



Downtown opening

It was all good news for New Plymouth's new Downtown shopping complex today.

First, as the picture shows, hundreds of people flocked to the Devon Mall arcade to view the new shops and special guests, Kermit the frog and Miss Piggy.

And second, the arcade now complies with city bylaws and can be officially opened tomorrow without legal problems.

But the New Plymouth City Council is still almost certain to prosecute the arcade's developer for allowing shops to open earlier this week in breach of city bylaws.

The Downtown controversy blew up on Tuesday when a council works and traffic committee meeting was told the arcade was open to public while its sprinkler system was not operational, emergency lighting was not working, and secondary exit routes were not satisfactory.

At that stage the fire alarm system was also not connected to the New Plymouth Fire Brigade, the committee was told.

The meeting responded by recommending the arcade's developers should be prosecuted for opening in breach of a number of bylaws.

The developer is Downtown Developments Co Ltd. City architect Mr Terry Boon holds 99,999 shares, and his wife Angela has one share.

This week construction workers have worked long and hard getting the arcade to the stage where it can be legally open and town clerk Mr Kinsley Sampson received a note at 10.30am today that the building now officially complied with the bylaws.

Mayor Mr David Lean said he would take part in the official opening ceremony scheduled for tomorrow now that everything had been brought up to standard.

A decision on whether to continue with the prosecution will be made at the next monthly council meeting on Tuesday, September 17.

Workers back

Staff strike

Wellington bureau
The head office of the Ministry of Energy's electricity division was hit by industrial action today when 90% of the staff struck in support of their claim for cheap electricity.

The workers want price concessions presently given to power station, substation and line depot staff extended to all those who work for the electricity division.

About 450 staff were involved in today's one-day

strike, which was the culmination of four weeks action around the country, the deputy general secretary of the Public Service Association, Mr Collin Clark, said.

There was a proposal to return to negotiations next week, he said.

Administration director for the division, Mr Dennis Allan, said services offered to the public were not being affected by the strike, and the office was being run by a skeleton staff.

Boeing in skid

AUCKLAND, Today. — Squalls and water lying on the runway caused a Boeing 737 jet landing at Auckland Airport on Tuesday night to skid for several seconds and slew off course.

Passengers adopted the

safety position, but the 737 came out of the skid and taxied normally to the terminal.

None of the 94 passengers was hurt. As a safety precaution the aircraft's tyres were changed later.

Views given on Maori loans

TAURANGA, Today (NZPA). — Many marae would be bankrupted if loans for building homes on Maori land were given to marae trusts instead of individuals, said National Opposition spokesman on Maori affairs Winston Peters.

"The onus must be on individual mortgagors," he said. "If a trust was responsible it could be bankrupted when one or two individuals defaulted."

Mr Peters was commenting on a suggestion from Internal Affairs Minister Mr Tapsell that loans for building homes on ancestral Maori land under

a proposed papakainga scheme should not be given to individuals.

Mr Tapsell's view was that trusts, or an organisation with overall control, should be given the Housing Corporation money.

If individuals built homes under the scheme they could have difficulties transferring the asset if they decided to leave, he told Tauranga County Council.

A trust would have the authority to require uniform maintenance, rather than have only individually occupied areas maintained, the minister said.

Good start

Taranaki made an excellent start to the North Island under-20 and under-16 representative netball tournament at New Plymouth today.

Taranaki's under-20 side won all three of its games against Maniapoto, Counties and Auckland Subs respectively.

The under-16 side beat South Waikato and drew with Howick.

Taranaki shares the lead on the under-20 points table with Rotorua and Thames Valley on four points each.

In the under-16 table Taranaki shares second place with Howick on three points. Wairarapa leads with four points.

Taranaki under-20 netball team manager Mrs Jan Hill said the side was playing very well with every member getting the chance to handle the ball.

Its main competition for the title was shaping up to be Thames Valley, she said.

This morning's results were: Under-20, Taranaki 28 Maniapoto 7, Rotorua 19 Henderson 15, Hawke's Bay 20 Counties 18, Howick 25 West Auckland 21, Thames Valley 21 Auckland Subs 12, Maniapoto 15 Henderson 20, Taranaki 25, Counties 15, Rotorua 21 West Auckland 17, Hawke's Bay 21, Auckland Subs 27, Thames Valley 22 Howick 20, Henderson 18 Counties 18, Maniapoto 15 West Auckland 13, Taranaki 25, Auckland Subs 23, Rotorua 24 Howick 22, Thames Valley 21 Hawke's Bay 13.

Under-16, Howick 23 Wanganui 17, Rotorua 14 Wairarapa 29, South Waikato 18 Taranaki 26, Coast 15 Horowhenua 11, South Waikato 10 Rotorua 15, Howick 21 Taranaki 21, Wanganui 17 Coast 18, Horowhenua 12 Wairarapa 17.

Armed robbers strike twice

WELLINGTON, Today. — Armed robbers struck twice within three hours in Wellington last night, getting away with \$34,000 from a Crofton Downs supermarket and about

The pair, dressed in overalls and balaclavas, demanded the day's takings and were handed the \$34,000 by about three staff present, before making off

At Kilbirnie a robber waving what appeared to be a slug pistol apparently warned about eight people in the bank that anyone who followed him would