

THE ACTIVIST



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ANZAC DAY PETONE CEREMONY

The Petone Community Board extends an invitation to all members to attend the Flag Ceremony at the ANZAC Memorial Flagstaff, Petone Railway Station, at 7am on ANZAC Day, Wednesday 25 April 2013.

The RMTU will, as is our usual custom, lay a wreath which recognises and honours railway men and women who laid down their lives during wars.

PRIME MINISTER JOHN KEY RIGHT ON ONE THING - HE IS CLUELESS

John Key is treating Parliament and the public with contempt with his farcical attempts to pretend his "phone a friend" approach to hiring the Director of the GCSB was above board, says Grant Robertson, Labour Deputy Leader.

"John Key had to correct answers to Parliament about the appointment of Ian Fletcher not once, but twice.

"One minute he is telling the House he doesn't have a clue how he came to have Mr Fletcher's phone number when he called him to talk about the GCSB role. Literally the next minute he is saying he phoned directory services.

"And then unbelievably, he had to correct that answer a few minutes later and tell MPs it might have been one of his staff that lodged the call.

"John Key can't keep his story straight. He hasn't told New Zealanders the truth, the

whole truth or anything even resembling the truth.

"The only thing he has been up-front about is that he is clueless.

"This is actually a serious issue. New Zealanders need to be able to trust their Prime Minister to tell the truth.

"John Key might think shoulder tapping a friend to be his chief spy is some kind of joke, but New Zealanders don't," says Grant Robertson.

RUSSELL STOREY PASSES NATIONAL CERTIFICATE IN EMPLOYMENT RELATIONS

Congratulations to Dunedin RCO and Delegate Russell Storey on his successful attainment of a National Certificate in Employment Relations. Russell is the first RMTU member to obtain this NZQA qualification and he did it on his own initiative.

Well done Brother, you are far better qualified than many of the people who manage our members and now you have the piece of paper to prove it!

We will be covering this story in more depth in the next issue of The Transport Worker.

WORKERS MEMORIAL DAY – 28 APRIL

International Workers Memorial Day is 28 April 2013. The day is about remembering those workers, especially RMTU members, who have been killed whilst at work.

All Branches are asked to commence formal arrangements for services at memorial sites.

All members are requested to attend a memorial service organised near them.



As usual we ask all members to stop what they are doing at midday to "Mourn the dead - Fight for the living" and to think about how important personal safety is to us all going home safe at the end of our days' work.

As usual we will be requesting KiwiRail to approve all trains stopping at midday on the 28th for 1 minute.

The services (that we have been informed of to date) will be held at;

Dunedin - the memorial garden 1150hrs

Christchurch - service held in the Reserve behind where Science Alive building used to be 11.30am -12.30pm with refreshments served at the NZNO across the road afterwards. A cabbage tree will be planted in memorial of all workers who died or were injured on the job in 2012. Wreaths to be laid at the Memorial Stone by families, unions, and workers. Barrier arm comes down on the adjacent level crossing at noon and bells ring for a minute's silence.

Hutt Shops - 28 April Service to be held by the Elizabeth Street entrance starting at 1150hrs at the workshop memorial garden.

During which we will launch a new book by Hazel Armstrong chronicling NZ rail safety history from 1974 to 2000. Also unveiling relocated (from Gracefield) Jack Neha Memorial.

Port Napier - Friday 26th April a ceremony at the memorial wall at the eastern entrance to the port. 1000 hrs start.

Hamilton - Sunday 28th branch meeting will be held at 1000hrs followed by WMD remembrance service at 1200hrs, followed by a pig on a spit, all at Te Rapa depot.

Tauranga/Mount Maunganui - Memorial Service on Monday 29 April at 1130 hrs, at the memorial stone at the Rata street gatehouse

Auckland - Sunday 28th, Maritime Club in Auckland (68 Anzac Ave) at 12pm. Followed by lunch at 1pm. Special focus on Forestry death rate.

Palmerston North - Sunday 28 April, 1.30 - 2.30pm, Palmerston North Memorial Park Fitzroy Street entrance. All members of the public are welcome to attend.

Please advise us of all services to be held on the day?

FOURTH DEATH IN FORESTRY

As Workers Memorial Day approaches this Sunday, a union in the wood sector is warning that little is being learned from the spate of deaths in our forests.

Yesterday a 23 year old forestry worker died near Waitara in Taranaki. He was the fourth worker to die this year.

Rawiri Daniels, Wood Secretary for FIRST Union, said the union extended its sympathy to the family of the worker.

He said FIRST Union was deeply concerned about the recent deaths in forestry, and supported the Council of Trade Unions' call for a full inquiry into forest safety.

"We cannot accept that the high number of deaths and serious injuries in forestry are acceptable."

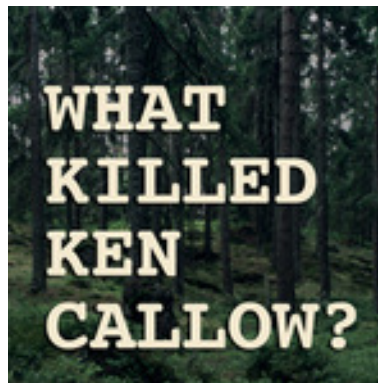
"Today the government has released an update on their Pike River Implementation

Plan. Forest deaths are of the magnitude of a Pike River tragedy every six years, but the government is simply not taking forest safety seriously enough.

"It is a dangerous industry, and leaving the responsibility of health and safety to forest contractors alone isn't working."

He said FIRST Union was willing to work with forest owners and contractors to improve safety, but despite forest stewardship certification requiring forest owners, their managers and contractors to facilitate workers having access to unions for advice and support, this has so far been met with opposition from industry.

This Sunday the Council of Trade Unions is hosting a memorial service in Auckland for the families of forest workers who have died.



WHAT KILLED KEN CALLOW?

CTU CALLS FOR GOVERNMENT INQUIRY AS FORESTRY DEATH TOLL RISES TO FOUR

The Council of Trade Unions is calling for a Government inquiry into health and safety in the forestry industry after a 23-year-old forestry worker was killed near New Plymouth this morning.

This is the fourth fatality in the forestry industry this year, and comes amid increasing pressure for the Government to investigate safety conditions in the industry.

Since 2008 there have been 26 fatalities in the forestry industry and nearly 900 accidents causing serious harm.

CTU president Helen Kelly says workers and their families want Government action on the forestry death toll.

"There have now been four people killed in our forests in as many months. This is a shocking toll with a very real human cost to the families and communities left behind.

"New Zealand has twice the death rate of Australia and six times that of the UK, but the Government has done little more than muck around with weak codes of practice, breakfast meetings with workers that assume they are the problem, and new initiatives that fail to address the underlying problems.

"Meanwhile the forest owners continue to deny there is a problem at all. Despite industry claims that the long-term trend is improving, the figures show there are more people being killed working in our forests now than at any time in the last twenty years."

Helen Kelly says six forestry families will meet in Auckland on Sunday for Workers' Memorial Day.

"Today's death sadly sends these families the message that the deaths they mourn have meant nothing to an industry that

refuses to change. The Government needs to step in now before even more Kiwi workers are killed in our forests."

Note: After the last forestry death the forestry industry claimed that as a result of their national action plans, the long term trend in forestry safety is improving and that the fatality rate in the past year is just one third of what it was about a decade ago. The death toll for 2012 was seven. In 2000 there were five deaths, in 2001 there were two, in 2002 there were five and 2003 there were six. 2004 saw just one death, and there were five deaths in 2005 and 2006 respectively. Last year was worst equal in terms of numbers of deaths since 1995 and this year looks as if it may be the same or worse.

Join the What Killed Ken Callow Campaign
<http://onebigvoice.com/petition/stopthekillin ginforestry#updates>

CALL FOR NOMINATIONS – RMTU NATIONAL MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE (NMC)

In accordance with Rule 24.6 of the Rules & Standing Orders of the Rail & Maritime Transport Union "the Union" calls for nominations from current financial members for the position(s) of:

- North Island Ports (A member of a North Island Port Branch of the Union)
- South Island Ports (A member of a South Island Port Branch of the Union)
- Northern North Island Rail (A member employed within KiwiRail Group - e.g. Freight, Infrastructure, Passenger, CT Sites and Mechanical (Incl Westfield AAM and Loco/Wagon depots). The Northern Rep covers all KiwiRail Group worksites north of a straight horizontal line drawn across the North Island at a point of the Porotarau Tunnel,
- Central NZ Rail (A member employed within KiwiRail Group - e.g. Freight, Infrastructure, Passenger (incl Tranz Metro), CT Sites and Mechanical (incl EMU Depot, Hutt Shops and Loco/Wagon depots). The Central NZ Rep covers all KiwiRail Group worksites south of a

straight horizontal line drawn across the North Island at the Porotarau Tunnel and north of a horizontal line drawn across the South Island at Seddon.

- South Island Rail (A member employed within KiwiRail Group - e.g. Freight, Infrastructure, Passenger, Tranz Metro, CT Sites and Mechanical (incl Loco/Wagon depots). The Southern South Island Rep covers all KiwiRail Group worksites south of a straight horizontal line drawn across the south Island at Seddon.
- General (A member not employed within KiwiRail Group or a Port branch member). The General Rep is a member of the Union employed within NZ in any area not covered by the Rail or Port representative positions on NMC (eg. employed by Veolia Transport, Toll Networks (Tranz Link), NZ Bus – Go Wellington, Cityline Hutt Valley, Taieri Gorge Rail, Orica NZ Ltd, Gough Forklifts, Halls Refrigerated Transport etc).

Nomination Forms are available from the RMTU National Office by contacting Julia on 04-499-2066, fax 04-471-0896 or julia@rmtunion.org.nz.

Nominations shall be in writing and contain the signed consent of the candidate, and be proposed and seconded by financial members (Rule 1) of the Union.

Correctly completed nominations must be received by the duly appointed National Returning Officer at the National Office of the Rail & Maritime Transport Union, PO Box 1103 Wellington 6140 **no later than 0800 hrs. on Friday 10 May 2013.**

The term of office is 2 years (Rule 24.2) and the duties are as contained in Rule 18 of the Union's Rules and Standing Orders.

For the information of members –KiwiRail employed NMC members will be appointed to an applicable KiwiRail Industrial Council upon election to NMC eg. A Mechanical Engineer will be placed onto the Mechanical Council filling one position on that Council.

Wayne Butson

Appointed National Returning Officer for this election.

JOYCE MUST HEED BANK'S WARNINGS ON JOBS

Steven Joyce must heed the warnings of a major bank that New Zealand risks becoming an 'employment backwater' and develop a credible economic plan, Labour's Associate Economic Development spokesperson Clare Curran says.

"Fred Ohlsson, Managing Director of ANZ Business Banking, said today that New Zealand risks becoming an 'employment backwater' unless more is done to help people turn ideas into new businesses that will create jobs.

"Steven Joyce hasn't shown much inclination to listen to anybody but when conservative commentators such as banks are warning of serious employment problems due to low enterprise births he has to take heed.

"The warning is another sign that the Government has no viable economic development strategy apart from releasing a few glossy pamphlets.

"Labour and business have been calling for a proper economic plan, especially for the ICT sector now that Telecom is shedding hundreds of jobs.

"Instead of focussing on incentives for new start-ups which will create jobs, create revenue and possible

new exports for New Zealand, Steven Joyce is fixated on defending his Government's flawed asset sales strategy and attempting to solve the Novopay debacle.

"Steven Joyce is leaving it to others to support business start-ups. But his hands off approach to our economy is hurting, not helping, our start-ups," says Clare Curran.

ORICA - UPDATE.

The terms of settlement for the renewal of the Collective Agreement have been agreed with Orica. The settlement includes increases of 2%, 2.5% and 3% for a three year term,



an improvement in the Weekend Roster Shift Team Leader rate, a rationalisation of the Driver's allowances, and an improvement in the production workers annual leave. We are working thru the training and grading appendices. Congratulations to the delegates Derek Murray, Kerry Graves, John Goodall and Joe Brown.

MAYDAY CELEBRATIONS IN BLACKBALL - (IN ASSOCIATION WITH RUNANGA COMMUNITY)

Friday May 3rd 7.30pm Debate between Blackball and Runanga. Topic: 'The modern worker is too bemused by TV, booze and consumerism, to stand up for his/her own class interests.' Blackball Working Men's Club.

Saturday May 4th 2.00pm Forum for community sector on topic: The community sector now serves the state rather than communities. (afternoon tea provided). Blackball Community House.

3.30pm March from Community House to Museum. Launching of Living Wage Campaign for the West Coast.

6.30pm Theatre Kiwi/Possum Productions presents Waihi Oratorio (a history of the 1912 Waihi Strike in song). Working Men's Club. (entry by donation)

7.15pm Dinner at The Hilton (\$25 for 3 course meal), plus songs from The West Coast Wobblers and forum: Four local people answer the question: What is good about current society?/ What is bad? Green MP, Kevin Hague responds. Reservations for dinner essential.

Enquiries: 732 4010. Bookings for dinner (03) 732 4010 or (03) 732 4705 or

wkultur@ihug.co.nz

Our Union Makes Us Strong

C3 (ASCIANO).

We are hopeful that a deal for the renewal of the CA will be finalised by the end of May. We are in dispute with C3 over the Employee Participation Agreement, as C3 does not want to use the elected H&S reps to help finalise the agreement.

Oz TWU PUT'S TOLL GROUP ON NOTICE

The Transport Workers' Union of Australia has advised of its approach to enterprise bargaining negotiations with the Toll Group even while they are progressing, making a veiled threat of potential action if the negotiations don't go its way. "Better safety and training, improvements in pay and superannuation and a fair deal for

subcontractors are on the agenda as thousands of Transport Workers' Union (TWU) members at the Toll Group begin negotiations for a new Enterprise Bargaining Agreement (EBA)," commented TWU National Secretary Tony Sheldon. The enterprise bargaining negotiations will cover around 8,500 Toll employees, with some benefits flowing onto subcontractors.

The TWU says the Toll Group is one of the largest and most profitable transport and logistics providers in Australia, with profits for the last financial year topping \$400 million and the company flagging its intention to continue to expand both here in Australia and across the world. Rick Milich, a member of the TWU negotiation committee and driver at Toll NQX Victoria, said: "We know management can afford fair wage increases and improvements in safety, because we helped deliver the hundreds of millions of dollars in profits the company booked last year. But we also know that Toll will give ground on nothing without a fight, so that's why workers like me are ready to stand up for a fair go and a better future for us and our families."

Mr Sheldon said: "Thousands of workers at almost 300 yards in every state and territory



in the country were surveyed on the issues to take into negotiations. It's clear from the responses that fair and reasonable wage and superannuation improvements are vital. TWU members also intend to fight hard on safety and training. On this occasion as in times gone by, workers at Toll will stand united to demand the strong safety standards and conditions at the company don't slip.

"Toll workers have also indicated a strong desire for better job security, including ensuring equal pay and conditions where work is contracted out, so that truckies in the same yard, doing the same work, get the same deal. We will also seek

Toll's support for lifting standards right across the industry, to tackle the lethal pressures from the principal employers in the road transport industry – major retail clients like Coles.

"We know that forthright and robust negotiations will take place over the coming weeks and months as we pursue an outcome that reflects the work and worth of the workforce at Toll," said Mr Sheldon.

PORT OF TAURANGA.

We hope to sign off the Collective agreement next week, the hold-up has been a dispute about which delegates can be involved in the finalisation of the Collective.

MORE NEEDS TO BE DONE FOR KIWIS FROM GOVERNMENT PROCUREMENT

In response to the release today from the Government of streamlined procurement rules, the CTU says that there is more to be done to back Kiwi workers to be employed on major Government contracts.

Peter Conway, CTU Secretary, says "what is missing is a requirement that New Zealand industry participation is part of the tender process. If a clause like that was required in each tender then bidders would need to indicate to what extent their proposal would include New Zealand content."

Peter Conway says "that should be a weighted factor for consideration as to who gets awarded the contract. That is what happens in Australia and the USA".

Peter Conway said that in addition government procurement rules should apply across the wider state sector.

"The announcement today is a step forward however. It simplifies the process, makes it more transparent and also identifies 'whole-of-life' consideration for contracts over \$5 million".

Peter Conway said that it is entirely legitimate for the Government to drive value for money in awarding contracts.

"But they also need to consider the positive effects of having local firms and workers getting awarded contracts or being participants in part of larger contracts".

"That would provide welcome support for the manufacturing sector for instance".

COSI CLUB MT MAUNGANUI.

We are embroiled in a redundancy dispute, where the employer is refusing to pay severance pay as outlined in the Collective Agreement to our members.

NZ - WORST CURRENT ACCOUNT IN DEVELOPED WORLD FOR NEXT 5 YEARS

The IMF has forecast that New Zealand will have the worst current account deficit in the developed world for the next five years, proving that National's promise to rebalance the economy has failed, says Labour's Finance spokesperson David Parker.

"Our current account deficit was last year the worst in the developed world and the IMF says it will remain at rock bottom for the next five years.

"By 2016 the deficit will hit 7% which is well into what economists call the 'danger zone'.

"We are simply not selling enough products and services overseas to cover what we import and the interest we pay. That makes us poorer. To fill the gap we have had to increase our borrowing as a country and sell



off our land and businesses. That's not good enough.

"National promised to rebalance the economy and increase exports. They have clearly failed. We have lower growth than our major trading partners Australia and China. We should be doing better.

"Labour has the policies to rebalance the economy and get our country back in work and back in the black. And New Zealanders support them. Raising the retirement age will limit the impact of our ageing population, universal KiwiSaver will boost our savings and investments, and a capital gains tax will direct those investments into the exporting side of the economy.

"National's policies are failing New Zealanders, they must change tack," says David Parker.

NOTE: The building of KiwiRail's new Loco's and wagons in China are examples of the imbalance of trade which is entirely within Government control/choosing.

WIRI DEPOT

Members from both Veolia and Kiwirail met with Veolia this week to discuss the Joint Operating Plan for the new EMU Depot at Wiri. Good progress was made with some of the key points being the speed of vehicles when entering the depot and the safety procedures while doing minor work with EMU's outside the buildings.

HEADS UP – RMTU PORTS FORUM

The RMTU Ports Forum is being held in Wellington mid-year. Port Branch Secretaries are asked to formalise their representation and to advise numbers of attendee's to National Office as soon as possible.

Suggestions for agenda items are encouraged from branches.

STANLEY STREET RMTU COMMITTEE

Members based in the KR offices on Stanley Street continue to hold their monthly meetings and are really enjoying learning the benefits of and becoming more active union members. Steve Rangi recently completed the CTU Skills of Organising course and gave a good overview of his 5 min presentation "homework". These delegates and others in the Auckland area have asked for more training, so

Union Delegate Training courses will be organised in the coming months, including other Auckland Regional delegates.

NO SELF LOADING BY SHIP'S CREW

All RMTU members are reminded that;

- Dockers work is done by dockworkers
- Seafarers work is done by seafarers
- It's that simple!

Dockers work is all cargo handling. This includes lashings. No ship is to be allowed to sail without all cargo lashings having been completed by Dockers. We have had a number of reports of ships putting to sea without all of the cargo lashing having been done and the ship's crew being directed by Captains to undertake the work – usually just to meet the tide.

This must cease.

MAXIMUM PENALTIES NOT ENOUGH FOR PIKE RIVER DIRECTORS

The CTU welcomes the guilty verdict against Pike River Coal Ltd and calls for a law change to make company directors liable where their company was negligent.

Helen Kelly, CTU President says "Pike River Coal Ltd has gone under as a failed company that has left behind death and debt. We need to change the law to make the Directors personally liable where their company was negligent. They were in charge, and the company was clearly



negligent in their duties to the men down the mine. The current law protects negligent companies and needs to change."

"The Judge found that there were 'fundamental breaches of the Health and Safety in Employment Act which lead to the unnecessary deaths of 29 miners' and we are looking to the sentencing to bring a sense of justice for the families of the men who were killed. Maximum penalties need to be imposed."

"All families should receive compensation and reparation, including the families of contractors working that day."

"This again shows the inherent danger of weak health and safety regulation and we're calling on the government to continue implementing the outcomes of the Pike River Report. We need to make sure this kind of disaster doesn't happen again."

WEST COAST VISITS

South Island Organiser John Kerr and National Management Committee member and KIC representative Doug Blakie visited the West Coast this week.

It was good to catch up with delegates and members, particularly John Bannerman and Kevin Gubb, so we could discuss the company's ideas for 're-engineering' in I & E.

We also caught up with our hardworking Port of Greymouth members who were involved in the unpleasant task of the clear up in the aftermath of the trawler that sank crossing the bar over the weekend with the loss of the skipper. This really brought home the reality of the work our members do - difficult and dangerous and in terrible weather.

MUA DELEGATES ARRIVE IN HONG KONG TO PICKET ALONGSIDE KWAI CHUNG DOCK WORKERS

In a mark of international solidarity, a delegation of Maritime Union of Australia

(MUA) unionists and rank-and-file workers has arrived in Hong Kong to join the Kwai Chung dockworkers on the picket line.

MUA National Secretary and President of the International Transport Workers' Federation (ITF), Paddy Crumlin, said Australian maritime workers have been deeply disturbed by the abuses of workers by Hong Kong International Terminals' (HIT) subcontractors and wanted to express their support. The delegation also includes an ITF representative.

"Following my visit to Hong Kong last week in support of the Kwai Chung dockworkers, my union has sent representatives from around Australia to stand side-by-side with these workers on the picket line," Mr Crumlin said.

"Transport and dockworkers around the world are shocked by the treatment of the Kwai Chung dockworkers under these contracting arrangements.

"Australian along with other international dockworkers and transport workers feel strongly enough not just to donate to the cause but to support these workers by standing arm-in-arm.

"HIT - which is a subsidiary of the global network terminal operator Hutchison - needs to make sure that workers are treated decently and paid fairly including in their subcontracting arrangements.

"To see hardly any increase in pay for more than a decade is just one part of the problem - the other part relates to the disgraceful treatment of these workers. It's employment more

akin to slave labour.

"These abuses must stop and HIT in particular needs to show that they are committed to ending the exploitation of outsourced dockworkers in their subcontracting arrangements.

"Hutchison is a decent employer of dockworkers in Australia and in other countries around the world and they need to provide consistency by recognising that the treatment of these workers in Hong Kong is not acceptable."



The Union of Hong Kong Dockers commenced strike action on 28 March as a result of inhumane treatment at work, including requiring some dockworkers to urinate out of windows, defecate and eat in their 6 foot-by-6 foot cabins so their work would not be interrupted.

INFRASTRUCTURE AND ENGINEERING WORKING PARTY

The KiwiRail Networks (Infrastructure) Industrial Council (KNIC) has agreed to form a working party to discuss the company's proposal for "re-engineering" within the I & E sector.

Membership of the working party will comprise RMTU KNIC representatives and other identified key delegates who work in areas where we need their expertise, for example the Midland Line and the Golden Triangle (BOP).

The first meeting of the working party is scheduled for next Wednesday 1 May in Wellington. If you are an I & E delegate please ensure you are getting the KNIC minutes and that you are reading them and talking about the issues with your members.

If you have not had the KNIC minutes then please contact South Island Organiser John Kerr at jkerr@rmtunion.org.nz or 027 246 4941. Don't put yourself in the position where you don't know what is going on!

SUPPLY AND DEMAND GAP WILL WIDEN

The gap between supply and demand in the container shipping market was expected to continue to widen this year, putting pressure on owners and operators, according to the latest market review by Danish Ship Finance.

The finance institution's review showed that total headhaul demand is expected to grow by 3% in 2013, fuelled by 4% growth on the Asia- North America trade lane, while the world's containership fleet was predicted to increase by around 11%.

ANTI-PROTESTING LAW CHANGE DRACONIAN

Draconian changes to the Crown Minerals Act set to pass into law today show how desperate the Government is to advance its petroleum and minerals agenda regardless of the environmental outcomes or democratic rights of New Zealanders to protest, says Labour Energy and Resources spokesperson Moana Mackey.

"National has put all of its economic development eggs in this one basket. There is no plan B and so it is desperate to tilt the playing field as much as possible in favour of exploration.

"The Crown Minerals Amendment Bill significantly weakens the role of the Minister of Conservation. It undermines their ability to ensure the protection and preservation of the Conservation estate and introduces an economic benefit test for the mining industry that doesn't exist for any other industry.

"The most controversial element of the bill, however, is the last minute change to restrict protest

actions in our Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ).

"The restrictions and related criminal charges only apply to protest vessels, and only those targeting oil and gas exploration. Anyone else behaving in a dangerous or reckless manner, or in a way that would be illegal in our territorial waters, is not covered. So the Minister's claim that this first and foremost about safety is patently not true.

"This is draconian legislation that legal experts have pointed out contravenes a number of our international obligations, as well as the Bill of Rights Act.

"Disgracefully, this change was deliberately withheld from the select committee in order to avoid proper scrutiny. Minister Bridges claims it was well flagged and yet it was never raised with the select committee working on the Bill.

"What's more Kiwis do not support this change. A new poll shows that eight out of ten Kiwis think the bill should be withdrawn



completely or sent back to select committee, including over 60 per cent of National Party supporters.

"The Government needs to listen to the public. If the Minister really believes these changes are popular as he claimed in the House today then he should test that by sending the bill back to select committee for proper scrutiny," says Moana Mackey.

GREEN PARTY COMMENT ON SUSPENSION OF MIGHTY RIVER POWER SALE

"The Government has done the right thing by suspending the sale of Mighty River Power and allowing Kiwis to withdraw applications for shares," said Green Party energy spokesperson Gareth Hughes.

"The decision to issue a supplementary disclosure document is a tacit acknowledgement by National that NZ Power will work to lower power prices and reduce excessive electricity company profits.

"The purpose of the NZ Power plan is not to frustrate the asset sales but to drive down power prices and eliminate the excessive profits of the electricity companies. It is important that Kiwis have the facts on this plan before they decide whether or not to buy shares in Mighty River.

"National could still cancel the asset sales, and it should because they make no economic sense. NZ Power will proceed whether or not the asset sales take place," said Mr Hughes.

MERCER STAINLESS WORKERS STRIKE TO PROTECT CONDITIONS

Workers at Mercer Stainless have walked off the job today in protest against management attempts to slash their redundancy entitlements and annual leave.

The strike began at 12pm and will continue for the rest of the day, effectively halting

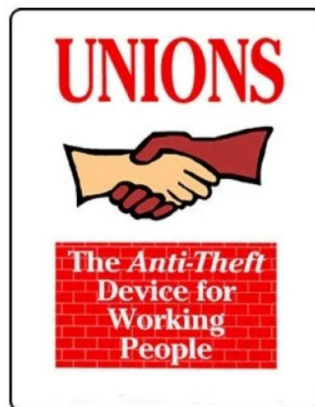
production at the company's Christchurch and New Plymouth plants. Workers will return to work in good faith tomorrow, subject to an indefinite overtime ban.

EPMU director of organising Alan Clarence says strike action is always a last resort, but the company's behaviour means workers have been left with no other option.

"This is quite simply a case of a profitable company trying to boost its margins by cutting its workers' most basic entitlements to redundancy and annual leave.

"We've been trying to talk sense with the company since October last year and even went to mediation and came to an agreement, but the company went back on that too. This is just grasping and opportunistic behaviour and our members have had enough.

"Our members don't want to take strike action but they're determined not to be pushed around. Management would be wise to drop this misguided attack and come back to the negotiating table in good faith."



Mercer Stainless produces a range of stainless steel products for domestic and industrial use.

The EPMU represents 75 workers at Mercer Stainless.

BITS AND BOB'S

- Track gangs recently converged on Whangarei to join in with the locals on some structures projects. Work was reported to have been very successful and the gangs seem to have mixed very well. The positive interaction was very good to witness from a group of members that have endured quite a torrid time over the last year.

LET'S BE SAFE OUT THERE & REMEMBER.....

"WE'RE STRONGER TOGETHER"!