

Carlson State
Alaska 6/21

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A carve-up by butchers ^{11/21/79}

INDUSTRIAL action has become so endemic that many civil service organisations here decided they could not give themselves an identity without staging one of their own. The health inspectors were no exception to this rule.

It was very unfortunate for them, indeed unfair to some extent, that they have had to back down after a "brief action."

When the slaughter houses could not cope with the daily demand due to a slowdown by the health inspectors, animals died in transit centres. As a result the butchers lost money.

When the inspectors decided against working on Saturday afternoons and on Sundays, butchers found themselves with nothing to put on sale on Sundays and Mondays. Again they lost money.

This prompted the butchers to get together and press for a meeting with the related Government officials. Although no commitment was made at that meeting, the butchers successfully conveyed their complaints against the health inspectors.

Once the inspectors realised that they

were not only confronting the Government and the expected laments of an unorganised public but were also in a head-on collision with a united front of butchers, they had to tack with the wind and announced a retreat.

The moral: do not antagonise an organised body.

I am an ordinary citizen. If I had my way I would choose not to have the term "industrial action" as part of my breakfast.

And I figure the only way to dispense with it is by organising into a united front, making sure that our voice of discontent is heard not only by our friends and neighbours but also by our enemies — the increasingly rebellious and selfish civil service.

The civil service, by definition, is the servant of the general public. Every member of society will benefit if it does a good job. When it is not doing its job, the damage any individual member of the public suffers will be spread out relatively thinly.

The effect is summed up in the old saying: "When it is everybody's responsibility, it is nobody's responsibility."

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