with a cup of tea and a
biscuit. 66 For many of them this was the first food they had had to eat that day. The meeting would last for two hours, the time taken up with speeches, discussions, and, sometimes, processions to landlords and manufacturers who were not felt to be sympathetic to the needs of the unemployed.

On one such occasion a protest march was led to the site of Archibald's furniture manufacturing firm in Manchester Street. Led by Mathison a crowd of some eight thousand members of the U.W.U. visited Archibald's premises to investigate the claim made by a fellow union member that Archibald, his landlord, wished to evict him from his premises. As the crowd discovered, the true situation was that Archibald himself wished to gain access to the property to fix some much-needed repairs. The tenant had not been charged for rent for over twelve months. 67

The good-humoured reception which the crowd accorded this news illustrates the moderate nature of the Union. Its leaders encouraged the Union members not to risk alienating public sympathy by committing acts of violence or outrage. Mathison himself was in a strong position in status and experience to maintain firm authority over the unemployed workers in his union. His first experience...
in strike action was gained when he was in his late teens, when he witnessed a strike in the Glasgow woollen mill industry. Emigrating later to New Zealand, he was the only member of the T.E.U. who had had previous experience in strike action, picketing or associative union stoppages. As a member of the Strike Committee Mathison helped draw up a plan for strike action in the tramway dispute which was presented to the T.E.U. at the special meeting of Sunday 1 May. It was passed by the Union and subsequently put into action on 4 May.

The Strike Committee which was formed on the same day contained representatives from two other unemployment organisations, the Relief Workers Organisation and the radical Unemployed Workers Movement. The purpose of the Committee was to ensure that the strike would be conducted in a moderate manner. Neither Mathison nor the Strike Committee were prepared to tolerate any suggestions of sabotage or destructive behaviour.

To its credit, the Committee succeeded to a large extent in this aim. Contemporary opinion remembers the Tramway Union employees as a well-respected body of workers, popular with the citizens of Christchurch whom they met every day on the trams in the course of their service. Warm sympathy
was extended to the unionists by individual members of the community. Unwilling to endanger this support and unattracted by the compulsion towards revolutionary action, the tramwaymen did not join those responsible for broken windows, damaged property, and beating-up of 'scabs' which formed part of the events in the strike.

Due to the rather transient nature of the Christchurch labour force, it is an easier task to ascertain who were not agitators in the strike than it is to analyse who were. Contemporaries described the rioters as 'outsiders'. While one must beware of such handy labels which often say as much about the user as the person described, it may well in this case have some validity. In the main, the militant action in the strike was the work of a small radical group who were assisted by a larger element of unemployed labourers from other centres. These were men who had drifted to Christchurch in search of work and had been attracted instead to the possibilities of conflict. The T.E.U. employees and vast majority of other unemployed workers in the city, felt no similar urge to wreak vengeance against either the 'scabs' or the property of the T.B. Their attention was diverted by the assiduous work of the Labour City Council and Unemployed Workers Union.
The Christchurch Hospital Board relief system helped contribute to easing the distress caused by the harsh conditions of the Depression. The relief system consisted of distributing hand-outs of relief money to those in need, to buy food and clothing. Each charity case was judged on the grounds of whether or not it was 'a case of necessity.' In thousands of instances the answer was affirmative.

Church depots provided outlets where people could buy and sell old clothes and goods. Handouts of food and soup kitchens were run by various churches around the city.

Individual acts of generosity and open sympathy for the less fortunate did much to ease the plight of the unemployed. Not only did the depression make poverty an intimate acquaintance for many, it also brought knowledge of its presence to people who had never been aware of hardship before. In many cases the reaction this produced was of selfless benevolence. Manufacturers, bakeries, landlords and businessmen volunteered their services to help assist the unemployed. Earnest Adams, from Adams Bruce Ltd., regularly gave his permission to the U.W.U. to take the necessary food items from his warehouse to feed a hungry family. Actions such as this helped reduce the gap between
the 'haves' and 'have nots' in the city. The closer relationship which formed between the unemployed and wealthier Christchurch citizens was important in the strike. Sympathy for those who were without work; dislike of the temporary police force, and a feeling of respect for the courage shown by the T.E.U. in striking against the Board in the midst of harsh economic conditions, bred feelings of compassion towards the strikers. The ordinary citizen shared an equal disrespect for the 'scab' worker with the T.U. employees. Some people showed their support for the T.E.U. by refusing to use the trams while the strike was on, and it was not unheard of for people to still be boycotting use of the trams a year after the dispute was over.

The services offered by each of the organisations mentioned, and the benevolency of a considerable portion of the community is important when looking at reasons for the absence of major riots during the strike. Passive support for the unionists was the rule rather than the exception. The two serious demonstrations which did occur, in Cathedral Square and Lancaster Park, were quickly and efficiently handled by the police. Later violence was slight. One man was killed when he was struck by a flying brick on the corner of Moorhouse Avenue and Ferry Road after the Lancaster Park football match. Contrary to what one
might expect, this incident did not induce further violence. The man concerned was the driver of a tram which was waiting to collect homeward passengers after the game. Some uncertainty surrounds the exact cause of his death, but it is known he died a week later of the injuries he suffered. A man named Burke was later charged with manslaughter but was found not guilty by the Supreme Court. Publicity of the court case and indeed of the circumstances surrounding the death of the tramdriver was minimal in Christchurch. It is not known whether this silence was a deliberate measure on the part of the city authorities, police and media to tone down any possibilities of further violence. The mystery enveloping the incident, however, suggests that this may have been the case.

As quickly as the crowd swelled into a spontaneous demonstration against the three rugby-playing specials, so too did it deflate into passivity once the objects of hostility were removed. The crowd was not motivated by hunger in its uprising at the football match. Neither did the shortage of food incite the unemployed to resort to revolutionary action in the strike. With bodies better nourished by Christchurch benevolent agencies than those of many of their counterparts in other centres in New Zealand, most unemployed saw the tramway strike as a focus of hostility.../42
against the Tramway Board alone.

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If the majority took this view there were those who saw in the tramway dispute an opportunity for wider social protest. In a letter addressed to A. Blance, a prominent Christchurch Communist Party leader, M. Wilkinson, National Secretary of the Unemployed Workers Movement (U.W.M.) wrote, 'What a glorious opportunity to show mass solidarity to the capitalist...The time is now ripe for concerted organised action'. 77

Wilkinson's view of the strike raises two important questions related to the involvement of the Communist Party (C.P.) Did the Party seek to widen the strike into a general attack against civil authority? If so, why did it not succeed?

In May 1932 the Christchurch branch of the C.P. was comprised of only a handful of members. It was directed and controlled by C. Saunders, A. Blance (Secretary) and T. Beardsley, and included such other prominent members as Frank Langley, J.J. Porter, C. Riley, S. Devereaux (who was
arrested for attempting to sabotage a tram in the strike), F. Renwick, Jim Andrews, and Philip G. Brayer. There was little leadership from Wellington headquarters to the smaller Party branch primarily due to serious internal crises which the Party was facing in the early nineteen thirties.

In mid-1929 a body blow was dealt to the Party by the loss of almost all its West Coast strength over the question of appropriate action to take towards the Australian miners' strike. The Wellington Party headquarters wished to extend N.Z. miners' support to include a general boycott of all coal exports to Australia. Certain mining leaders who were influential members of the C.P. rejected this idea. Angus McLagan, National Secretary of the United mine Workers, National Secretary of the C.P., and editor of the C.P. journal, 'Workers Vanguard', argued that the N.Z. miners would not support such a move. Neither, he claimed, would the miners support a sympathy strike for their Australian counterparts. McLagan's subsequent resignation from the C.P. was followed by similar action from other leading miners. Until the C.P. regained a measure of unity and strength through the recruitment of increasing numbers of unemployed workers dissatisfied with the economic system, the Christchurch Party branch remained largely responsible for the direction of its own policies. Its administrative relationship with
Wellington headquarters was confined to general instructions and advice on appropriate Party action. A report sent out to all branches from central headquarters encouraged all attempts to exploit any:

'Strike action - sectional, local and general. Every attempt must be made to utilize this most effective method of resistance. (However) small and insignificant any strike may appear support may be given to it and every attempt should be made to broaden the issue and link it with our general economical and political demands.'

The Christchurch branch of the C.P. had insufficient warning of the outbreak of the strike to use it as an excuse to 'broaden the issue'. There had been confrontations between the Board and the T.E.U. in the past which had been settled before strike action became an issue. When it was known that the T.E.U. was intending to strike over the rationing system, the Party, and people of Christchurch thought it unlikely the Union would risk strike action at a time of increasing unemployment and colder, wintry weather conditions. Taken aback by the suddenness of the situation, the C.P. in Christchurch was ill-prepared and ill-equipped to successfully turn the strike to its own advantage.

C. Saunders, A.B. Blance, and their fellow-associates aimed to maintain a high intellectual standard within the
Party. They refused to recruit unemployed workers en masse into the Party simply to increase the membership roll. They believed this would detract from the future goal for which the Party was aiming - that of the organised overthrow of the decadent capitalist system. They regarded the Auckland riots with disapproval. J.J. Porter asserts that the Christchurch C.P. followed the opinion held by the central N.Z. Party that the Queen Street riots were the work of an 'organised gang of looters' who had deliberately encouraged frustrated, hungry individuals to take deliberate action against their plight. 80

The Christchurch C.P. leaders were opposed to the idea of violence for violence's sake. They saw it as their duty to offer an alternative political system to those who were dissatisfied with capitalist society. Encouraging mass insurrection and revolutionary agitation when the Party was not yet strong enough, nor sufficiently equipped to handle such a situation, was regarded as nothing less than suicidal for the branch's existence. 81

Because they were aware of the limitations imposed upon their role in the tramway dispute, the leaders of the Communist Party in Christchurch transferred much of their energies to supporting the Unemployed Workers Movement. The radical
wing of the U.W.M. which the C.P. supported was noted for its extremist stance in unemployment affairs. This is clear in its stated objective which was:

'To unite the unemployed and employed in their fight against unemployment and its effects by fighting for the demands of the workers and for the ultimate abolition of wage slavery.' 82

The relationship between the Communist Party and the U.W.M. was good. 83 The majority of officials in control of the U.W.M. were Party members. Charlie Saunders, F. Grant, Alec Blance, C. Riley, J.J. Porter and S. Devereaux held prominence in both organisations.

In 1932 in Christchurch it was a regular occurrence for mass meetings of unemployed workers to be held in Victoria Square. These demonstrations were organised by various labour-orientated parties such as the N.Z.L.P., the Socialist Party, and the N.Z. Alliance of Labour. Other speakers were permitted to join in, the opportunity seen as an excellent way of directly conveying to the unemployed the different alternatives open to them other than those offered by the Coalition Government. Regular speakers at these Sunday meetings included A.B. Blance, C. Riley, and F. Grant, who consistently exhorted those present to demand better living and working conditions from the Government. They
stressed that the short-term, and immediate requirements of all those out of work could be met by organised depu­tations protesting to the Government against the present economic situation.

Not surprisingly, the speakers from the U.W.M. and the C.P. were closely watched by the police authorities for any signs of incitement to revolutionary action. H.E. Barnsley, an associate of the U.W.M. and a member of the radical Labour Defence League, was arrested on a charge of 'inciting to lawlessness' a crowd of unemployed men and women on two occasions in Victoria Square. He was arrested initially for announcing to a crowd at Victoria Square on 23 April that on 1 May, Labour's May Day, the biggest demonstration ever held in the country would take place, 'permit or no permit'. On 24 April he reinforced this proclamation of the preceding day by asking the crowd:

'What is wrong with two hundred men making a hunger march on Forbes' farm [N.Z.F.M. Forbes] at Cheviot and taking possession? You can take produce and live in the out-houses...I will take the lead if necessary...resolutions do no good. What we want is action.'

Sub-Inspector G.B. Edwards, who arrested Barnsley for his incendiary remarks, held that Barnsley was guilty of making an undesirable impression on a large number of youths...
present at the demonstrations. Edwards drew attention to the fact that there had been trouble in other cities 'and it was not wanted in Christchurch'. Barnsley was subsequently sentenced to six months imprisonment with hard labour. He had begun his prison sentence before the tramway strike broke out.

A former accountant, Barnsley had already served a previous sentence of imprisonment in the late nineteen twenties for misuse of business funds. Although he was arrested in May on the charge of being a danger to the order of the community, it is doubtful whether he would have played a prominent role in agitating the unemployed in the strike if he had been present. His influence in Christchurch before the strike was not a significant threat to the maintenance of law and order. His importance in the tramway dispute is minimal.

A person who one might think was likely to have played a larger role in agitating among the unemployed workers in the strike was Sidney Fournier. Sidney Huguenot Fournier d'Albe, to give him his full name, was in his early sixties when the strike began. He was a descendant of a French Huguenot family who fled to Prussia during Napoleon's war. Fournier was educated in
England but it was while he was in Dusseldorf, Germany, that he gained his first taste of industrial action. He happened to witness a strike in Brussels in which the militia had been called out. On one side of the square were the troops. On the other side were the strikers. In a brave, yet foolhardy gesture, one of the strike leaders walked across the square, urging the troops to desert. He was shot dead. This incident made an indelible impression on Fournier's mind. His return to England saw him become a member of the Fabian Society and he later became a miner, involving himself heavily in trade union activities. Fournier's experience in strikes and strike action (he was present in the Tonypandy mining riots) soon showed him the realities of prison life. He received a sentence of three months jail for action in the riots.

Sidney Fournier spent a large amount of his time travelling up and down England, moving from job to job, helping organise strikes and picket action and assisting in initiating industrial disputes. His main concern was with urging for better conditions of employment for trade union members. He emigrated to New Zealand around 1910 and immediately became immersed in the New Zealand Socialist Party and 'Red Fed' Labour political organisation. In 1913 in the Waterfront Strike, Fournier was a member of the Central Strike Committee. 88
His involvement in trade union action continued unabated throughout the twenties. In 1925 he was elected official spokesman for the Communist Party at the Labour Party Conference, 1 April. The previous year he founded the Christchurch branch of the Communist Party, only to help revive it again three years later.

Fournier, however, was not a member of the Communist Party when the tramway strike occurred. He was expelled from the movement in 1931 over his enthusiasm over his co-operation with the Labour Party. For the C.P. the bourgeoisie mass and the political Labour Party were its twin enemies. The C.P. was critical of the Labour Party's claim that it represented the working class on the grounds that the Labour Party was following, instead, a traitorous and misleading 'social fascist' line. Fournier's adherence to this 'reformist' policy was a direct cause of his break with the C.P.

Despite this set-back to his relationship with the Party, Fournier was a prominent member in the U.W.M. He spoke for the U.W.M. at many mass rallies of the unemployed in Victoria Square. He was present at the meetings of 23 and 24 April after which H.E. Barnsley was arrested. Fournier's extensive knowledge of, and experience in, trade union disputes made him a well-known figure around
Christchurch and the exhibitionist nature of his character attracted much attention. For example, in the mid-1920's when the newspapers in Christchurch were running a verbal vendetta against communist membership in the Labour Party, the *Times* published an article headed 'The Communist Creep'. The evening of the article's publication, a crowd gathered outside the *Times* office to see Fournier, on his hands and knees, creeping along the footpath chanting, 'How's that for a Communist creep?' 91

Yet in fact it was his reputation for exhibitionist behaviour which reduced Fournier's significance in the Tramway Strike.

To many, he was regarded as 'a bit of a joke'. 92 Respect was held for his experience and advice in industrial affairs by trade union officials, and his wonderful command of the English language seldom failed to secure him a ready and attentive audience whenever he spoke at unemployment rallies. However, he himself was not an accepted member of the working class, and his fine oratory and enthusiasm for a new political order directed to appeal to the lower classes failed to make him totally 'one of them'. Fournier's role in the strike was important in that he helped divert the attention of the unemployed from undisciplinary action by expounding philosophical ideas and theories of social
revolution. But, as with H.E. Barnsley, Fournier was not a significant figure in the larger context of inciting revolutionary action during the strike.

The U.W.M. and the U.W.U. co-operated together in the strike in organising picket lines and ways of stopping the trams driven by the 'scab' labour. The U.W.M. formed a 'Fast Bicycle Brigade' which visited the premises of businessmen who were members of the Special police force. The fast bike riders would wrap a note, with the words written on it, 'with love from the strikers', around a brick and hurl it through the business premises in the early hours of the morning. 93

The C.P. and the U.W.M., too, acted almost as one organisation in efforts to sabotage trams, waylay the 'scab' workers to 'rough them over' and scare them with threats of violence, and abuse the much-despised 'Tin-Hat Brigade'. Their plan of action was confined to these tactics however. There were no moves to extend the tramway strike to include wide-scale riots like those of the other main centres. With the level of unemployment in the vicinity of ninety thousand, the two organisations realised it would be irresponsible to endanger the jobs of those workers fortunate enough to have employment, even though they may be on starvation wages only. It was recognised too, that

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confrontations with the police would do more harm than good to the future of the Communist movement. At every meeting held by the Party during the strike these facts were pointed out, with the added emphasis by the leaders that many shop-keepers themselves were only in small businesses and were also finding it hard to make ends meet due to the prevailing economic climate.

The Communist Party lacked a clear, concerted plan of action to put into practice during the strike. There was an attempt by a radical organisation, the United Front Council, to fill this gap. The Council was initially created and controlled by a committee, in mid-March. The Committee was made up of a strange mixture of local moderate and radical trade union officials. The President was J. Mathison. The rest of the administrative body included E. Snow, Secretary of the T.E.U., A. Blance, representative of the U.W.M., J.A. McCulloch, representative of the Socialist Party, and R.M. MacFarlane, representative of the Industrial Council and Labour Representation Committee. The Secretary of the U.F.C. was C. Saunders, leading member of the C.P. H. McCaw was Vice-President.

The objective of the U.F.C. was to:

'wage a determined struggle against the attack being made on the workers' living standard and for the ultimate...
overthrow of the capitalist system. 96

During the strike Saunders and Blance attempted to widen the dispute through the U.F.C. They demanded a harder line against the Government's mishandling of the unemployment situation. 97 Mathison and other moderate Council members resisted the demand for militant action. 98 Although they kept control of the tramway dispute, it was at the sacrifice of the united composition of the Council. On 20 April, Mathison presided over the formation of the Relief Workers Union (R.W.U.) which was formed by the moderates as an alternative organisation to the U.F.C. 99

Distinct from the U.W.U., the R.W.U. sought to improve the living and working conditions of relief workers in the Canterbury region. The remaining members of the U.F.C. adopted a more extreme attitude to their original objective. At a meeting on 5 May, a motion was passed, and subsequently carried, to declare the trams black. 100 R. MacFarlane then moved that it be suggested to the T.E.U. to meet with the Freezing, Trades, Watersiders, and Seamen's Unions to discuss ways of conducting the strike, including the waging of a general strike. Although this motion was rejected by the Council, it was reintroduced in a modified

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form to suggest:

'That the United Front delegate three representatives to the Tramway Employees Union Strike Committee with a request that they be admitted to its deliberations and full membership, the decision of the Strike Committee to grant such application not to prejudice any possible proposal by it to hand over to the United Front Council the future conduct of the struggle.' 101

The intention of the U.F.C. to widen the scale of the tramway dispute ended with the collapse of the Council after the first week of the Strike. Perhaps if the U.F.C. had gained stronger support from those with radical sympathies within the community, it would have had greater success in its intention to extend the tramway strike. As it was, the special meeting of 3 May seems to have been the final strains of the U.F.C.'s swan song.

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There is no evidence to indicate that individual unions in the Canterbury region viewed the tramway strike as an opportunity to extend the dispute. Moral and financial support was given to the tramway employees by a cross-section of local unions, from the Canterbury Trades and
Labour Council to the Addington Workshop Employees, but their involvement went no further. The latter, with the Borthwicks branch of the Canterbury Freezing Workers Union voted support for the T.E.U. immediately the strike broke out. Other unions were more cautious - the Auckland Tramway Union did not confirm its support for the tramway employees until 10 May by which time arrangements for settlement of the dispute were well under way. Surprisingly, some unions made no mention of the strike at all in their minute-books of the period. The General Labourers Union does not include any reference to the strike either in its General Minutes or Executive Minutes, and the situation is repeated in the case of the Canterbury Seamen's Union. Two deductions may be made from this apparent lack of interest shown by these two unions. Firstly, because the strike resulted from a private dispute between the Tramway Board and the T.E.U. and was therefore likely to be on a union scale, the G.L.U. and S.U. possibly regarded the episode as a short-term event, unlikely to warrant wholesale support from fellow unions.

Secondly, the geographical barrier of the Port Hills separating the city of Christchurch from Lyttelton Harbour and its township is a possible reason for non-involvement of the Seamen's Union. It possibly regarded the strike...
as a Christchurch issue, unrelated to the industrial affairs of Lyttelton port. Although three seamen were among the thirty-four men arrested in the strike, there is no evidence to suggest that their involvement was sanctioned by the S.U.

* * *

In May 1932 the Christchurch Police Force was comprised of one hundred and thirty-five policemen. It was the duty of this team to administer law and order among 90,700 citizens of Christchurch, plus many thousands of unemployed workers who were resident in the city but were not included in the official population statistics. The usual mode of transport for the police was by foot, or, more commonly, by bicycle. There was one police car in the force and two horses for the use of two permanent mounted constables. There was no radio communications system. All police messages were transmitted by telephone, or again, by foot or bicycle.

The tramway strike produced a state of alarm in the first week. The presence of the U.W.M. and C.P., urging the unemployed to demand better living, working and economic conditions from the Coalition Government aggravated
the situation by indirectly encouraging acts of sabotage and vengeance against the Board and its 'scab' employees. The accident in which a tramdriver was killed by a thrown object would have possibly led to further mob violence, had not prompt and effective action by the police limited the opportunities for general disorder. How did the Christchurch police accomplish this, given their facilities and the size of their force?

The steps taken by the police authorities against the outbreak of violence in May 1932 followed the old and familiar adage 'prevention is better than cure'. This was in line with the attitude taken by the Government after the Auckland riots saw rampaging crowds swarming down Queen Street breaking windows and stealing goods, unimpeded by an ineffective and disorganised police force. After this incident, the Government immediately put through Parliament the Public Conservation Safety Act, which empowered the Governor-General of New Zealand (and in his absence specified civil authorities) to invoke appropriate regulations if a state of public disorder imperilled human life and/or institutions. The emergency regulations could remain in force for one month. Although it was not found necessary to invoke the P.S.C. bill during the succeeding years of the Depression, its existence did assure all citizens that

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the Government was prepared to defend their rights if the situation arose. Just as the bill was a safety-device, so was the Government order to recruit a band of temporary policemen from each main centre. The 'Specials' were to be available for service if an emergency arose. They were to be treated on the same footing as regular police and were sworn in as special constables, making them a legal extension of the permanent force.

In Christchurch, the Special police force, or 'Tin-Hat Brigade' as they came to be known, were largely recruited from employees in the business sector, namely insurance and bank clerks, motor-mechanics, shop-keepers, farm labourers, and local rugby club members. They were disliked intensely by the supporters of the T.E.U. and were frequently the target for much hostility and abuse by more vocal demonstrators in the community. The owner of a city firm, Bell Cycle and Motor Company, commenting on the smashed windows of his business premises, admitted that the violence was in reaction to his position as a member of the Specials. Neither were the temporary police regarded with much favour by the regular police members. They were angry that public citizens should be brought into the force to carry out what they considered was their job in the maintenance of social order.
The regular police were not unsympathetic to the tramway unionists and their supporters in the strike. For each constable one day off work a month was allowed. The rest of his duty was worked seven days a week for 11/- a day. Promotion was slow. It took sixteen years for a constable to reach sergeant status. Life was hard for the police as it was for the rest of the community in the Depression, and they showed their recognition of this by occasional non-official acts of sympathy to the strikers. Mathison recalls being warned by the regular police on occasions when the Specials had received orders to arrest him over some action he may have committed. Mr Pat Burns, who joined the regular police force during the strike, remembers the compassion he and his colleagues felt towards the unemployed who had no means of income.

At the same time as several hundred temporary police were enrolled in Christchurch in late April, Superintendent D.J. Cummings announced that 'a plan of campaign' had been worked out as a further preventive against any trouble occurring in the city. 'In other cities we have had demonstrations and we don't want such things to happen here', spoke Sub-Inspector G.B. Edwards on 29 April. The plan included the outlawing of all picket action on any section of the tramway route and close supervision of public meetings...
of the unemployed. Individual agitators of the likes of Sidney Fournier and H.E. Barnsley, regarded as 'red-hot Labour agitators', came under particular attention by the police which sharpened during the tramway strike.

On 1 May the Labour Party organised a May Day demonstration in the city. A crowd of about 8,000 to 10,000 people filled Cranmer Square to hear Labour speakers denounce the present Government's handling of the Depression. John A. Lee, Labour M.P. for Grey Lynn, flew down to Christchurch to attend the celebrations. He was given a 'tumultuous reception' and told the people that 'the system must function or it must end'.

The police were prepared for the occasion and made it known that full interception by the force would take place if the demonstration got out of hand. Superintendent Cummings announced that the police were ready 'to suppress any incident that might be caused by that small and irresponsible element which is always present when a big crowd assembles'.

H.E. Barnsley had been arrested only three days before on a charge of 'inciting to lawlessness'. The police were obviously chary of similar incidents recurring.
These precautionary tactics helped prepare the Christchurch police force for possible trouble when the tramway strike broke out. On the first day of the strike police protection of the tramway sheds and depot was well-organised and large numbers of Special Constables accompanied each tram on its normal route out to the suburbs throughout the duration of the strike. As acts of sabotage occurred against the trams, by flying stones, iron bars, and bricks, reinforcements of police were sent out to all points of the city in hired taxis and buses. Tram-sheds, business premises and private homes were under police protection each night, and the Special police were equipped with steel helmets and batons as an added precaution. Batons were needed on limited occasions. When they were employed in the melee in Cathedral Square on 6 May, their use quickly helped dispel the demonstration.

The presence of large numbers of Specials, the effective precautions taken by the police against the risk of riots resulting in the city, and the knowledge that certain members of the police force were not unsympathetic towards the unemployed, contributed to preventing social disruption in the strike.

The temporary and regular police recognised that the
troublesome element in the dispute was not comprised of members of the T.E.U. The owner of Bell Cycle and Motor Company commented after the incident in which the plate-glass windows of his premises were smashed, 'the trouble the Special Police have been called upon to deal with are the work of the hooligan element, and not of the tramwaymen at all'. 115

This statement supports the view of Mathison who staunchly maintains that the tramway employees were not responsible for the physical acts of sabotage against the trams or against the property of local businessmen who supported the Board. He attributes these incidents to the work of outsiders, 116 men who had drifted to Christchurch seeking employment and had been attracted instead to the Strike.

Mathison's statement contains some truth as there is evidence to indicate that as high as 50% of those arrested in the Strike came from areas other than Christchurch. 117 It is unlikely, however, that these itinerant workers were responsible for the demonstrations which occurred in the strike. They did not comprise an organised force and served mainly as supporters of the few hard-line radicals in the city who viewed the strike as a possible opportunity for wider social protest.
During the strike the police were on guard for any signs of incendiary action. The frequency of Superintendent Cummings' public announcements of precautionary measures taken by the police suggests the recent Auckland riot was uppermost in the minds of the authorities. They were anxious to forestall any possible repetition of such behaviour in Christchurch. The extent of their vigilance was significant in the maintenance of relative calm in the city while the strike was on.

* * *

Once the strike was over J. Mathison did not seek re-employment with the T.B. By the end of May he was working as canvasser for the Christchurch Star, collecting subscriptions from local residents. On 31 May he also resigned as President of the T.E.U. and was succeeded by a former President of the Union, J. Wilson. Mathison continued his interest in tramway affairs, however, and in 1933 was elected on to the T.B. when a majority of Labour candidates defeated the Conservative incumbents. Through his new position he was able to work steadily with
the Tramway Appeal Board to fill the position with one of these men. Three years passed before all the men who wished to be re-employed by the Board were once again working as tramway employees. 122

The financial cost of the strike to Christchurch businesses ran into thousands of pounds. Retail net earnings shrank due to the lack of normal takings and business employers who had lent their staff for special police work found themselves handicapped by the shortage of labour. The T.B., too, suffered a considerable loss in revenue. 123 Wages offered to the volunteer tramway employees by the Board were above those of the ex-tramwaymen, and the extra expense this entailed was not recouped by normal patronage of the trams. 124 The Board's economic loss in the dispute can only appear ironic in light of its previous determination to cut costs and reduce expenditure.

In terms of personal loss, the T.E.U. suffered the largest deprivation of income. On 19 May the Times estimated that the unionists lost between one thousand, six hundred to two thousand pounds sterling in wages. 125 Although the men were reimbursed with their Superannuation funds, the deliberate withdrawal of their services was a
valiant step to take at a time when the country was facing the harshest economic depression it had known.

Personal loss was suffered by one not directly associated with either the T.E.U. or the T.B. when the contract of the editor of the conservative newspaper, the Press, was not renewed in May. The curt explanation given by the official history of the Press for Oliver Duff's resignation is that it resulted from 'differences of opinion with the board over editorial policy on the tramway strike'. 126

Contemporaries assert, however, that Duff was dismissed for his mild intimation of sympathy for the tramway unionists in a May editorial. 127 From the beginning of the strike, the Press had firmly upheld the position of the T.B., and had castigated the T.E.U. in no uncertain terms for 'making war on the public'. 128 On 5 May, however, the Press editorial declared that it was not the time to bring the unionists to their knees and drive them into the arms of extremists. The Board should 'seize the first opportunity to re-open negotiations if it wished to serve the public in more ways than by carrying them on its trams'. 129 It is possible that this slight deviation from the paper's conservative stance cost Duff his position.

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Christchurch was united, not divided by the circumstances surrounding the tramway strike. Unlike the riots experienced in Auckland, Wellington and Dunedin in the same months, the dispute in Christchurch did not assume riotous proportions. As this essay has aimed to show, there were definite reasons for this. Although the unemployed in Christchurch suffered in equal measure the debilitating and severe effects of the Depression which their fellow counterparts were feeling in the other main centres, their distress was eased by the presence of a Labour City Council, led by a sympathetic Mayor. The City Council's activities, in helping the unemployed, included the provision of a relief work scheme, the provision of food, shelter and clothing for poverty-stricken families, and the assistance of organised efforts in forcing the Government to take some positive steps to alleviate the unemployment situation. These actions reassured the unemployed that they were not without support from their local authorities in their battle for better living and working conditions.

The combined assistance from the Hospital Board relief system, Church depots, 'doss-houses', and soup kitchens, and individual acts of charity contributed, too, to easing the plight of the unemployed. These factors served to
reduce the necessity for the penniless to resort to militant action in order to bring attention to their situation.

The moderate nature of the T.E.U. leaders is significant in determining why Christchurch did not experience social upheaval during the strike. Mathison continually stressed that it was not the intention of the T.E.U. to condone violence on any grounds. The unionists were aware of the foolishness inherent in alienating public sympathy, and were urged to conduct their actions accordingly. The moderating influence of the Union leaders cannot be underestimated. Mathison is proud to stress that not one of the striking tramwaymen broke away from the ethics established by the T.E.U. leaders in the dispute.\(^{130}\)

The C.P. was equally aware of the dangers of creating possible public antagonism against their movement. Yet their involvement in the strike was of insufficient proportions to warrant much public fear. The Christchurch C.P. was isolated from its central Party headquarters in Wellington in this period. The branch was too weak and disorganised to incite social disturbance from its own initiative. Moreover, it had little desire to do so. It...
held a responsible attitude to the hundreds of unemployed workers in the city and felt no call to worsen their conditions by endangering what little subsistence wages were available from charitable organisations. The U.W.M. and C.P. co-operated with the T.E.U. in organising picket lines and sabotage action against the trams, and were partly responsible for recriminatory action towards the volunteer tramwaymen and Special police.

The U.F.C., too, indicated radical intentions in the remit passed on 3 May sanctioning wider boundaries within the strike. There is no evidence, however, to suggest that attempts were made by either the C.P. or the U.W.M. to capitalise on the two serious demonstrations of 6 and 7 May respectively; and any militant intentions the U.F.C. may have had quickly came to nought when the organisation collapsed a week after the strike began. The other minority element in the city who saw the strike as an opportunity for wider social protest were composed of a small core of seasoned agitators supported by a fringe element of itinerant workers, restless for some diversion from the daily routine of seeking employment. Unsupported by the T.E.U., the C.P., or the vast mass of unemployed, their influence was not long lasting.
The fact that Christchurch police were stronger numerically in the forces in the other major cities probably acted as an added deterrent to greater lawlessness during the strike. Any hostility felt towards the regular police force was tempered by stronger feelings of dislike directed against the Specials. This antagonism was expressed in terms of abuse and threats from members of the public but its importance was slight. Both the police and the strikers deplored the troublesome element responsible for disturbances and the rebels had little success in enlarging the tramway dispute into a wider confrontation with civil authorities.

The Christchurch tramway dispute gradually faded from people's memories. It was overshadowed by more immense problems of struggling to earn a living through what were to be the worst winter months of the Depression. In hindsight, too, the tramway strike was destined to be eclipsed in the public memory by the earlier Auckland riots.

The tramway strike provided a brief diversion from the dullness of the Depression. It revealed some tensions in Christchurch society but the tensions were of a lesser order than those experienced in Auckland and Wellington. Even in depression, Christchurch preserved a calm face.
APPENDIX I

The following sixteen men were arrested on 6 May 1932 on the charge that they 'did with a view to compel other persons to abstain from working, which such other persons had a legal right to do, wrongfully and without legal authority watch or beset such other persons at the place where they were working'. (Christchurch Times, 7 May, Page 13)

Lionel Barnsley, 22, labourer . . . . . . . 1 month hard labour.
Robert Fairlie Bennett, 30, quarryman . . . . . . . 6 months hard labour.
Norman Cecil Bowden, 26, labourer
Victor Carroll, 28, labourer
Leonard George Cotton, 31, tram conductor . . Fined three pounds and costs or 14 days imprisonment.
Frank Martin Cusack, 48, tram conductor . . Fined three pounds and costs or 14 days imprisonment.
Selwyn McDonald Devereaux, 23, farmhand . . .6 months hard labour.
Alexander Gill, 26, labourer . . . . . . . 6 months hard labour.
Walter Hayes, 43, carpenter . . . . . . . 1 month hard labour.
William Thomas Hoare, 26, labourer . . . . . . 3 months hard labour.
James Edwin King, 53, labourer . . . . . . . 6 months hard labour.
John Stephen McKegney, 28, labourer . . . . . . . 6 months hard labour.
Albert John Patterson, 25, labourer . . . . . . . 6 months hard labour.
Reginald Joseph Reidy, 34, labourer . . . . Dismissed for abetting but fined five pounds and five shillings for using insulting words.
George William Rogers, 27, seaman/labourer . 6 months hard labour.
David Carroll Watson, 37, labourer . . . . . . . 6 months hard labour.

* * *
APPENDIX II

The following seven men were arrested in Cathedral Square on 7 May 1932. (Christchurch Times, 9 May, Page 16)

Edward Henry Frost, painter. . . . . . . Inciting lawlessness. Ordered to come up for sentence within six months if called upon.

Joseph Patrick McIlroy, 52, labourer. . Obstructing a constable and loitering so as to cause obstruction in Cathedral Square. 3 months imprisonment.

Sydney James Puller, 50, tramway worker. . Inciting disorder and using indecent language. 2 months imprisonment.

Alfred Saggers, 19, fishmonger/carrier. . Inciting lawlessness. Ordered to come up for sentence if called upon.

Joseph Siegert, 49, labourer. . . . . . . Inciting disorder. 3 months imprisonment.

Webb James Tooley, 38, carpenter. . . . Striking a constable. 3 months imprisonment.

Percy Hector Wigg, 24, painter. . . . Inciting disorder. 3 months imprisonment.

Arrests on Other Charges:

Agnes Goodman, 23, married woman. . . . Inciting lawlessness in Cathedral Square, 6 May.

Colin T.H. Dixon, 30, tram motorman. . Did alleged violence to J. Smith. 3 months hard labour.

Ernest George Ellis, 43, tram motorman. . Ibid. 3 months imprisonment.

George Albert Knowles, 36, tram conductor. Ibid. 3 months hard labour.

* * *
The following eight men were arrested in Christchurch on 7 May 1932 on charges that 'they did with a view to compel other persons to abstain from working, which such other persons had a legal right to do, wrongfully and without legal authority, watch or beset such other persons at the place where they were working'. (Christchurch Times, 9 May, Page 9)

Henry Drayton Davis Dodge, 22, labourer . . . . . 3 months hard labour.
William Grey, 29, labourer . . . . . . . . . 3 months hard labour.
Henry Greenway, 41, labourer . . . . . . . . Convicted and ordered to come up for sentence within 6 months if called.
Harold Johnson, 32, waterside worker . . . . . Dismissed for besetting, but fined five pounds, five shillings for using insulting words.
William Jones, 40, labourer . . . . . . . . . 3 months hard labour.
Robert McDonald, 27, labourer . . . . . . . . . 3 months hard labour.
David McKay, 33, labourer . . . . . . . . . Conviction unknown.
James William McKay, 36, seaman . . . . . . . . 3 months hard labour.

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5 Ibid, p 72.

6 Ibid, p 605.

7 Christchurch Times (CT), 2 March, 1932. p 8.


9 CT, 29 April, 1932, p 9.

10 Press, 27 April, 1932, p 15.

11 CT, 29 April, 1932, p 9.

12 CT, 4 May, 1932, p 9.

13 Ibid.

14 Press, 3 May, 1932, p 3.

15 CT, 4 May, 1932, p 9.

16 CT, 5 May, 1932, p 9.

17 Press, 5 May, 1932, p 9.

18 CT, 5 May, 1932, p 10.

19 CT, 6 May, 1932, p 9.

20 Ibid.

21 CT, 6 May, 1932, p 10.

On 9 May, 1932, three ex-tramwaymen were charged with using violence against one John Smith, an employee of the Tramway Board, 'to compel him from doing an act which he had a right to do'. (CT, 10 May, 1932, p 9)

The men were:

- E. G. Ellis, tram motorman.
- A. Knowles, tram conductor.
- C. T. H. Dixon, tram motorman.
44 Ibid.
45 Press, 12 August, 1930, p 12.
46 Report No. 2744, 1 October 1931. Christchurch Tramway
   Board Reports, Vol. 26, p 5.
47 Report No. 2758, 16 October, 1931. Christchurch Tramway
48 Report No. 2732, 18 September, 1931. Christchurch
49 Docs. of Tramway Strike Tribunal. Statement by J. Mathison
50 Sun, 5 May, 1932, p 7.
51 Ibid, p 7.
52 Roth, H. 'The Christchurch Tram Strike of 1932', New
53 J. Mathison, Interview with writer, 17-01-78.
54 Press, 9 May, 1932, p 12.
55 J. Mathison, Interview with writer, 17-01-78.
56 Ibid.
57 Ibid.
59 New Zealand Parliamentary Debates, Vol. 231, 3 March,
   1932, p 189.
60 CT, 18 May, 1932.
61 CT, 6 June, 1932.
63 CT, 5 April, 1932, p 10.
64 CT, 6 April, 1932, p 10.
J. Mathison, Interview with Dr. L Richardson, 1974.

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T. Simpson (ed), The Sugarbag Years, p 67.

R. Blacklock, Interview with writer, 10-01-78.

In the 'Tramway Board Minutes of the Works and Traffic Committee, No. 8' the chairman referred to the death of a tram-conductor, W. V. Laing, who was 'struck in the face' during a demonstration against the volunteer employees at Lancaster Park, 6 May. 'He died a few days later in hospital.' However, J.J. Porter, a prominent radical in the Strike, reports that the conductor was hit by a 'flying missile', and later died as a result of his injuries. (J.J. Porter, Letter to writer, 25-01-78).


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C.P. Records, (Jack Locke Correspondence).
J. Mathison, Interview with writer, 17-01-78.
CT, 11 March, 1932, p 7.
Ibid.
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Ibid.
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Ibid.
CT, 6 May, 1932, p 9.
CT, 18 April, 1932, p 9.
J. Mathison, Interview with writer, 17-01-78.
An analysis of the addresses of the thirty-five arrested persons reveals that the following men were not registered as residents of Christchurch in 1932:

R.F. Bennett
N.C. Bowden
V. Carroll
S. M. Devereaux
A. Gill
J. E. King
J.S. McKegney
A. J. Patterson
R.J. Reidy

(Window's New Zealand Post Office Directory, 1932.)
124 Ibid.
125 Ibid.
126 The Press, 1861 - 1961, p 211.
127 J. Mathison, Interview with Dr L. Richardson, 1974.
129 Press, 5 May, 1932, p 8.

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