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Judges asked to limit Pilgrim picketing

By Jean Demos
The Patriot Ledger

BROCKTON — A three-judge panel was asked yesterday to limit picketing by 80 laborers fired from their jobs at the Pilgrim nuclear power plant in Plymouth.

Lawyers for Bechtel Corp., contractors for the plant, said management employees and members of other unions are afraid to cross the picket lines because of threats and acts of violence by the laborers.

At a hearing in Superior Court, Brockton, Bechtel asked for a limit of three on the number of laborers allowed to picket outside Pilgrim.

Plant Superintendent Robert Shylofsky testified that union members shouted obscenities and threatened him one day when he tried to cross their picket line.

Shylofsky said he was prevented from driving into the parking lot at Pilgrim by picketers moving their cars back and forth in front of the entrance. "I was blocked by a truck

and profanities were hurled at me," he said. "I was told I was dead meat and that I wasn't safe in Duxbury. They said they would drag the body for me sooner or later."

Shylofsky said he saw 40 to 50 of the same men picketing Monday near the plant's main gate on Rocky Hill Road.

The fired workers are members of Local 721 of Brockton. They assisted pipefitters, plumbers, electricians and machinists at the plant.

The laborers have been picketing since May 1, when they were fired

striking. The strike began when Bechtel fired 80 union members for smoking a cigar in a restricted area. The union had a no-strike clause in its contract.

Many of the fired workers have been picketing every day. At yesterday's hearing, John Havil, business agent for the electricians' union, testified that some of his workers are afraid to cross the laborers' picket line because they fear their car tires will be slashed.

Robert Rubincio, business agent for the carpenters union, said eight of his workers have refused to report for work because they fear reprisals.

"Many of them said they feared the workers would threaten their lives," Rubincio said.

Testimony indicated that in May nearly 200 employees were unable to pass the picket line to report for work. Since July, Bechtel lawyers said, 46 workers have not shown up because they are afraid to cross the picket line.

The three judges hearing the cases, Augustus F. Wagner Jr., Guy Volterra and William H. Carey, have taken Bechtel's request to limit picketing under advisement.

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