

DO NOT DISCARD

OFFICE OF

22 AUG 2008

RON MARK MP

Mr Ron Mark
Member of Parliament
New Zealand First Party
Parliament Buildings
Wellington

Dear Mr Mark,

When we learned that Labour's plan to abolish the SFO was to be referred to the law & order select committee, those of us working at the coalface of the SFO took huge comfort knowing that you sit, were the chair of that committee and that any deciding vote on the Bill would be yours.

For as long as I can remember, staff at the SFO have thought of you as a man of integrity, a man who rightly demanded that law enforcement be accountable but who also championed strong and effective law enforcement. Furthermore, you were seen as someone who understood the devastating impact of white collar offending on our communities.

Most of all, you were seen as a man who would be prepared to do what was right, regardless of the political motivations that seem to drive so many of our elected representatives.

Over the years, whenever SFO management came back from appearing at select committee hearings, they would relay to us that mostly it was you who had asked the searching questions, you who had probed the deepest, you who had listened most attentively, and you who seemed most concerned with achieving a fair and balanced assessment of the SFO's performance in any year.

We know that you heard what David Bradshaw had to say in 2007 on his very last appearance in front of your committee as Director. My own manager reported back to us on the very dignified and fair hearing that the committee (and you in particular) gave him that day. We know that you heard from David again this year when he made submissions to your committee on the bill – submissions he was prepared to make in the face of hostility and pressure from other individuals and groups, because he knew it was the right thing to do to inform the committee.

We took comfort that you read and listened to all the other submitters. We believed that you would see what was so obvious to see; that the move to get rid of the SFO was foolhardy and a risk taken that simply didn't warrant or need to be taken. That you would see that the way in which the abolition was orchestrated from the start was plainly dishonest, with your committee lined up at the end to hopefully rubber stamp it. That you would NOT see any compelling evidence to support the abolition – how could you? There was none. We took comfort Mr Mark, that you were there in the Chair and that you would inject some integrity, some honesty and most of all, some courage into the decision making.

Now, last Friday, we learned that you decided to kick for touch and voted to get rid of the one agency that could properly investigate and prosecute serious or complex fraud in this country. Mr Mark, New Zealand's white-collar criminals are laughing. The one agency that they feared might hold them to account is to be closed; destroyed by the vote of someone who needed to demonstrate and champion the qualities of integrity and courage that those within the SFO admire so much.

You must know that the capability of the SFO will never survive a transfer into the Police. In 6 months, it will be gone. It is being split further apart every day. That much is very clear to those of us who work here. My manager is valiantly trying to hold the outfit together, but he is like King Canute and the sea. Mark my words, people will be leaving. Count who is still there 6 months into the new agency. Soon, nearly 20 years of institutional knowledge will be lost to our country. The Police will pay their lip service to serious fraud, they always have (I know that first hand) and they always will. The public will be fed the line that everything is okay and MP's will choose to buy into it. No one will want to find out the truth. The most clever of our corporate crooks will relish the return to the halcyon days of the 1980's.

Friday was a sad day for the SFO and for all the committed and capable workmates that I am proud to work with. Most of all, it was a sad day for those 1000's of ordinary Kiwis who needed someone like you to stand up to the pressures and just do what was right, to reject the bill. It's a shame that you did not.

I have been told by workmates not to sign this letter to you. Public servants aren't meant to have views it appears. But I wanted to write it because I think you need to read it. Sadly, I expect political expediency will prevent anything happening in spite of it.