

CHRONICLE

NOVEMBER 1982

On 29 October, the Minister of Labour applied to the Arbitration Court for an immediate resumption of work order at the Marsden Point oil refinery under section 119C of the *Commerce Act*. The Court set 5 November as the date for the hearing, but urgent negotiations between the Government and FOL leaders led to proposals for a settlement, which Mr Knox put to the Marsden Point workers on 4 November. The formula, which the workers accepted, provided for a return to work, negotiations for an agreement to cover maintenance work, and urgent discussions on an evaluation of pay relativities to enable the parties to negotiate and determine new rates as soon as the wage freeze ended. The Government withdrew its application to the Arbitration Court.

Maintenance work at the refinery resumed on 6 November and, after talks lasting four days, agreement was reached on pay and conditions for the 8-week maintenance period. This agreement, which was ratified by the one-man wage authority, Mr J. Dempsey, provided for a basic hourly rate of \$6.45.

The FOL/CSU campaign against the wage freeze continued with marches and rallies in Christchurch and Whangarei (5 November), Wellington (8 November), Dunedin (11 November) and other centres. Thousands took part in this campaign, which culminated in a special 1-day conference of union delegates in Wellington on 18 November. The conference asked the Government to grant, as an interim measure, an immediate flat-rate \$20 a week increase to all wage and salary earners, as well as to the unemployed and to welfare beneficiaries. It also asked the Government to set up an independent body to review the entire wage fixing system, and to replace the wage freeze by an agreement on the range of the next round by consultations between Government, employers and unions.

The call for a general wage order, described by Mr Knox as "urgent and immediate", was immediately rejected by the Prime Minister but Mr Anderson, the President of the Auckland Trades Council, warned that the claim would be served on employers nationally, locally and individually. On 26 November, 400 workers employed by Auckland freight-forwarding firms held a 24-hour strike in support of the FOL's claim for a \$20 a week rise. Stores workers at Lucas Batteries also took part in the strike.

Taranaki dairy workers cancelled a projected 2-day strike on 1 November after consultations with the FOL. Dairy workers at the Auckland Milk Corporation's Penrose plant also dropped their pay claim. Workers at the Te Puke dairy factory gave 14 days' notice of industrial action on 3 November, but settled their differences with the company before the notice expired.

Combined oil industry unions in Auckland (stores workers, engineers and tanker drivers) gave the employers 14 days' notice of industrial action on 11 November, because of a lack of response to union requests for talks on unresolved issues. They cancelled a stopwork meeting called for 25 November, when the employers agreed to discuss the men's grievances.

The cancellation of existing wage contracts and shed agreements at the Islington freezing works by the employer, Waitaki NZR, led to a strike by some 260 workers on 15 October. On 2 November, the Islington sub-branch of the Meat Workers Union handed the dispute to the Canterbury branch, which issued an appeal for financial support.

Agreement on wages and conditions at the Glenbrook steel mill expansion project was reached early in November, after talks lasting 7 months. The agreement provides for a basic hourly rate of \$6.45, with a construction allowance of \$2.35 an hour. In addition, about 80 percent of the workforce will receive a "fallout" allowance of 22.1 cents an hour. The issues of site accommodation and the recruitment of overseas labour still remain to be solved.

The combined unions involved in the Clyde dam project lodged claims for core wages 15.5 percent above the rate at other major construction projects, i.e. a basic hourly rate of \$8.40 for registered electrical technicians, \$8.02 for indentured plumbers, \$7.65 for other certificated tradesmen and women, and so on down the line. In addition they claimed various allowances, including a \$2.35 construction allowance, free board and lodging, and free transport to and from the site. The contractor, Zublin-Williamson, applied for an exemption of the site agreement from the wage freeze, but declined to comment on the union claims.

Talks on the recruitment of overseas boilermakers and riggers for the Marsden Point oil refinery extensions opened on 15 November but broke down 2 days later. Riggers on the project held a 1-day protest strike on 18 November, after the employers, Badger Chiyoda JVII, had given the Labourers Union the names of 3 local riggers whom they did not wish to hire because of their previous industrial record. The men claimed that the company was operating a blacklist against union activists. Riggers at the refinery went on strike on 25 November when 1 of the proscribed men, Mr J. Doran, was stopped from coming on to the site. Mr Doran, a qualified rigger, had worked on 2 previous refinery shutdowns; he had earlier been chairman of the site committee at the Tasman mill project at Kawerau. Mr Doran had been taken on by a chimney stack contractor, but the company terminated the rigging contract on the refinery's flue stack and dismissed the contractor. The riggers returned to work on 30 November, but talks to settle the dispute failed.

Mr H.G. Duncan, an independent investigator appointed jointly by the FOL and the Department of Labour, found that the removal of a railway guard from "top roster" duties because of passenger complaints was justified. The removal had caused a 2-week long dispute which disrupted Wellington rail services in May-June. Mr Duncan recommended that the guard be reinstated in May 1984; he also suggested that the Railways Corporation introduce courtesy courses for guards along the lines of Air New Zealand's courses for cabin staff.

Shop employees throughout New Zealand held a week of action at the end of November, in memory of the wage rise they would have received at that time, if it had not been for the wage freeze. They distributed a national petition calling for an end to the freeze, and in Auckland the unions set up street stalls where they distributed pamphlets, balloons and bumper stickers to shoppers.

The strike continued at Nathan's Wiri depot over the dismissal of 14 workers who had been charged with theft from the company. The staff returned to work on 10 November, when the company offered grocery vouchers in excess of \$20 000 — 200 to each worker — on condition that they increased production and co-operation in the next few weeks. On the day work resumed, police raided the depot and arrested a further nine workers on charges of theft. These workers too were dismissed by the company, despite union objections that they should be kept on the pay-roll until their court cases had been decided. The workers involved, who denied the charges, then sought a personal grievance hearing, but the company refused to let the mediator make a decision and the cases were referred to the Arbitration Court. The Distribution Unions Federation decided to ask the FOL to start talks with the Employers Federation on a code of practice to protect workers arrested for job-related crimes. The unions stressed that they did not condone theft, nor did they take action for members sacked for proven theft, unless special circumstances existed, but they did not accept that employers had the right to sack workers on the allegation of theft.

The State Services Tribunal, on 24 November, approved the New Zealand Educational Institute's claim for the restoration of pay parity with secondary teachers. The salary increase to the country's 20 000 primary teachers averages out at slightly under 10 percent and was expected to cost \$29 million a year.

DECEMBER 1982

Riggers employed on the maintenance shutdown at the Marsden Point oil refinery struck again on 1 December in protest against the company's refusal to let Mr J. Doran on

to the site. The company said that its dismissal of the contractor who had employed Mr Doran was a commercial decision, and not an industrial relations matter subject to discussion with union officials. Riggers and boilermakers at the refinery extensions and at other projects in Whangarei joined the walkout.

The riggers resumed work at midday on 7 December, but called a stopwork meeting for the following day to discuss the dispute. They went back on strike when the company maintained its refusal to reinstate the dismissed contractor. That afternoon, 8 December, the Prime Minister announced in Parliament that the Government intended to declare a state of emergency under the *Public Safety Conservation Act 1932* unless the riggers resumed work. This was a serious response by the Government, said the Prime Minister, but "I regard it as very serious that thousands of New Zealanders will be without petrol on their holidays". Mr Bolger warned that this was "a crunch time" for the trade union movement and that the movement might not continue to exist in its present form. The Leader of the Opposition told a press conference that petrol supplies to the public ought not to have been put at risk by an industrial dispute.

The *Public Safety Conservation Act* had last been invoked during the 1951 waterfront dispute, though its use had been threatened, in 1976, during the electricity workers' rent dispute. An urgent meeting of the FOL Executive, which lasted for almost four hours, decided to recommend a return to work of the refinery fitters, which the Marsden Point men accepted. The dispute then shifted to the refinery extensions, where the riggers placed a ban on the employment of new men unless Mr Doran was taken on. They abandoned this stand a few days later; according to the Labourers Union they had misunderstood the recommendation of the FOL Executive, which asked the riggers to "continue supporting the right of employment for competent New Zealand labour to be employed before the importation of overseas labour".

On 14 December, the Arbitration Court began hearings on JVII's request to import up to 168 overseas riggers in the next 8 months. Evidence was given on Mr Doran's victimisation, but the Court's ruling avoided that issue, saying it might have to be dealt with in other proceedings. The Court approved the hiring of 90 overseas riggers in the first half of 1983. Mr Knox warned that the refinery men might not accept the ruling lightly, and Mr M. Rata, the president of Mana Motuhake, demanded that imported riggers be declared black and called scabs.

The CSU challenge to the wage freeze regulations came before the Full Court of Appeal on 8 December. The CSU claimed that the regulations were invalid as regards the *State Services Conditions of Employment Act* and did not therefore apply to their members. By a 4-to-1 majority, the Court, on 14 December, upheld the CSU claim. The Prime Minister however, commented that the Government could not permit State servants to be exempt from the freeze, and the Government on the following day introduced a Bill to amend the *Economic Stabilization Act* and to negate the Court of Appeal decision. The Bill was passed on 16 December.

The joint working party representing the FOL, CSU, Bank Officers and Local Body Officers Unions adopted 5 principles for the establishment of a New Zealand Council of Trade Unions. According to these guidelines, the autonomy and independence of individual unions will be protected and there will be a provision for separate group organisations, such as the CSU, within the new body.

At the Huntly power station site, boilermakers and other unions imposed overtime and loadout bans in a dispute over redundancy procedures. They wanted the rule of "last on, last off" followed, but the boiler contractor, CERS, insisted that it had the right to select employees to be laid off. On 25 November, about 90 boilermakers and riggers went on strike over this issue. The contractor sought an Arbitration Court hearing, but the dispute was settled, on 13 December, in talks chaired by an industrial mediator. The agreement gave job protection to union delegates and provided a mathematical formula to select staff for redundancies.

The Caretakers and Cleaners Union imposed a general ban on the cleaning of school

toilets late in November, over the dismissal of a cleaner by the New Plymouth High School Board. The Board claimed that time sheets had been filled in inaccurately and, though police enquiries found there was no case to answer, it refused to re-employ the man or to negotiate with the union. The cleaning ban was lifted on 3 December, after the Board had agreed to accept mediation, with the right of the mediator to make a decision if the parties failed to agree. The mediator later ruled that the dismissal had been unjustified and ordered the man's reinstatement, with slightly less responsibility.

The Wellington Combined Motor Unions complained to the Arbitration Court that the New Zealand Motor Corporation had given insufficient notice of redundancy when it laid off 71 workers at its Petone plant, contrary to the composite agreement which required a month's notice to the union before individuals were notified. The Court reserved its decision.

Waikato dairy workers threatened to strike on Christmas and New Year weekends, unless they were paid holiday rates. Their union endorsed a telegram sent by the chairman of the New Zealand Co-operative Dairy Co. to Mr Bolger, asking for a change in holiday regulations applying to the industry. The Minister turned down the request, which also affected other 7-days-a-week industries, but promised to investigate the problem in time for next Christmas. The union accepted this assurance and called off the proposed strike.

Mr J.A. Butterworth, the secretary of the Auckland Engineers Union, suggested on 20 December that workers take off 1 week in every 6 and receive unemployment pay for that week, as a means of fighting unemployment. He also suggested a shorter working week, extended Christmas breaks, cutbacks in overtime, and various forms of job sharing and early retirement. The Auckland Engineers Union had lost 900 members through redundancies in the previous 5 weeks. The Union and engineering employers agreed to set up a joint working party to find ways to combat growing unemployment in the industry.

The secretary of the Meat Workers Union, Mr A. Kennedy, met the Prime Minister on 9 December and announced afterwards that the Government had dropped its objections to the principle of a 4-day week, "providing the problem areas that do exist can be resolved between the parties". Mr Muldoon stressed however that the Government would not permit the freezing industry to work a 4-day week for 5 days' pay. The President of Federated Farmers described the agreement, even in principle, as "premature and unnecessary", while employers' spokesmen claimed that a reduced working week would increase hourly costs and would not increase productivity to the levels needed. The strike at the Islington freezing works continued. A Fairton member of the Meat Workers Union, who had refused to pay the \$10-a-week levy in support of the Islington workers, was expelled from the union and thus lost his employment.

The Tasman Pulp and Paper Co. commissioned a new chlorine plant at their Kawerau mill early in December, but paper workers refused to operate the new equipment which, they claimed, was new work not covered by their existing agreement. The Pulp and Paper Workers Union was claiming a 15 percent increase in their award negotiations, while most other unions at the plant had already accepted a 10 percent increase. On 11 December, the company threatened to suspend workers unless restrictive practices were lifted, but when it suspended 7 workers on 16 December, all paper workers struck for 48 hours and workers at the nearby Caxton paper mill declared a 1-day sympathy strike. When the paper workers returned after their strike, the company continued with suspensions because the union had not lifted the ban on the new chlorine plant. On 21 December, a union meeting decided by a large majority to drop the demand for a 15 percent increase and to lift the ban. Nine days later however, 200 kraft pulp workers at the plant decided not to work on New Year's Day and 2 January. According to the union secretary, this was not a strike; the men had worked through the Christmas period and now wanted a break. Tasman directors and shareholders, he said, would not be working on New Year's Day, "and neither will our people, because they like a holiday too".

Shop employees' unions sought an interim injunction in the High Court in Auckland to stop Foodtown supermarkets from opening 3 nights a week before Christmas. They claimed that their award allowed only 2 nights' work a week. Foodtown had opened

late for 3 nights in Christmas week in previous years without union opposition. The High Court rejected the union request on 17 December, ruling that supermarkets could open on several nights a week, as long as the same staff were not employed on more than 2 nights. The shop employees' unions said they would pursue the issue in the Arbitration Court.

JANUARY 1983

The FOL and CSU sent a joint letter to the Prime Minister on 7 January, asking for urgent discussions with the Government on the direction of its economic policy. The country's economy, they claimed, had suffered a rapid deterioration in the past few months, marked by massive lay-offs and extremely tight monetary condition, and they called for remedial action to shore up living standards and spending levels by a \$20-a-week rise in pay and benefits. The 2 federations also expressed concern at the lack of any firm proposals for the wage-fixing system that would be applied at the end of the current freeze. The Prime Minister replied that a meeting with the FOL and the Employers Federation would be held in February.

Mr Bolger, after attending the Ninth Asian and Pacific Labour Ministers' Conference in Tokyo, expressed his admiration for the Japanese system of industrial relations. "The whole New Zealand craft union system needs restructuring", he said, and he praised Japan's "enterprise unions" which concern themselves solely with labour-management affairs of their own companies, take an "aggressively progressive attitude" towards the introduction of new technology, and attend quality control sessions in the workers' own time.

Members of the Cooks and Stewards Union picketed the British cable-laying ship *Luminence* in support of their claim for 3 New Zealand staff to be added to the crew, to feed 14 members of the New Zealand Seamen's Union who were employed as cable hands and riggers. Meanwhile, a demarcation dispute at Lyttelton between watersiders and harbour board workers held up the wharveside handling of the cable relay drum for the *Luminence*.

The New Zealand Merchant Service Guild demanded that two supply ships for the Hunt International-Petrocorp oil exploration project in the Great South Basin should have New Zealand captains. Hunt argued that American laws required that American ships have American captains, and threatened to withdraw from the project altogether. It has been Guild policy, since 1974, that overseas ships used on New Zealand projects must have a complement of New Zealand officers. In 1979, the Guild succeeded in having New Zealand officers installed on a Swedish support ship for the Maui oil rig.

Sixteen representatives of New Zealand and Australian metal unions, 8 from each country, met in Wellington on 20 and 21 January to discuss the implications of the CER agreement for closer economic relations between the two countries. CER, they said in a joint statement, ignored human and social considerations and would lead to takeovers, bankruptcies and factory closures. They agreed to work together for the renegotiations of the CER agreement, and to meet again in August to review progress. Continuing lay-offs in the car assembly industry led to the setting up of a national committee of motor unions, co-ordinated by Mr E.W.J. Ball, national secretary of the Engineers Union.

The 3-month-old strike at the Islington freezing works was settled on 17 January. Six of the 12 cancelled incentive contracts have been renegotiated, and talks are continuing on the remaining 6. This opened the way for a resumption of talks on new technology in the industry between the Freezing Companies Association and the Meat Workers Union, which had been suspended because of the Islington dispute.

Lawyers threatened industrial action by withdrawing from the criminal legal aid system, unless the government raised the fees paid to defending counsel. They expressed fears that in future defendants seeking representation from legal aid might not be as adequately defended as they could be, because the only lawyers prepared to work for the fees would be those who were less experienced or those who worked for clients out of the goodness

of their hearts. Cabinet deferred the matter until the lifting of the wage freeze.

Representatives of 11 unions working at the Marsden Point refinery extensions met in Auckland on 18 January, to consider the Arbitration Court's ruling that the JVII consortium could import 90 overseas riggers. They decided to call a stopwork meeting at the site, with Mr Knox as the main speaker, to discuss the issue. Labourers Union policy, said its secretary, was that qualified local riggers should be hired ahead of overseas workers. The first group of imported riggers was expected to arrive early in February, and the FOL asked the British TUC to inform its member unions of the position at Marsden Point. According to Mr Knox, the TUC passed on the FOL warning and asked British unionists not to take work at Marsden Point until the FOL had given the all clear. Meanwhile, half the project's workforce, some 600 labourers and drivers, walked out on 20 January in protest against the dismissal of a scaffolder for "persistent absenteeism". They returned to work 4 days later but, when a personal grievance hearing failed to win the man's reinstatement, 20 scaffolders resumed the strike. JVII referred the matter to the Arbitration Court.

Seven oil storemen, who had been charged with failure to give the required 14 days' notice of intention to strike, were discharged without conviction in the Auckland District Court. This was a test case, being the first time a breach of the *Industrial Relations Act* had been brought before a District Court as a criminal proceeding.

FEBRUARY 1983

Talks on future wage policy between the Government, Employers Federation, FOL and CSU opened in Wellington on 23 February. Union delegates argued that the freeze should be lifted after its scheduled end, but the Prime Minister emphasised that the freeze "certainly won't come straight off on June 22". The parties agreed to set up 2 joint committees to consider ways of ending the freeze and establishing long-term wage-fixing procedures. A FOL-CSU press statement deplored the fact that the government had rejected the union claim for an urgent interim \$20 per week cost of living order, and that it "had not come up with any proposals for after the freeze and had not defined the sort of system it would find acceptable".

Marsden Point scaffolders, riggers and drivers returned to normal work on 1 February. Mr Knox was due to address workers at the site on 3 February but, on the eve of the meeting, both the chairman of the Refinery Company and the Minister of Energy warned that continued industrial disruption might force the winding up of the extensions project. The stopwork meeting reaffirmed its opposition to overseas labour, and decided to hold a protest strike on the day the first overseas workers arrived on the site. A liaison committee consisting of Mr Knox and representatives of the Labourers Union was to explain the position to the British riggers (or "out-riggers", as one writer called them).

The first group of 16 British riggers arrived on 10 February and, as decided, the 1300 workers on the site walked out for 24 hours. Mr Knox met the riggers and announced afterwards that they were now part of the New Zealand trade union movement. On the next day, 11 February, all 120 riggers on the site, including their British colleagues, decided to stay on strike indefinitely. The Prime Minister announced that he would recommend to Cabinet that the British riggers' entry permits be revoked and that they be sent home if they did not work. "We have had enough of migrants in very militant union positions", he told the press. JVII's industrial relations manager however stressed that the consortium needed foreign workers. The Labour Party's shadow minister of labour also condemned the Prime Minister's threat and asked the riggers to return to work. Mr Bolger threatened to deregister the Labourers Union, or a section of it, and suggested transferring the riggers from the Labourers' to the Engineers' Union, a solution immediately rejected by the latter.

On 14 February, Cabinet members met FOL representatives and agreed to defer action while Mr Knox discussed with JVII the setting up of a joint committee to consider the

employment of New Zealand riggers who had applied for work at Marsden Point. The President of the Employers Federation strongly criticised this recruitment-by-committee plan, because it cut across an employer's prerogative of hiring. JVII did not reject the union proposal, but it wanted the joint committee to be responsible for all disputes on the site and for the unions to guarantee continuous work while a dispute was in progress. This extension of the original proposal to a no-more-strike policy was not acceptable to the unions.

The riggers' strike continued, and JVII suspended other workers as work ceased to be available for them. On 16 February the President of the Northland Chamber of Commerce and other "concerned citizens" called a lunch-time rally in Whangarei to express public concern. Most Whangarei businesses closed between 11am and 12.30 pm to allow their staff to attend; 2 000 - 3 000 people were present and passed resolutions calling for work to proceed unhindered by industrial trouble and for the holding of secret ballots before strike action on major projects.

On 18 February, Mr Knox announced that a peace formula had been worked out with JVII, which included freer discussion and a better flow of information over the hiring of site labour. The riggers returned to work on 21 February, including the British riggers who had been accepted as members of the Labourers Union. According to the Prime Minister, the riggers had achieved nothing and the rest of the workforce were opposed to them and pro-company. JVII undertook to process all outstanding applications for work but not those already rejected. "We have only rejected 3 riggers", they wrote to Mr Knox. "They have been processed and we won't reconsider them". The plan for a joint committee on hiring was abandoned, but talks on hiring policy were to continue between JVII and the unions.

A Whangarei contractor who advertised for 12 carpenters and builders' labourers for a year's work at Marsden Point, received 595 calls from all over the North Island. "The unemployment problem for carpenters in Auckland is extremely serious", commented the secretary of the Auckland Carpenters Union. "The ridiculous part about it is JVII advertised in the London paper *The Sun* for carpenters last March to work at Marsden Point. They offered \$22 000 a year, air fare and accommodation paid, while we have members who made applications and have not received replies".

At the Clyde dam-site project, the union claims require the employer to recruit labour first locally, then from the rest of New Zealand, and finally by training labour recruited in New Zealand. No overseas labour is to be hired without the consent of the unions. The Minister of Labour on, 14 February, exempted the project from the wage freeze regulations so that negotiations for a site agreement could proceed.

The Airline Stewards and Hostesses Union gave 14 days' notice of industrial action on 1 February, because Air New Zealand refused to reinstate a ground steward who had been acquitted on charges of theft from the company. Six other stewards had been reinstated after being acquitted in Court but, in this instance, the company and the union failed to reach agreement at a personal grievance hearing. The company then referred the case to the Arbitration Court but the union objected because of the delays involved. Last-ditch meetings brought no agreement, and a 24-hour strike went ahead on 16 February. Air New Zealand claimed that more than half the rostered cabin crew had reported for duty that day, but only 4 planes were able to take off before action by Engineers' Union members, who refused to work with strike-breakers, stopped all traffic.

Air New Zealand then applied to the Arbitration Court for a ban on further industrial action under the *Commerce Act*. After the court had agreed to an urgent hearing, the company offered to withdraw the application if it received an undertaking from the union. The union ignored this request, but the company decided to hold back after all. Another steward had meanwhile been acquitted on theft charges but Air New Zealand again refused to reinstate him. On 24 February, the union held a 3-hour stopwork meeting in Auckland to discuss further action and, on the following day, negotiations between company and the union resumed in the presence of a mediator.

The Aircrew Industrial Tribunal, on 28 February, rejected an application by Air New Zealand to make some of its pilots redundant. Instead, it advised the parties to seek agreement on a leave purchase scheme proposed by the Air Line Pilots Association.

Three hundred and fifty asbestos workers went on strike in Auckland on 4 February, because their employer refused permission to send their X-rays to a New York doctor who specialised in asbestos-related health problems. The dispute was settled 4 days later, when the company released the X-rays for overseas posting.

After investigating the financial affairs of the Wellington Boilermakers Society since last April, the police announced that it would not lay criminal charges.

Members of the Early Childhood Workers Union started a series of pickets at Auckland child-care centres on 2 February, because a woman worker had been dismissed without notice or wages in lieu. The pickets were also part of a campaign by the union to start talks for an award for the estimated 2 000 employees in 507 child care centres throughout New Zealand. The pickets ceased when the employer agreed to pay the dismissed woman a week's wages. A Child Care Employers Association was to be formed, which would open informal talks with the union.

Two hundred workers at the Northland Co-operative Dairy Co.'s factories struck on 8 February over the dismissal of a colleague. They returned 2 days later, when the company agreed to reinstate the man. Some farmers were forced to dump their milk during the dispute.

The Pacific Freezing Co. broke off talks with the Meat Workers Union at Oringi on 1 February and cancelled all existing agreements. It proposed instead to submit a composite agreement to the Wage Freeze Authority by 19 February. In protest against this one-sided action, the staff voted 283 to 24 to impose a load-out ban. On 15 February, the workers voted down the document drawn up by the company. The company then refused to put up stock and suspended its staff. According to the union, this constituted a lockout, though the company claimed its workers were on strike.

Ocean Beach meat workers struck on 3 February because there had been a 40-minute delay in evacuating the plant after an anonymous bomb warning the day before. The company refused to take the strikers back, unless it received a guarantee of uninterrupted work, but the dispute was settled amicably on 16 February. The Prime Minister, on 18 February, denounced the stirrers, agitators and fermentors who were responsible for "mindless stoppages" in the meat industry.

The Pye electronics factory announced plans to reduce staff at its Waihi and Frankton factories from 450 to 300. Lay-offs also continued in the motor assembly industry. On 23 February, the New Zealand Motor Corporation announced that it intended to close its Petone plant, which employs 160 workers. This brings the total number of redundancies in the motor industry to 1660 since last July, half of them in the Porirua-Hutt Valley region. The Ford Motor Co warned of further redundancies at its Seaview and Wiri plants unless workers accepted a reduced working week of 4 days. Union reaction to such proposals has been divided: North Island timber workers, carpet mill workers at Foxton and electrical workers at Philips' Naenae plant have agreed to a 4-day week, but the Wiri car workers voted against accepting the Ford proposals. The employers too are of two minds: Mr. P. Carroll, an Auckland employers' advocate, told a Hamilton meeting that to offer 4 days' work for 4 days' pay was in breach of most awards and that employers could find themselves liable for back pay for the unworked day. "There is also the danger", he said, "the fifth day will come to be regarded as overtime".

Herbert Roth

20 MAY 1983