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Chile: Employees At El Teniente Copper Mine Vote To Strike

by Barbara Khol
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On July 29, El Teniente copper mine employees voted 8,292 to 162 in favor of an indefinite strike to begin Thursday, Aug. 1. Employees rejected contract terms offered by the state-run Copper Corporation (CODELCO), consisting of a wage hike equal to the consumer price index, a productivity incentive based on 2% of net profits, and a 175,000 peso (about $500) one-time bonus. Union leader Juan Marambio said employees are particularly disenchanted with management's wage offer. According to Marambio, union leaders commenced negotiations calling for a 12% real increase, and then reduced their demand to 8.92%. In response, he added, the company offered a zero-level hike. In addition to the real wage increase, union leaders are demanding 25 days of paid vacation, and improvements in selected benefits. On July 27, Daniel Trivelli, El Teniente assistant manager, told reporters that the mine will lose $450,000 per day during a general strike. El Teniente, located near Rancagua, 80 km. south of Santiago, is the world's largest pit (subterranean) mine. In 1990, the mine produced 296,000 metric tons of processed copper. CODELCO exported 1,192,200 MT of copper last year. (Basic data from AFP, 07/25/91; EFE, 07/27/91)

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