

Sitting On The Dock Of The Bay: Load Of Strife

THE UNION

Eyes of the world on Capo Noli stand

IT might be one ship trying to unload its cargo at Port Kembla, but the MV Capo Noli has the eyes of the world watching it, a union official says.

The Maltese-registered ship, chartered by Canada Steamship Lines (CSL), has been stuck at the port's No 6 wharf since Tuesday, with a stevedores' picket line preventing its 25 crew from unloading a cargo of gypsum.

Maritime Union of Australia assistant national secretary Rick Newlyn said the dispute, in a politically charged industrial relations atmosphere, had worldwide repercussions.

"The world is watching Port Kembla. It'll either blow over or blow up," he said.

The stevedores had been inundated with support from unions around the world angry that an international agreement banning seafarers working as stevedores could be breached.

Union officials boarded the Capo Noli for about 40 minutes yesterday and spoke to its Filipino skipper, Ferdinand Belino.

Mr Newlyn said the captain refused to acknowledge the union's position that seafarers could not unload the ship, saying he wanted to speak to its owner.

However, the union believed the crew had neither the skills nor the licences required to unload the Capo Noli.

The union was amazed CSL had chosen Port Kembla to try to unload the Capo Noli, which did not meet the criteria of a self-unloading ship.

"It's not going to be (unloaded by its crew). Under international law it's not allowable. You just can't come in and create something new ... it's just a disaster waiting to happen."

The union had no problems with the selfunloading CSL-owned Iron Chieftain, which has carried iron ore and coal between Whyalla and Port Kembla for several years.

"If the Iron Chieftain was here, we wouldn't be."

Mr Newlyn also claimed the Capo Noli incident smacked of a "conspiracy".

"This process can't be undertaken without the compliance of the Federal Government.

(Workplace Relations Minister Joe) Hockey has got his fat thumbs all over it."

A spokeswoman for Mr Hockey rejected the claim.

"Any suggestion that the Government in any way orchestrated this dispute is farcical," she said. "This outrageous claim is yet another stunt in the union's \$100 million scare campaign (against the Government's industrial relations policies)."



Standing Firm: Union secretary Rick Newlyn