

THE ACTIVIST



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EMPLOYMENT LAW CHANGES TILTING THE BALANCE STRONGLY TOWARD EMPLOYERS

Rail and port workers say an ability for employers to opt out of multi-employer collective agreements sends a message that a race to the bottom on wages is acceptable.

"The rail MECA employment agreement is the largest in the rail industry and covers over 3,000 workers at NZ Railways Corporation, Ontrack Infrastructure and KiwiRail," said Wayne Butson, General Secretary of the Rail and Maritime Transport Union.

"Rail workers fought hard to achieve this document. Multi Employment Collective Agreements are a vital tool to prevent competition amongst employers for a race to the bottom with wages and conditions."

"The government is sending a clear signal that they are happy for employers to try and opt out of industry standards."

Wayne Butson said the removal of the provision where new workers benefit from union-negotiated conditions for the first 30 days while they consider joining the union was another signal that the government has given up on a high wage economy.

"Minister of Labour Simon Bridges is being a bit cute with his language over this. To say workers are 'forced' into these conditions for the first 30 days is disingenuous."



"As we know, union collective agreements have better pay rises than the national average, as Victoria University research has demonstrated, year after year."

"All the government is doing with these changes is putting more barriers in the way of workers coming together to improve their pay and conditions and to lift New Zealand's living standards."

"What happened to National's bright future?" he said.

EMPLOYMENT RELATIONS BILL WILL CUT WORKERS' PAY

The Bill introduced today to destroy collective bargaining is a direct attack on the wages and conditions of those who go to work every day in this country.

Helen Kelly, CTU President says "these changes make it easier for employers to cut pay and conditions. They will increase inequality and make it harder for working families to get by."

"The Government's Cabinet paper admits these changes will make it easier for employers to pay workers less."

"The Bill weakens collective bargaining and will exclude new employees from collective coverage at the time they are most vulnerable - when they start a new job. Employers can favour individual agreements and refuse to conclude a collective agreement. This Bill will further reduce pay and conditions for New Zealand workers, especially for low paid, vulnerable workers. These changes are unfair on working Kiwis."

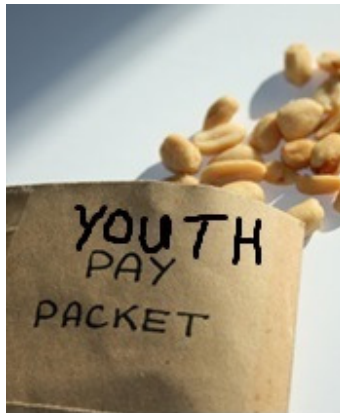
"The Government is hiding the real effect by using pretty words like flexibility and choice,

This is for the information and guidance of RMTU members only!

but this Bill even removes the tea break. No one will be fooled that this is anything but a license to exploit working people. This law will breach our international obligations and the CTU will be taking a complaint to the International Labour Organisation about it. The Bill also puts some of our trade agreements at risk."

"Working life is hard enough for many Kiwis at the moment. Many families are struggling to keep up with the cost of living, even with low inflation. This Bill will hurt these families more than it helps, and will take us back close to what applied under the despised Employment Contracts Act. We are standing against this Bill."

"We will be campaigning against these changes, and pushing for employment laws that encourage collective bargaining as the way to higher wages and productive and safe workplaces, not changes that undermine bargaining and make it even harder for workers to get ahead," said Helen Kelly.



EMPLOYMENT RELATIONS ACT - MORE CAMPAIGN RESOURCES

RMTU members and delegates are asked to register for the campaign on:

<http://union.org.nz/whycutourpay>

See 12 Fact Sheets, video message from Helen Kelly, and sign-on page for the campaign. We HAVE to start now on making this initiative of the Nat's too dangerous for them to pursue.

'OPPORTUNIST' INTRODUCTION OF YOUTH RATES WON'T BE TAKEN LYING DOWN

As the government's new youth pay law comes into effect on 1 May, a large group of Auckland supermarket workers took action to prevent a wage cut through youth rates being introduced in their stores.

FIRST Union members from Pak n Save Royal Oak stopped work and met with

workers from five other Pak n Save supermarkets, and from Foodstuffs' two Auckland distribution centres, to plan their response to increasing employer hostility in pay talks.

From 1 May employers can cut by 20% the minimum wage for 16 and 17 year olds, and 18 and 19 year olds who have been on a benefit for 6 months.

"We have been bargaining with Pak n Save Royal Oak since September last year," said Maxine Gay, Retail Secretary for FIRST Union.

"In all these months they have offered no payrise, and are trying their hardest to bring in youth rates."

"Pak n Save and New World businesses are doing well. They operated extremely profitably before the extended youth rates law came in. They are simply chasing an opportunity to get away with paying young workers less in order to make even greater profits."

"Workers are fed up with the antics of Foodstuffs. Across their supermarkets and distribution centre businesses they are acting in concert to strip down wages and conditions to the lowest level possible."

"This reflects the growing anger among workers about the poverty wages the company pay," she said.

Maxine Gay said Foodstuffs was isolating itself as a low wage employer of adults as well as young people among retail chains.

Several other large chains have confirmed they will not be using the new youth rates law. These include supermarket competitor Countdown, and other retail chains such as The Warehouse, Farmers, Kmart and Bunnings. A similar confirmation has also been given by Restaurant Brands, operators of KFC and Pizza Hutt, Starbucks and some Carl's Jr stores.

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

Acting National Returning Officer for this election.



HONG KONG PORT STRIKE IS OVER

Workers fighting for improved pay and decent working conditions at the Port of Hong Kong have voted to call off their industrial action after accepting an improved wage offer and promises of further negotiations on working conditions – as well as an assurance that there will be no retaliation against workers who participated in the strike. Full details of the settlement are included in a statement from the Union of Hong Kong Dockers (UHKD) below.

Responding to the news, ITF president Paddy Crumlin commented: “The Union of Hong Kong Dockers, supported by the Hong Kong Confederation of Trade Unions, has won a real victory: a pay rise and promises of continuing dialogue on working conditions and health and safety. Their bravery has been rewarded. We in the ITF and the wider union movement are proud to have been

able to mobilise the international support they deserved and needed."

He continued: "We trust that Hutchison Port Holdings will now address the issues around the dignity and working conditions of the workers at the port."

Sharan Burrow, general secretary of the ITUC (International Trade Union Confederation), added: "This is an important result for the dock workers of Hong Kong. We congratulate them on their resilience and determination to get a fair deal, and we are proud to have been able to give international solidarity in their quest for justice at work."

The Union of Hong Kong Dockers has issued the following statement:

Members of UHKD decided in the meeting held this evening to call an end to the 40-day strike in the HIT terminals.

On 6 May, UHKD received a written confirmation jointly signed by the four contractors of HIT, Everbest, Comcheung, Lem Wing and Pui Kee via the Labour Department. The four companies confirmed the new salary plan of 9.8% increase in the basic wage for all their employees at different works in Kwai Chung Container Terminals, effective for one year from 1 May 2013. In the workers' meeting called by UHKD in the evening, members considered the written assurance by the four contractors with the Labour Department a step forward compared to the verbal, unilateral announcement these companies made on 3 May. Although the strike has not secured a collective bargaining agreement with the employers, the 40-day industrial action has broken the "tradition" of unilateralism and succeeded in forcing the contractors to seal a written confirmation about the pay and working conditions. UHKD believes that this is the first step towards building a mechanism of communication and negotiation between the employers and the union representing a large section of the contractual workers in the Hong Kong terminals.

The four contractors' written confirmation also gives details committing the employers to "improve the occupational safety and health protection with the terminal companies", as well as providing the crane

operators the right "to stop the machine to take lunch", and "leave their workplace for toilet" as necessary. Members of UHKD consider that these concrete commitments are important basis for the union to further engage the contractors and HIT in good faith in the future.

Re-employment of the crane operators

While calling an end to the strike, the union is now working to assist the re-employment of its members, particularly the hundred crane operators employed by Global Stevedoring which announced its closure on 18 April. The union is pressing the Labour Department to negotiate with all the contractors for the soonest possible re-employment of these members.

Non-retaliation

UHKD will see to the end that the contractors abide by their promise of non-retaliation; and that none of its members will be penalized in the future for having taken part in the strike. The union will follow up to demand the contractors and HIT for a mechanism to schedule the rest and lunch breaks, enforce the safety and health provisions, review the salary regularly and eventually establish a collective bargaining mechanism that includes the contractual workers in the terminals.

Back-up from the community and international support

The passionate support and generous donations of the Hong Kong community, the international trade unions and organizations have helped us to sustain the strike for forty days. On behalf of our members, UHKD is thankful to all of you who have been giving us unwavering support. Together with you, we have demonstrated again the importance of workers' unity in fighting not only for reasonable pay, but also our dignity and our future.

Collective bargaining is a must for Hong Kong trade unions

It is the time for Hong Kong SAR government to re-table the legislation on collective bargaining, scrapped by the government in 1997, in obligations under the ILO Convention No98. The working people in Hong Kong must have an internationally recognized mechanism on

collective bargaining to ensure the right to fair negotiation of their working conditions and protection of the unions they belong to.

D&A TESTING

68,561 on-site drug tests were done by NZDDA during 2012. Of those tests a measly 6.4% tested as being non-negative. Of these approximately 4388 non negative tests, methamphetamine was found in 6% (down from 9.1% in 2011), Cannabis registered in 71% of the non-negative tests in 2012 compared with 68.5% in 2011.

TASKFORCE MUST SERVE AS BLUEPRINT FOR HEALTH AND SAFETY

Today's independent taskforce report must serve as a blueprint for the future of workplace health and safety, the Rail & Maritime Transport Union said today.

Today the Independent Taskforce on Workplace Health and Safety released its report to the government.

"This report has been carefully and methodically put together and deserves to be implemented in full," said Wayne Butson, RMTU General Secretary.

"The recognition in the report that health and safety will only work effectively with the full participation of workers, employers and government is welcome."

"Members of our union work in a dangerous industry. They want to know that their workmates are free to return home safe and well at the end of their day."

"As Hazel Armstrong's book published this week has shown, when laws are shaped to protect the employer, and light handed co-regulatory safety models implemented, there are devastating consequences. The sorry tale of fatalities in rail in the 1990s will never be forgotten by many rail workers."

The report calls for more effective coordination between the new health and

safety body and the transport agencies that regulate health and safety in their areas.

But Wayne Butson said it would be better for rail to be removed from the NZ Transport Agency and reside in the specialist health and safety entity.

"It is very difficult for NZTA to be both the regulator and enforcer of health and safety in rail."

"Rail operators require an approved safety case, but the approval of these may provide a defence to the employer in the event of a prosecution. Annual audits by NZTA review the compliance with the approved safety case, not workplace health and safety."

"It is far preferable for rail to sit alongside other industries in the new specialist health and safety agency," he said.



WAGES NEED TO RISE FASTER

"Wage rises are disappointingly slow given the economy now appears to be growing", says CTU Economist Bill Rosenberg. "It is good to see wages rising faster than prices, but labour productivity growth is strong given slow growth in hours worked but a faster increase in GDP, yet this is not showing up enough in wages." Average hourly earnings, which should reflect productivity growth, were up only 2.1 percent for the year or about 1.2 percent in real terms.

"Wages need to rise significantly if we are to keep people in New Zealand, close the gap with Australia and encourage them to use their skills in this country", Rosenberg says. "We should be encouraging good wage growth both to regain living standards and to increase demand for goods and services in our economy. It is good to see companies like the Warehouse recognising the need for higher wages and moving to adopt the Living Wage."

The labour cost index rose only 1.7 percent in the year, and the median increase for those who got a wage increase in the last year was 2.9 percent, one of the lowest in the last decade, and back where it was in 2010/2011. In the last year 44 percent of

employees did not receive an increase in their pay to reflect the cost of living or to retain staff.

Job growth measured by the Quarterly Employment Survey continues to be slow with only a 0.4 percent increase in jobs (both in numbers and full-time equivalents) the last three months in seasonally adjusted terms – the same as the disappointing result in the December quarter – and zero increase in hours worked.

The gender pay gap at 13.2 percent for the average ordinary time wage remains higher than the 12.9 percent it was a year ago.

PORT OF TAURANGA

The Port company has issued a notice of discontinuation to the Employment Court against the RMTU in relation to the industrial action at the Port arising out of the MUNZ and Port of Auckland dispute in 2012. This now means that the damages claims against the Union have been withdrawn by Tauranga, Centreport and Lyttelton. The C3 claim from Sulphur Point remains as the sole remaining live litigation.

INFLATION RATE

Our official inflation rate for the past year remains low at around 0.9%. It is at the low end of the Reserve Bank's inflation target of 1 - 3%. This means that we can allow a little bit more inflation to creep into the system, if this would assist growth or employment opportunities. Compared with other advanced economies around the world, our inflation rate is low. Australia is at 3.1%, the United Kingdom at 2.7% and the Euro zone at 2.6%. Even the USA has a higher rate at 1.7%. Certainly our higher exchange rate helps to keep our inflation in check.

DOC CUTS PUT OUR NATURAL HERITAGE AT RISK

The National Government is putting New Zealand's precious natural heritage at risk with confirmation today of job cuts at the Department of Conservation, says Ruth Dyson, Labour's Conservation spokesperson.

"The Government and the Department are trying to pretend that everything is sweetness and light – and that they are increasing frontline staffing. But the truth at least 70 full time positions have been cut.

"No amount of spin will convince Kiwis that cutting DoC workers will protect our biosecurity and biodiversity. Make no mistake; the Government is cutting frontline services.

"This is a massive reorganisation of the Department of Conservation, and will have far reaching effects. The move to 'streamline' the current 11 conservancies into 6 will mean that some provincial centres will no longer have the conservation expertise they have come to trust and rely on.

"Our natural environment is precious, and at the heart of New Zealand's 100% Pure brand. National's cuts put that at risk and are as short sighted as they are ill considered.

"National is cutting the heart of DoC, and hoping that volunteers, corporate sponsorships and donations will fill the gap. If it wasn't so serious, it would be laughable," Ruth Dyson.

APARTMENTS MORE POPULAR

Anecdotal evidence suggests that increasing interest is returning to the Auckland apartment market. From the onset of the global financial crisis until last year, most apartments were being purchased by investors attracted by the high investment yields. Agents are now telling us that owner-occupiers are returning to this market. This makes sense, as standalone dwellings have been appreciating in Auckland, and so buyers are now looking for value and choice within the apartment sector.

EPMU WINS TIWAI POINT LEAVE CASE

Workers at the Tiwai Point smelter are owed back pay from their employer for annual leave they were legally entitled to but never received, the Employment Relations Authority has ruled.

The case was taken by the workers' union, the EPMU, and centred on management's

decision to interpret a day's leave in lieu of a public holiday as meaning eight hours' leave, despite the fact employees worked standard twelve hour shifts.

The Authority rejected the company's argument and ruled the workers were legally entitled to twelve hours' leave in lieu of a public holiday under their employment agreements.

EPMU director of organising Alan Clarence says the decision is great news for workers at Tiwai Point.

"The Authority's decision means workers will finally receive the full legal entitlements set out in their employment agreements.

"Workers had raised this issue with the company repeatedly over the last two decades, but they were ignored until they collectively joined the union and were able to take a case.

"This is a great example of collective action getting results."

A copy of the Authority's decision can be found at:

<http://www.epmu.org.nz/assets/Legal/lieu-day-decision.pdf>

CAMPAIGN UPDATE – PAID PARENTAL LEAVE

Labour MP Sue Moroney's Bill to extend Paid Parental Leave (PPL) to six months is receiving great support through almost 5,000 submissions sent to Select Committee – all but 7 supporting the Bill. The second reading of this popular Bill will be happening later in the year and is a great opportunity for Labour to work locally with organisations like Plunket, Barnados, and Every Child Counts who are campaigning in support for the Bill through a coalition called "26 For Babies."

If you are keen to participate in local activities to promote the Bill, please contact Sue on Sue.Moroney@parliament.govt.nz

Become a walking billboard for extending PPL by ordering a T-Shirt through the RMTU National Office. It's a great way of starting conversations about why voting Labour is

important, particularly with those who don't normally think about politics.

KEEP OUR ASSETS COALITION COMMITTED TO STOPPING ASSET SALES

The Keep Our Assets coalition will continue to collect petition signatures to force a referendum on asset sales.

The Clerk of the House of Representatives' initial count, released today, shows that a remaining 16,500 valid signatures are required to trigger a referendum.

"The Keep Our Assets coalition is committed to finishing the job and forcing a referendum to stop the Government's unpopular asset sales programme," said Keep Our Assets coalition spokesperson Roy Reid.

"We have two months to collect the remaining signatures. History shows that most petitions require a second go to get across the line.

"Three out of the four previous citizens initiated referenda have had to go back to get more signatures after the initial count.

"Of those petitions that required more signatures, two of them needed more than ours, so we are happy there it is only a small number of signatures left to go and that on the second go the referendum will happen.

"The asset sales are still unpopular and economically foolish. The collapse of Solid Energy's value and the Government's willingness to push ahead with the sale of Mighty River Power regardless of market conditions shows the Government isn't listening.

"The Government needs to pause the asset sales programme and allow the referendum process to conclude," said Roy Reid.

FIRST LIVING WAGE VICTORY FOR RETAIL WORKERS

This morning's announcement by The Warehouse Group of a Career Retailer Wage has been welcomed by FIRST Union, the union for retail workers.



FIRST Union Retail Secretary, Maxine Gay, said the announcement of The Warehouse, on the eve of Collective Agreement negotiations with FIRST Union is excellent news for retail workers in The Warehouse and hopefully will start a trend to lift the retail sector wages from poverty levels to living wage levels across all chains.

Collective Agreement negotiations between FIRST Union and The Warehouse take place in early July which will determine the actual rates to be paid and put the final touches onto the career retailer wage concept.

"FIRST Union has been working constructively with The Warehouse for the last three years to raise pay rates, introduce skill based pay, comprehensive training for all roles and improved retention and engagement of workers in the company," Maxine Gay said.

"The Warehouse workers joined FIRST Union in droves around 5 years ago during the dark period of The Warehouse leadership where cost cutting, including staff "costs" was the major management tool. Workers still shudder when they hear the words "Project Invigorate".

"Last year, the union and The Warehouse workers accepted a lower wage rise than justified when the company was in a turnaround phase and the share price had dropped to record low levels.

"At that time The Warehouse CEO Mark Powell promised the workers and their union that the company would look at significant wage increases after the turnaround had been completed. We are pleased to see that Mark Powell is a man of his word," said Maxine Gay.

"The actions of The Warehouse are in stark contrast to the Foodstuffs group where many Pak'nSave and New World supermarkets continue to pay minimum starvation wages, refuse to engage constructively with the union and are now trying to cut wages through the new youth rates provisions," Maxine Gay said.

"Given that Foodstuffs is a major shareholder of The Warehouse we hope that the Living Wage commitment of The Warehouse may rub off onto the

millionaires that run Pak'nSave and New World stores," she said.

The announcement of The Warehouse is also a challenge to the other supermarket chain, Countdown, and the direct competitors of The Warehouse being Farmers, Briscoe's and Kmart. FIRST Union will be negotiating Collective Agreements with all of these companies over the next few months.

NOVOPAY DECISION NO SURPRISE



News that Novopay is here to stay comes as no surprise given the system's hasty implementation has left the government with little option but to ride out the difficulties, Labour's Education spokesperson Chris Hipkins said.

"Hekia Parata, Bill English and Craig Foss signed off on the implementation of Novopay despite clear evidence that it was plagued with problems.

"They scrapped the contingencies that were supposed to be in place and Steven Joyce is now being left to pick up the pieces.

"This whole process has caused massive disruption across the entire education system. It has had a wide-ranging impact on people's lives. Many of the problems could have been avoided if National ministers had done their jobs more diligently in the first place.

"Steven Joyce now needs to explain what steps he is taking to hold Talent2 accountable for its on-going failures. Taxpayers have already been forced to stump up over \$13 million dollars to fix Novopay problems. Talent2 needs to accept its share of the cost," Chris Hipkins said.



RAIL UNION AND INTERNATIONAL ORGANISATIONS LAUNCH THAI GOVERNMENT COMPLAINT

The International Transport Workers' Federation (ITF), its affiliated union the State Railway Workers' Union of Thailand (SRUT), the Thai State Enterprises Workers'

Relations Confederation (SERC), and the International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC) have joined together to make a complaint against the Thai government to the International Labour Organization (ILO).

The complaint to the ILO's Committee on Freedom of Association alleges that the Kingdom of Thailand is in gross violation of the international norms on trade union rights set out in ILO conventions 87 and 98 and that this has been highlighted by its having allowed the State Railways of Thailand (SRT) to victimise trade union members for exposing serious safety breaches on the country's rail network.

The case centers on the dismissal of 13 union leaders and branch officials who took part in an occupational health and safety initiative in October 2009 to publicise the serious rail safety failings which led to two derailments and one fatal accident in four days that month. The accident killed seven and injured many others. The driver had had one rest day in the previous 30 days. The driver's 'deadman's handle' system was not working, and, unbelievably, only 20 per cent of locomotives were even equipped with such a fundamental piece of equipment, according to the union. The initiative involved 1200 SRUT members who refused to drive trains with faulty or missing deadman's handles.

As well as dismissing the union leaders for their part in raising the hazards faced on the crumbling rail system, the SRT took the SRUT to court to try to impose punitive damages. Despite international protests and against all legal opinion the dismissals have been allowed to stand by the Thai courts. Their decision has led to the complainants taking this latest action.

ITF inland transport section secretary Mac Urata commented: "The injustice is manifest - these trade unionists sacked, their union targeted for massive damages totalling millions of dollars, and all for exposing serious safety dangers. The SRT has been able to get away with its

behaviour because of its closeness to government and the government's continuing to allow legislation that stifles the rights of workers in public enterprises. These injustices are what we are asking the ILO to rule on."

For more on the background to the case please see www.itfglobal.org/campaigns/thai-railway-workers.cfm

PORT OF VANCOUVER 'NEEDS SOLUTION'

Commenting on developments in the Port of Vancouver, Washington, USA, ITF (International Transport Workers' Federation) acting general secretary Steve Cotton said:

"The lockout of workers by Mitsui-United Grain will soon be entering its tenth week. The company choice of this tactic over honest negotiation has gained them nothing except local and international opprobrium."

He continued: "The recent spectacle of 12 carloads of police arriving to oversee a peaceful protest outside the Mitsui-owned United Grain Corporation terminal shows how the company's intransigence is harming the local community - and the company's reputation. If Mitsui insist on playing with fire they shouldn't expect the Vancouver police department to have to don asbestos gloves on their behalf."

He concluded: "This situation demands a solution. The company can no longer evade that fact."

For more details of international trade union support for the

locked out dockworkers, please see www.labourstartcampaigns.net/show_campaign.cgi?c=1795.

GOVT AT FAULT FOR MORE SOLID ENERGY JOB LOSSES

On the same day it has been reported that Solid Energy is laying off another 105



people, Bill English has questioned the viability of the company and has put the possibility that the Government may let the company tip over completely on the table, says Labour's SOEs spokesperson Clayton Cosgrove.

"Over 400 people have already lost their jobs since the Government woke up to the fact it had completely mismanaged Solid Energy. As reported another 105 jobs have gone today.

"The fault for the job losses and the \$389 million worth of debt rests squarely with the Government. I once called the Government amateurs. I was wrong. They are negligent and reckless amateurs.

"National was warned four years ago that Solid Energy was in trouble but it did nothing. Ministers were receiving month to month reports that said the company was in deep financial strife but these same ministers were asleep at the wheel. Now the taxpayer and employees are paying a huge price for that lack of Government oversight and scrutiny.

"The fact that Bill English is now questioning the viability of Solid Energy is another about-face. In February this year Mr English said: 'No, we are not going to let it [Solid Energy] go into receivership'.[i]

"Just months ago this Government was preparing Solid Energy for sale, now it appears they're preparing it for the receivers. This is supposed to be the party that knows about running businesses. This is now the party that couldn't run bathwater let alone a business," says Clayton Cosgrove.

PETITION CALLS FOR INQUIRY INTO FORESTRY SAFETY

Forestry workers will continue to be killed on the job unless something is done to

improve safety on the forestry industry, Labour's Health and Safety spokesperson Darien Fenton is warning.

A petition in the name of Darien Fenton and presented by Green MP Denise Roche has been tabled in Parliament today asking the government to conduct an inquiry into forestry safety.

The petition is on behalf of Caroline Callow, the mother of forestry worker, Ken Callow who died in Wharerata Forest in October 2011.

"Forestry is the most dangerous industry in New Zealand," says Darien Fenton.

"Already there have been four deaths this year. 28 workers have died since 2008 and nearly 900 have been seriously injured.

"The families of those killed or injured in New Zealand forests are pleading with the government to wake up and do something, or more workers will continue to die.

"Urgent action needs to be taken to stop the needless deaths and injuries in this industry and the petition gives the government a way to look at the evidence and find real solutions.

"It is well past time something was done to improve the safety of forestry workers, and I hope the government will take this petition seriously," says Darien Fenton.

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

"WE'RE STRONGER TOGETHER"!

WHAT KILLED KEN CALLOW?

