

The Northern News

CONFIDENTIAL INTERNAL NEWSLETTER OF THE NORTHERN AMALGAMATED WORKERS UNION

WHY IS JOHN KEY AND THE NATIONAL PARTY SO POPULAR?

A recent poll put the National Party on 53% support. If they win the Election in November with that support, they could govern on their own and behave like they did under 'First Past the Post'. This also means they would not need either Act or the Maori Party to rubberstamp their policies.

So why have they got that level of support? Just after that Poll, three workers were asked when they last got a wage rise. They answered; 1) A long time ago; 2) 5 years ago; 3) Never. We know of many workers in non-Union jobs who tell the same story. We don't know why the Nats are so popular, but we do know why they should be dumped in November.

It is clear to anybody that the 5.3% inflation rate is attributable to the National Coalition Government's actions.

- 1) Prior to the Election in 2008, Key promised that there would be no increase in GST. We now know that was a lie.
- 2) His excuse was that the increase in GST would be offset by Tax cuts. For the 'Rich' that was true, but for most workers they ended up worse off.
- 3) You must also remember that this Government introduced an Emissions Trading Scheme that increased Petrol and Power charges. There was no tax offset for these increases.
- 4) For Dairy Products, Meat, Timber and other exported commodities we pay overseas prices. Why?

So how does all this effect NZ workers? Government spending has been cut at the cost of thousands of jobs. Wage increases (even if you got them) are not in the main, keeping up with the rate of inflation.

The main excuse for nil or very low wage offers, from Employers who do not value their Employees, is the Global Financial Crisis. I have asked on many occasions how the Global Financial Crisis affects Councils, Construction Companies or Roding Contractors. Not one of these Employers has been able to answer that question. Their next response is that the Government is making it clear that they expect wage restraints from Employers at this time.

The outcome of all this is that NZ Worker's 'standard of living' is dropping. The price of food is so high, people are forced to eat unhealthy food. This leads to health problems eg diabetes, obesity etc.

I ASK AGAIN WHY THIS LEVEL OF POPULARITY?

Are people happy that Petrol has increased by 20.1%, Electricity costs up by 7.8%, Food up by 7%?

Another cost you will face is Rates increases. Even in Auckland, with the reduction in staff because of the creation of the Super City. A Rates increase is predicted to be about 4%.

A SIMPLE QUESTION

Recently, Secretary Ray Bianchi was approached by a Reporter and asked what he thought about the Auckland Council's decision to halt all work on or about roads in the region. His answer to that question was, "It is a stupid decision because much work in that area will be work that cannot be left." As an example Ray asked, "If there is a sewer break or water break, will it be left because of a stupid game of football?" The Secretary was then asked, how would our members be affected if the moratorium on that work was implemented? His response was that because our members have a guaranteed 40 hour week in their Collective Agreements they are guaranteed at least 40 hours pay in any week. However, he made the point that most non-Union Companies do not enjoy that minimum and it is likely those Companies could send their Workers home with no pay with the instruction to come back after the end of the World Cup. His point was that if the Council allows sewage or water to flow from our street because of the World Cup, then the whole situation is **STUPID!**

Who is the Commerce Commission meant to Protect?

That is the question that is on everybody's lips. The milk inquiry or lack of it is just another case which leaves your average person wondering what the heck is going on. We have seen the price of milk related goods go through the roof. When the Commission carried out a pre-cursor investigation they came back with, "there is no need for an inquiry into the pricing of milk." But when they were asked by a journalist at the meeting, to give an assurance that there was no price gouging, they could not answer the question.

Equally the AWUNZ have been taken aback by the decision of the Commerce Commission to allow an alliance between Humes Pipe and Hynds Pipe Systems to produce plastic and some cement pipes. For the record the AWUNZ would like to take this opportunity to say that we have a very good working relationship with both companies. However, this still does not take away our concern that both companies, have been allowed to join forces and trade together in the market place. They, for all intense purposes are the market in the Cement Pipe industry. There is a start-up company in Christchurch and a few 'Ma and Pa' operators mainly in the agriculture field, but generally it is accepted in New Zealand that if you want cement pipes, there are only two places you go to.

This has already had an impact as there have been redundancies because of the alliance, as they seek to consolidate some of their manufacturing into the RCP plant in Hamilton. Here is the question for the Commission; where will the competition come from in the Cement Pipe market in NZ, since 90% of the market have been allowed to join forces, and what effect will this have on pricing? You get this strange feeling that Corporations, not Consumers are protected by the Commission.

Stop Work Meetings

Our Round of Stop Work Meetings this year will be held in October/November 2011 prior to the Election. The venue, dates and times will be put out soon. The draft Agenda below will include;

- a) *The Election and Labour's dismal performance.*
- b) *Union Financial Report.*
- c) *Fees for Next Year.*
- d) *Industrial Report.*
- e) *General Business*



Job Vacancy

A vacancy exists for an Organiser, based at our Hamilton office. Previous experience as an Organiser would be preferable but all applications will be considered.

Please forward your CV and covering letter outlining why you would be the right candidate to fill this position to:

Attention: Ray Bianchi
Fax: (09) 378 6190
Email: auckland@awunz.org.nz

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