

THE Transport Worker

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TWO MORE CENTENARIES TO CELEBRATE IN 2008

The beginning of unionism in NZ at Blackball. Page 3

The main trunk line at Ohakune and the Raurimu Spiral. Page 16



CARTOON REALITY

Cartoon accurately depicts NZ Rail's descent through a spiral of change.

Page 4

WORKERS' MEMORIAL DAY



New Plymouth



Mt Maunganui



"I want to acknowledge that the RMTU recognises the importance of H&S and the importance of mourning the dead and fighting for the living."

Carol Beaumont, CTU secretary



Port Napier



Otago



Palmerston North



Hutt Shops



THE JOURNAL OF THE RAIL AND MARITIME TRANSPORT UNION

WORKERS' MEMORIAL DAY



[From a speech by Carol Beaumont, CTU secretary (pictured above with branch chair Greg Rowan), to the RMTU Hutt Workshops].

"What more fundamental workers' right is there than the right to go to work and return home to your family safely.

You know directly the cost of workplace deaths and injuries – too many of your fellow workers and RMTU members have been killed or injured at work.

I am aware that the RMTU has played a very active role in promoting safe and healthy working practices and in supporting workers injured at work and the families of those who have died at work. You have also played a wider role in the union movement in ensuring that Workers' Memorial Day is commemorated around NZ. Your Union's visibility and activism in this area has led to the recent appointment of Wayne Butson to the ACC Board. Congratulations Wayne I know the union movement can count on your efforts in promoting workers' rights in that role.

Since the election of a Labour-led Government in 1999 much has been done to improve H&S and ACC rights. Despite this there are still unacceptable levels of workplace accidents and deaths. A 2004 report indicates that between 700 and 1000 people die annually as a result of occupational diseases and a further 100 from occupational injury. Despite popular myths, work accidents and disease do not generally occur because of apathy, carelessness or stupidity on the part of workers, but through unsafe and unhealthy systems, processes and tools of work. The deunioni-



sation of workplaces that occurred through the 1990s allowed these unhealthy systems and processes to flourish.

The CTU like the RMTU believes that organising around H&S is a fundamental union activity. The union movements have now elected and trained through CTU courses 16,000 H&S reps throughout NZ and we have a nationwide ACC Advocacy service for union members. We know that the safest workplaces are well unionised with strong representatives and good levels and worker activism and education. This underpins the organising approach that the CTU promotes.

I would like to note the recent announcement by the Minister of Labour of the formation of a national Workplace Health and Safety Council to promote better health and safety outcomes in NZ. This Council is a tripartite body with Government representatives including the Minister of Labour, CTU representatives - Ross Wilson, Andrew Casidy from FINSEC and I – and representatives of Business NZ. The formation of the Council



Laying the wreath are new United Group Rail CEO Don Parker assisted by branch activist Kasia Kurene.

will mean that NZ can finally ratify an important ILO Convention - Convention 155.

To each and every one of you here today I want to acknowledge your commitment to your union and to the union movement. I know that you understand that the only way to create a safe and healthy workplace and to promote workers' rights generally is to be well organised in a union. I urge you to share your understanding of and commitment to the value of unions with your family and friends.



WORKERS' MEMORIAL DAY

Napier Port

Rep Taana's daughter Jess unveils his plaque at the port entrance while Rep's colleague Graham Keelan spoke about the loss of a good workmate and friend. Industrial Chaplain Neville Stevenson in the background.



Canterbury

Christine Clarke's mother and children plant a tree in her honour.



Mt Maunganui

Tauranga Mayor Stuart Crosby unveils the memorial plaque.



Palmerston North

News

Blackball for 100th anniversary of unionism

THE 1908 Blackball "crib-time" strike will celebrate its centenary next Easter, 2008 (March 21-24), with a series of events which will attract a national gathering. Crib-time was time taken for a break when required to work overtime. The "crib-time" strike for a full half-hour break led to the formation of the first national unions in New Zealand and the first trade union federation and was one of the triggers for the formation of a national labour movement and the complex birth of the NZ Labour Party. The Federation of Miners (aka 'Red Feds'), which grew out of the successful 1908 strike at Blackball was eventually destroyed by the 1913 general strike.

It is intended to commemorate the event in Blackball and more widely on the Coast.

The draft programme includes:

- A dinner at the Blackball Working Men's Club aimed at old timers together with launching of book;
- A market and parade through Blackball followed by a family



afternoon;

■ A community theatre production, Rain, Love and Coal smoke at the Regent Theatre in Greymouth;

■ Saturday buffet preceding the play, a concert with union choirs, followed by an old time dance at Blackball; and

■ A seminar on the theme of Labourism – then and now.

Early bookings are advised as it will still be the tourist season. We will arrange marae-type accommodation and some billets.

A further notice, with registration form and further information, will be circulated in August.

■ Enquiries: Blackball Museum of Working Class History Trust, Box 2, 47 Clifford Street, Blackball 7804, Ph: (03) 732 4010; Fax: (03) 732 4015; e-mail: wkultur@ihug.co.nz

Or phone Paul Maunder (details above), Jane Wells (03) 732 4705 or Matt Winter 027 590 0084.

AS I contemplate writing this issue's comment I found myself in the unusual situation of considering what NOT to write about – rather than what to write. There is a lot happening in NZ which impacts on the Union, its membership and therefore on me – and regrettably there is just too much to include here. The magazine also has space problems, some articles have been reduced or omitted to contain it within 24 pages.

Workers Memorial Day continues to grow in status and recognition in the Union and the wider community. The first ever service held in Mount Maunganui was a joint effort from us and MUNZ and signifies the reality of the close working relationship which exists between our two unions – on the job and on issues of importance. I found the depth of feeling exposed by several speakers very moving. They don't expect mates, fathers and husbands to leave for a normal day's work only to die in a workplace accident/incident. One young man spoke about when his father died over 15 years ago and how he "lost it" for a while before he found Jesus Christ. It was very moving. It is times like this that fuel my personal drive and determination to ensure that RMTU members return home unharmed. My thanks to all of the delegates and activists who continue to support commemoration services in their areas.

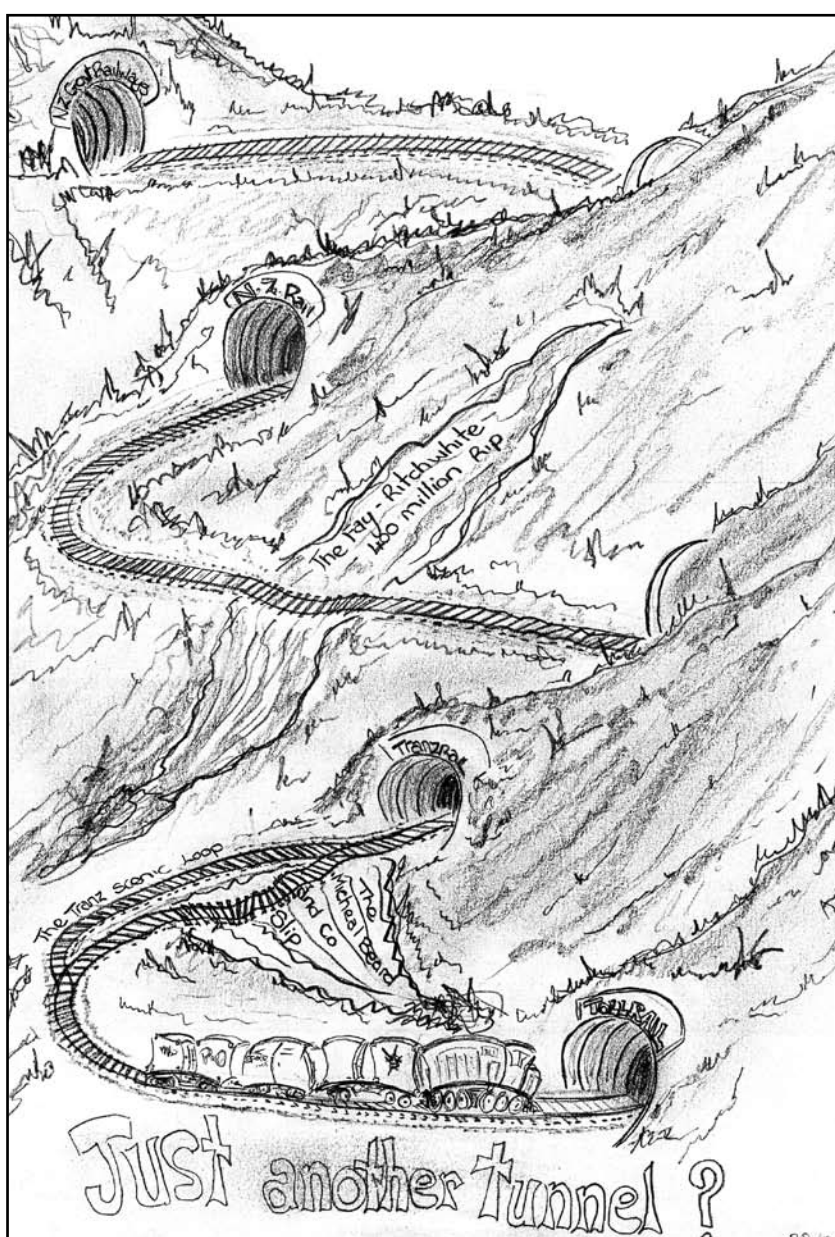
Budget for rail

Dr Cullen delivered a budget that continues to provide strong support for rail and public transport with \$500 million in capital funding over four years towards the electrification of Auckland's rail network, upgrading and maintenance of Wellington's network and improvements to the national network. Commuters in Auckland and Wellington will welcome this. If NZ is ever to achieve carbon

neutrality then electrification of Auckland's suburban rail network is essential. Although a lot of political commentators have decried the fact that a number of rail museums and rail societies have been approached by the Wellington Regional Council to lease English electric units and locomotives back to Tranz Metro they don't seem to understand that these "museum" vehicles are exactly the same age as the rolling stock currently doing the job



Wayne Butson, general secretary



Nelson has its port poet but in rail we have our cartoon DaVinci. Today's shows the NZ rail industry descending the spiral with Toll NZ just another tunnel on that descent. This anonymous artist has been published before and will again to reinforce issues of note.

day in and day out. In reality the leased-back vehicles will be in better condition than the current operating stock. The influence of the Green's in keeping Labour "ontrack" with public transport and rail transport should not be forgotten in this debate.

Disgraceful support

As I write this, a state luncheon is being held in Parliament for Philippines President Gloria Arroyo. I was invited to attend but declined as did all other trade union leaders as a protest at the atrocious human rights' abuses occurring there under her administration. Instead, I attended a protest rally at the front of Parliament with members of the RMTU and other unions and activists. Arroyo is responsible for the extrajudicial killings of 858 Filipinos including unionists, church leaders, student leaders and opposition politicians. She has jailed members of her own Parliament for the crime of opposing her. The protest rally called for the freeing

LETTERS

Dear Editor

Bill Te Kanawa was instrumental in assisting to establish the Te Kupenga Mahi group of which he was extremely proud but also with his unique skills donated carvings, as on the Arataki, and gifting those to the company.

Bill assisted our depot in Te Rapa to establish a memorial to a fellow workmate and loco engineer, Graeme Orange, killed in tragic circumstances between Raurimu and Oio after his train derailed in adverse weather which caused a washout. He carved a river stone which is now placed at the spot in Graeme's memory.

One project that used Bill's unique skills was the teaching of unskilled railway workmates to carve a poupou that stands proudly at the entrance to the Waitomo Caves. Another work stands in the streets of Te Kuiti where he etched a glass panel as a millennium memorial. Over the years Bill has helped many people from the North Cape to the Bluff with his gentlemanly ways, including me and my family. A great workmate and even though not now employed by Toll Rail he is still used after a tragedy to bless the worksite.

Recently Josie, his lifelong wife and best mate, passed away. A lovely lady and great support to Bill and his workmates over the years.

He was our Kaumatua and hugely respected by all who knew him. A real gentleman and a pleasure to work with and any person who shared his company learnt from that experience as Bill was a natural teacher and always willing to help one learn about his unique knowledge of Maori culture and marae protocol.

There are many other worthwhile projects he has been associated with and all done to perfection. A true craftsman in all ways.

On behalf of all who have had the pleasure to know Bill I wish him all the best of luck that life can bring in his retirement and thank him for his contribution over a lifetime to the rail network as a locomotive engineer, kaumatua, and most of all great friend and workmate.

Peter Kelk, Te Rapa Branch.



Dear Sir,

As I am retiring on 13 April 2007 after 49 years of service. I would like to resign from the Union and say thank you.

Yours sincerely
Gavin Stott

Dear Wayne,
I am resigning from the Company and I give

notice of my resignation from the RMTU. I thank the Union for all they have done for me over the years.

Sincerely

Leo Hemara

Tranz Metro Wellington

Dear Wayne

As I am taking early retirement from 1 April 2007, I am tendering my resignation from the RMTU.

I would like to thank the present and past members of the union(s) and head office that I have been involved with over the years for their support and friendship and wish the membership of the RMTU all the best for the future.

Yours in fraternity
Ray Woolhouse

Dear Editor,

I was employed by ONTRACK as a signalling technician at Napier. Staff No 746. In October 2006 I took early retirement and on May 18 was paid my final of retiring leave. For this reason please accept this as my resignation from the RMTU and I thank you for the services provided over my 45 year Career with the rail industry.

Gary Sarginson

of Bro Crispin "Ka Bel" Beltran, an ailing 74 year-old congressman and unionist, arrested in February 2006. Too sick to be sent to jail, Ka Bel has been held in hospital detention for 16 months awaiting trial on trumped up charges. Avid readers of the *Transport Worker* will recall that our March 2006 issue reported on a visit to Manila by myself and the national president Jim Kelly. Todd Valster visited Manila in April of this year to attend an International Centre Labour Solidarity (ICLS - RMTU is an affiliate) meeting. He returned humbled like the rest of us. Whilst we may think we have a hard day as unionists here, we never fear for our lives or the lives of our loved ones – a daily reality for union activists in far too many countries. At a recent CTU National Affiliates Council meeting we had representatives from Burma (who live in exile), Philippines and Tonga. Trade union and civil rights oppression occurs in each country. A question remains: Why is Helen Clark wel-

coming a political leader who jails her political parliamentary opponents and is complicit in hundreds of killings?

It is in this context that I read with grave concerns the reports of state-owned entity Solid Energy engaging spies to monitor the activities of peaceful protesters. Our Union and the EPMU sometimes find ourselves in conflict with Solid Energy and so it would not be too outrageous to draw a conclusion that unions may be subjected to infiltration from spies also sponsored by Solid Energy. It is outrageous for a Government-owned entity to say this type of approach is acceptable. We must all watch for any undermining of democracy and this form of state-sanctioned espionage is unacceptable. We must all send a message to Government and to Solid Energy. In the words of Wayne LaPierre: "Freedom is never an achieved state; like electricity, we've got to keep generating it or the lights go out." Write your letter now!

Life membership



Auckland control officer Ted Foran was awarded life membership of the Harbour Workers Union on 25 July 1991. As there was no badge in the 'good ol days' Scott Wilson caught up with Ted to present him with one.

Repanga William Taana (Rep)

RECENTLY two memorials for former member 'Rep' Taana were unveiled. Rep was a Port Napier member who died tragically at work on the March 29, 2006.

The first was unveiled by Henry Fagaia (right below) from National Office on March 31 at the Western Hills Lawn Cemetery in Napier. It was well attended by Port Napier members and Rep's whanau. His children, Raewyn, Ihaka, Watene and Jessica, gave beautiful song and oral tributes to their late father.

The service was very humbling in terms of the large attendance of friends and family, which showed how many lives Rep had touched in life – and in death.

A thank you must go to Phil Taana, Rep's brother, who worked alongside his brother at the Port, and his family who showed great hospitality to those who attended. Also thanks to Dave Marden, who welcomed Henry and introduced him to Port Napier members.

The second memorial was unveiled on Workers' Memorial Day, Saturday April 28, at the Port's memorial wall. This is the second year in succession that we have unveiled a memorial at this wall.

At the unveiling were Rep's whanau while his daughter, Jess (left) removed the plaque cover and read the inscribed words. Due to the rain, most of the service was delivered inside #1 shed by our industrial chaplain Neville Stevenson. Helen



Kelly vice president of the CTU, Todd Valster RMTU organiser on behalf of Wellington head office and Russell Fairbrother Labour MP and RMTU member also spoke. All paid tribute to Rep's whanau and endorsed the importance of a safe work place and how important it is that we look out for each other.

Our thoughts and prayers continue to be with Rep's whanau as they continue to heal.

Rep was one of our own and was part of our RMTU whanau, so it is never easy to deal with such a loss.

Cherish the time you spend with your workmates and the friendships you foster – and never take for granted if that chair you sit next to today in your smoko rooms might be empty tomorrow!

- Dave Marden



Turning back the clock. The Harbour Workers Union's former national secretary, Ross Wilson, Wellington Port secretary, Kevin Jackson, administrative officer Leonie Steillar and national president, John Murfitt enjoy an afternoon at the dockside to celebrate Kevin's three score and five. Plenty of reminiscing on the good times and struggles of Harbour Workers Union.



Make way for the RMTU camper

The RMTU camper purchased by ONTRACK. The "Rail Managers Transportation Unit" is a welcome addition to the rail industry just like its namesake!

Joint maritime forum

AN all-or-nothing final shot at getting union amalgamation back on track was the outcome of a joint maritime forum of delegates of port branches from RMTU and MUNZ.

The forum was held on May 8 and 9, with the entire first day devoted to amalgamation issues.

Paul Goulter (ACTU) chaired the first day and declared himself an unashamed advocate of amalgamation. The real issue to be faced was whether the two unions were stronger together, or apart, he said. If they chose not to join, they needed to be clear about why and to be able to go back to their members and explain. He conceded process had not been easy and there were still significant issues.

Those issues were then put before delegates with the general secretaries, Wayne Butson and Trevor Hanson explaining the various positions on each. The meeting then broke into working groups under the direction of



(l to r) MUNZ national president Phil Adams, general secretary Trevor Hanson, RMTU southern ports rep Ruth Blakeley and national president Jim Kelly. (below) Team RMTU at the forum.



Bronwyn Maxwell (CTU) to try to thrash out a way forward.

Initially the workshops looked at how amalgamation would benefit members and

identified the barriers. They then explored ways to overcome the barriers.

Among the issues they confronted:

- Voting rights under a two sector structure;
- Fee structure and the handling of assets;
- The role of the organisers;
- The role of the national executive.

After the report-back an interesting, and at times passionate, debate followed, with the weight of opinion in favour of the potential benefits.

The forum resolved to give the process one last shot on May 30 and if it could not be concluded, they would proceed no further.

After MUNZ delegates had left the RMTU delegates voted to endorse the decision for the steering committee to continue to progress the amalgamation.

Timaru Collective signing

ON April 26 the Collective for Specialised Container Services Timaru and the RMTU was signed.

(Pictured top right) Representatives from Specialised Container Services (L-R) Tony Abraham (bargaining agent), Grant Tregurtha, (co-owner) and Mary Daniels (human resources) and RMTU organiser, Henry Fagaiava met and signed off the Collective which will be in effect until 2009.

The company's first collective deal, which marked a significant change, is a true compliment to our members there who believed in their right to have a collective. Good on you guys!



(l to r) Tony Abrahams SCS advocate, SCS boss Grant Tregurtha, SCS HR Mary Daniels and "the man" RMTU organiser Henry Fagaiava at the CA signing



Some of the workers who will be covered by the CA.

Wairarapa commute steps up a grade

Wellington's newest train
— the SW Wairarapa express

Positives

Passenger rail in Wellington got its first of many boosts recently with the long-awaited SW cars, the first 4 of 18 have now entered commercial service with the remaining 14 planned to arrive during 2007. The new carriages are fully refurbished BR cars with all the latest mods, basically only using the original BR cars as jigs.

The SW project represents a significant \$25m investment by the Wellington Regional Council, which will own the carriages once they are fully operational.

Toll's Professional Services Group (PSG) project managed the SWs with extensive risk assessments and consultation with our local and national reps.

Toll Tranz Metro operate the services and Toll Rail provides a "hook and pull" service by providing the locomotives and drivers.

The SWs are a quality product. Well done to PSG and Hillside by clearly proving that NZ can produce high quality rolling stock, and are excelling with small orders like the SW cars.

Training programmes have been developed for on-board staff by the Metro trainers and practical training and sign-off for the Toll



The SWs and test car leaving Masterton and being put through their paces on test and training runs in the weeks leading up to the launch.

Rail drivers on the new braking features.

The only issues staff have with the SWs is the very small staff compartment (aka "the confessional").

Negatives

The introduction of these new carriages would have been seamless, however the ball was clearly dropped.

Metro management promised two years ago, when the SW project started, that everything would be in order when they were ready to be introduced. Those promises were clearly broken especially with regards several platforms and the storage compound for the SWs in Masterton. The manager in charge left Metro two weeks before the launch!

The lack of operational project management makes evident the lack of operational nous in passenger management, which became reliant on staff members for making the safety decisions.

Members refused to use one platform as it was unsafe for SW operation and because it was in such a poor state. It was closed for all trains until brought up to scratch. Another platform could not be extended in time and remains closed.

The initial costings for the storage compound in Masterton did not include the agreed safe underfoot conditions — plenty of protection from taggers for the SWs but no safety considerations for the staff. Even up until two weeks prior to their launch, the ONTRACK engineer in charge promised the compound would be finished and up to standard. Another broken promise.

The approval from LTNZ to run the SWs was also left to the last days and hours prior to the launch. The RMTU complained that there was insufficient time to consider these last minute safety issues before granting the approval to operate the SWs.

Continued on the next page



(left) Delegates, engineers and management prior to viewing the SWs in the Wellington passenger yard.

(l to r) - Delegates Mani Rautamati, Mike Nicholson and Howard Phillips. Toll Rail commercial manager Leena Singh, delegate Hayden Smith and SW project engineer Tony Pepperrell.

(right) Tony showing off the high powered and fully contained SW generator to Mani and Howard.





Passenger maintenance (l to r) Arthur Tiraa and Derek Case - all smiles at the SW's launch, looking forward to looking after the new cars.

The RMTU cannot understand why these important processes were not completed earlier.

The RMTU has requested a full debrief so that any future issues can be addressed well before the commercial operation of the rest of the SWs.



Mike and Howard test the new SW seats.

The Master-ton \$200k+ SW compound two days before the launch - fit for purpose, not!



Hayden Smith in the "confessional".

ANZAC Day

(Extracts from a speech by ONTRACK chief executive, David George, at Petone)

I was born and grew up in the United Kingdom. But while Britain has its own remembrance ceremonies, it wasn't until I lived in Australia and New Zealand that I felt the intensity of emotion associated with the annual day of remembrance we know as ANZAC Day.

In the southern hemisphere it is dominated by the memory of what happened at Gallipoli. The experience changed those who survived and the way New Zealanders and Australians thought about themselves and their relationship with Britain.

It has been said that the troops left home as colonial soldiers in the service of the empire, but returned as New Zealanders and Australians. An enduring bond between the Australian and New Zealand Army Corps was forged out of this mutual respect.

I understand that this remembrance service at Petone was one of the first ANZAC services held in New Zealand back in 1916.

Gerald Davidson and Sherryl McNab's excellent publication on World War One memorials in Petone – 'Til the day breaks' – tells the story very well.

There's a roll of honour in the foyer of the offices at Wellington Railway Station that records the names of the 444 railwaymen who died in action or from their wounds during World War One – 37 died at Gallipoli.

More than 7,500 railwaymen served in World War One, almost half the entire railway workforce.

A total of 18,500 New Zealand men were killed and 50,000 wounded over the course of the war. In fact New Zealand lost more men per head of population than any other country involved in the Great War.



(l to r) Lower Hutt Mayor David Ogden, GS Wayne Butson and ONTRACK CEO David George.

ANZAC Day is an opportunity to recognise the sacrifices made by our predecessors so that we could enjoy the freedom we have today. It's a precious gift that we must be thankful for together with the fact that my generation has not been required to risk our lives by taking up arms.

I note that the general manager of Railways in 1916, E H Hiley, was present at this service in 1916 and was deeply involved in its organisation. He adjusted the timing of the event to suit the then Minister of Railways and he arranged a train for the 50-strong Twelfth Reinforcement Band from Trentham.

I am pleased that ONTRACK is able to be represented today, even if we can't provide either a Minister of Railways or a military band.

ANZAC Day is a day for reflection and remembrance. It is also a day for seeking peace and justice and working for a world that doesn't resort to war to settle differences. In this way we can best honour and pay tribute to the fallen and to all those who served.





Another good year for workers

Sue Moroney Labour, List MP

SO what difference will Budget 2007 make to the workers and businesses in the rail and maritime your industries?

KiwiSaver - the big one

Firstly, and most importantly, saving is at the centre of Budget 2007. If you save through KiwiSaver, the government will match your contributions dollar for dollar, up to \$20 per week from 1 July 2007. That's over \$1,000 a year into your savings account.

Plus, your employer will have to match your contributions (up to 4% of your salary).

The Labour-led government will kick-start your KiwiSaver account with \$1000 and subsidise the account management fees to the tune of \$40 a year. First home buyers can withdraw their own and their employer's contributions as a deposit after three years, and some will be entitled to more government help of up to \$5000 each after five years saving.

Transport package

In terms of rail transport, \$600 million will be provided over six years to urban rail development projects in Auckland and Wellington including electrification of Auckland's urban passenger network, helped by a regional fuel tax.

For Wellington commuters, there is new funding to replace worn out infrastructure, extend double tracking to Waikanae and enlarge tunnels on the Johnsonville line.

The Budget also provides \$50 million for general track improvements to the national rail network between 2008 to 2010. (Budget 2004 provided \$100 million for national track improvements).

Another \$25 million is committed to ensure rail remains a major transport option both complementing and competing with roading.

The Labour-led government is investing heavily in building a world-class transport network. We bought the rail tracks back into public ownership, increased investment in public transport ten fold and we are investing over \$2 billion every year on the biggest road building programme in this country's history.

Family support

Labour's worker- and family-friendly policies of the last eight years continue to make a tremendous differences to all New Zealand workers.

Unemployment is at an all-time low – in many parts of the country, youth unemployment is zero – and more Maori are participating in education and the workforce than ever before.

Health spending very nearly doubled since 1999 delivering 5,000 more doctors and nurses, new hospitals and halving the cost of seeing the family doctor. Cheaper GP visits will be available to everyone from July, when 25-44 year olds are embraced by the Primary Health Care Strategy.

Specific initiatives include offering another proven vaccine to fight pneumococcal meningitis, supporting older Kiwis in their homes or in residential care, investing in primary mental health services, working to reduce suicides, helping children adopt healthy approaches to food and exercise and helping smokers stop smoking.

We are also giving a \$500 million boost to the education budget.

So all in all 2007 is looking like another great year for workers.

Key points

- \$3 billion to enhance the KiwiSaver scheme, including a tax credit of up to \$20 a week for employees contributing to the scheme. Compulsory employer contributions starting on 1 April 2008 beginning with 1% of an employee's gross salary with the rate of compulsory employer contributions increasing to 4% by 2011/12. Employers will be reimbursed for this, also with a tax credit of \$20 per week per employee;
- company tax rate to be reduced from 33% to 30%, costing government \$2.1 billion over four years in lost revenue;
- \$630 million over four years on a tax credit for research and development, \$87.8 million over four years to help firms take new products to new markets and \$53 million over four years for industry training;
- \$1890 rebate threshold on charitable donations made by individuals and 5% deduction limit on donations made by companies and Maori authorities to be scrapped estimated to cost government \$65 million over four years in lost revenue;
- \$500 million in capital funding over four years towards the electrification of Auckland's rail network, upgrade and maintenance of Wellington's network and improvements to the national network. \$145 million set aside for unexpected costs associated with the state highway construction programme;
- provision for a regional fuel tax for specific transport projects;
- an extra \$3 billion over four years for health including \$1.9 billion to sustain inflation-adjusted health costs per person;
- a tertiary reform package that sees \$259.1 million of operating funding over four years redirected to improve the sector;
- \$238.3 million of capita funding to include for the building of 14 new schools, 180 new classrooms, 10 new school gymnasiums, and for modernising existing buildings;
- \$133.4 million for 702 extra Year-1 teachers to bring the teacher/pupil ratio down to 1:18 by term 2, 2008;
- an increase in the overseas aid budget to \$246 million by 2010/11 – a rise to 0.35% of gross national income;
- \$72.4 million towards energy efficiency initiatives including help fitting insulation and energy efficient heating into homes;
- \$194.6 million in operational funding and \$10.2 million capital costs for the second wave of the 1000 extra police previously announced;
- real gross domestic product growth is expected to slow to 1.6% in the March 2009 year, before increasing to around 3% in the following year; and
- an operating surplus at the end of the current financial year of \$6.3 billion, up from the \$5.8 billion forecast.

Metro tangle



A close call and a graphic illustration of the dangers with so many contractors working on the DART project in Auckland. It is incidents like these that have necessitated ONTRACK employing an additional H&S field officer for Auckland.



International Centre for Labour Solidarity (ICLS) 5th Steering Committee Meeting - Manila, Philippines.

RMTU organiser Todd Valster attended the meeting, 17th April, on behalf of the NZ and Australian affiliates - the RMTU and RTBU. The meeting discussed the business of the ICLS, looking at better ways to promote and communicate through the ICLS website - www.icls.or.kr/ – and the surveying of each affiliated union.

The meeting was held in Manila because the Philippines union BMP (Bukluran ng Manggagawang Pilipino - Solidarity of Filipino Workers) was the latest union to join the ICLS. The Philippines are a friendly trading national with NZ but within the Philippines freedom of speech, the right to organise and the right to make a stand are not available and, in reality, life threatening. In the last six years over 850 unionists, union members, journalists, church leaders and human rights activists have been murdered through extra-judicial killings. See the online petition for more details at: www.pinoyhr.net/

Todd reports that “the Philippines could be a beautiful country but in my view the only beauty it has are the very brave people that still stand tall for fairness and human rights in spite of the very real risk to their lives”.

A detailed report from Todd, and country reports from the all of the unions that attended this meeting, are available on request from the RMTU Wellington office.

A 'unionised' couple



Ex RMTU H&S organiser Kirsty Macnab is seen here in a loving embrace with Chch loco engineer Jed O'Donoghue during their civil union service. Good luck Jed and Kirsty!

Wellington Passenger Yard

Some months ago members from the yard met and raised important issues to their branch reps. These issues were discussed, distilled and despatched to management. Result - a deafening silence! These members work hard to keep Metro ticking along but are losing patience with management's lack of response, lack of willingness to address the issues or its inability to address the issues or ALL OF THE ABOVE!



Seated in Hutt Shops' style

One of the two seats erected at the Hutt Shops workers' memorial site constructed by the apprentices. Thanks to UGL for their support.

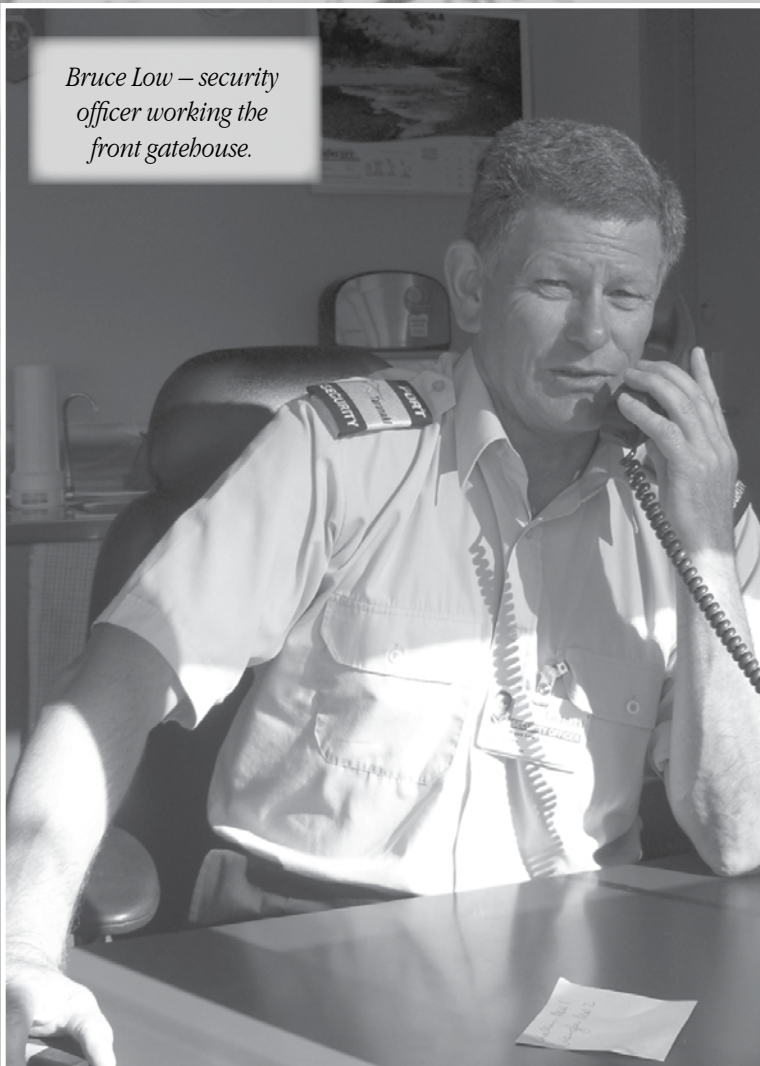
TARANAKI PORT ROUNDUP

ON this warm Saturday morning in early May at Port Taranaki, our members can be found performing a wide range of duties keeping the port ticking along nicely. Crane and hoist driving, engineering, marine, mooring, security and watch house are all key roles at the port.

The port has been particularly busy servicing the many tender boats, which in turn service the oil rigs off west coast. This can challenge the hours of work arrangements for the mooring crews with their number and frequency. With the opportunity of new 'energy' work at the port, the future looks bright.



Daniel Manu – branch president aboard the Rupe tug.



Bruce Low – security officer working the front gatehouse.



Kerin Nobile – crane driver, proudly standing on the 1964 model mobile crane he uses to load and unload the tender boats.



Rob Murray – cargo handler, at the reach stacker, working shipside.



Dennis Hibbert – watchman at the controls.



Ian 'Dicky' Jury – engineer working on the Liebherr mobile crane. (Why is it overheating?).



Maersk Pembroke finishing being loaded, bound for Nelson.



Bryce Falconer – fitter-welder, new to the port, grinding away at another damaged gangway.



Steve Muggeridge – mechanic, off to test the crane's water pump.



Head-high safety lights

Update -Toll Operations Council

THE TOC is a consultative body made up of RMTU and Toll management reps. It discusses and reviews toll operations, health and safety issues and trends, industrial issues and proposals on a national basis. The coverage of the TOC includes all operational areas within Toll NZ (Toll Rail, Toll Tranzlink including CT and Toll Passenger) aside from the Interisland Line, which has its own consultative forum. Its terms of reference have been signed off by Joe Garbellini for TollNZ and Wayne Butson for the RMTU.

At the last meeting in March the RMTU gave a presentation to the TOC on the terms of reference and how the TOC should operate, where it fits with other forums/committees (such as the H&S Executive and local H&S action teams) and what information should be provided to the TOC each meeting. One feature in its terms of reference is the requirement to set up local consultative committees throughout NZ. We will be looking to set these up and operating effectively this year.



Craig Nelson, Toll Rail national manager, tries out a proposed 'headlight' without the impediment of hair.

The TOC has not been without criticism from members as to what the forum does. Both the RMTU and Toll want to raise the understanding of the importance of the TOC and get better two-way communication between members and management.

A new minute secretary was elected last meeting and minutes from that meeting have been available since mid May. We are going to work on improving the availability of the minutes. Any members who do not see minutes need to contact their manager, delegate or Todd Valster at the RMTU Wellington office.

In the hope of reducing yard collisions, Toll Rail members will soon be asked for input and feedback in regards to whether the current 'range of vision' instructions and/or procedures need to be improved. Headband torches (see pic) are being trialled to gauge whether they would be good enough tools for operating staff. The versions being trialled would not be bright enough for train inspections.

The next TOC meeting is in Wellington (Woburn Training Centre) on June 8 & 9 – all are welcome to attend as observers.

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May Day

THE beginnings of May Day as an international labour day came from North America more than 100 years ago.

It was born out of the struggle for an eight-hour day in America and Canada in 1886. Three years later, the International Working Men's Association declared May 1st an international working class holiday, and adopted the red flag as the symbol of workers' struggle for more decent work.

By 1890 the day had become an international event, with demonstrations and rallies in many European centres. Its focus on the eight-hour day did not achieve widespread success until the 1920s, when the International Labour Organisation declared the eight hour day (for a six day week) a standard.

Today 66 countries have a statutory holiday on May 1st, while New Zealand and other countries celebrate Labour Day at other times. May Day itself remains a



RMTU people (l to r) Ben Thompson, Paul Aitken, Leonie Steiller, John Murfitt, Howard Phillips, Rob Laurs, Julia Harrison, Hazel Armstrong and Kasia Kurene at one of the RMTU tables.

significant day for New Zealand unionists, with various low-key celebrations around the country, including the traditional Blackball gathering.

In the past it had a much higher profile. For example in Christchurch in 1932, precipitated by the bitter Tramway's strike, 10,000 workers marched to Cranmer Square to brass band music, where they were addressed by the city's mayor and Labour MPs.

The significance of May Day remains. While we mark the successes of previous generations of trade unionists, this generation once again has to fight for an eight-hour day in an economy and country where the rights of workers face daily attack and erosion by employers – and sometimes even the courts. While protections come under attack, we still need to protect and improve our working conditions.

H&S Training



Stage 2 H&S Rep training with Toll NZ finally got underway in May with the inaugural two-day training workshop being held in Petone. GS Wayne Butson addressed the reps present and stated very clearly what the RMTU's expectations of H&S reps are. Toll's Steve Hunter has been the liaison person with the CTU standards writers and has worked very hard to assist in the case study preparation. CTU trainer Jen Breed did the first school and said she enjoyed working with the group. (L to R) Bob Ngataierua, Gary Innes and Mike Nicholson.



(l to r) Mike Gillum and Graeme Twist.

Learning Reps at our Ports



A recent branch meeting provided a perfect opportunity for Don Farr (CTU) to give our members a presentation on Learning Reps. During the presentation he explained the logic and history behind Learning Reps – a very successful programme from the UK which encourages maximum worker/member participation in all employment training matters. Members also broke into groups for exercises on their training needs at their worksites. Several members from Port Taranaki were keen to be further involved and Learning Reps training is planned for late May/early June. Thanks Don.

2008 – a year to celebrate in Ohakune

2008 is a significant year in terms of anniversaries for the Central North Island. With the coming of the North Island Main Trunk (NIMT) railhead, towns sprung up inside the forests, as workers filled the area in anticipation of completing a great railway line. Conditions were very tough and didn't get much better until 1911, long after completion of the NIMT.

The workers were unemployed men placed on low paid cooperative work schemes. They lived in cramped tents with no amenities and often in very isolated areas. In these small tents, they were expected to store their belongings and food, and somehow sleep. If a sympathetic engineer tried to increase their comfort by supplying extra equipment, he was reprimanded. Food was hard to obtain and expensive and in bad weather conditions became atrocious.

The co-operative contract scheme depended on the amount of work done, and men often went days without pay when conditions were too bad to work in.

For their work they had horse and scoop teams, pick, shovel, and wheelbarrow. In the big cuttings, men slung their heavy picks into the papa and rock, and with long handled shovels filled the wheelbarrows which were pushed to the edge of a following embankment. It was all constructed by hand.

The Hapuawhenua camp was described as one where few women could have lived. A number of workers there froze to death in their tents during a severe snow storm. It was



Construction workers erecting tents at Raurimu.

often necessary to get out at night and scrape the snow from the tent to prevent a collapse. Once, an entire family living in a tent were killed in the Ohakune yard, after a large tree fell during a storm.

For bedding, a framework was constructed and sacking stretched across as tightly as possible to form a mattress. Sometimes bush vines were used instead. Fireplaces were made from corrugated iron and fatalities from tents catching fire were often reported.

Flour was the staple diet and was used to make bread and scones baked in camp ovens. Yeast was made by boiling jacketed potato with hops. Construction workers often grew their own vegetable with cabbage being the main green for boil ups.

In the Central North Island, they also lived off the bush and native birds like the Kereru trapped using Maori trapping methods. An injured Kaka was often used to attract and snare other birds. Occasionally they killed a working bullock and shared it amongst neighbouring camps. The meat was dropped into brine until it was corned, but this was a luxury. Usually the meat was strung high in trees to keep it fresh and at times was smoked in chimneys. When available, it was eaten for breakfast, lunch and tea, until it was all gone. There was no waste.

There was no electricity in the camps. Light was provided by campfires, improvised and smelly mutton fat lamps or kerosene

lamps – which were considered the height of luxury.

In celebrating the anniversary of any railway line, the efforts and plights of the workers should never be forgotten.

The 2008 celebrations of the NIMT should be about the people who risked their lives to make it what it now is and those who gave their lives through accident or illness, to either build or operate the NIMT.



Makatote under construction 1908.

Join the celebration

A committee has been formed to celebrate 100 years of the NIMT. Ruapehu District Council is supportive and local Maori, RMTU, TOLL and ONTRACK have been invited to join.

As the railheads were joined, and the last spike driven in, close by, Ohakune is where the celebrations will take place.

It is still early days for the new NIMT Centenary Committee, but we will bring RMTU members news as we can.

To keep in touch contact secretary Christine Johnson.

Kamping out

A small delegation representing the RMTU recently attended the 'Workers Out' bi-annual conference (Kamp), run by the CTU at Wainuiomata's Brookfield Scout Camp. Delegates from Toll Passenger Wellington and Veolia Auckland attended the two day camp.



'Workers Out' participants at a recent camp.

The purpose of the Kamp was to discuss Lesbian/Gay/bisexual/transgender/transsexual/transitional and intersexual (LGBTI) persons in the workplace. Issues discussed included trade union and human rights, with themes touched on including universal enjoyment of human rights, non-discrimination and recognition before the law and rights of expression, opinion and association.

An interesting report back was presented by attendees of the recent LGBTI International conference held in Montreal, Canada.

There were many interesting, and sometimes challenging, guest speakers, including Labour MPs Maryan Street and

Tim Barnett.

Outcomes of Kamp include; promoting gender safety, similar to the cultural safety concept; supporting recommendations of the Human Rights Commission (HRC) regarding the transgender inquiry; working with the HRC to ensure transgender rights are achieved at work; endorsing the Montreal declaration; and organising a Workers Out delegation for the next LGBTI international conference in Copenhagen.

Kamp was a great success and a great opportunity for gaining an insight into other workplace environments both in New Zealand and internationally, and also a good networking opportunity.

EWF thanks

Dear Sir,
I wish to thank you for your generosity in awarding me the Ernest William File Scholarship. The scholarship will be of great assistance to me this year as I am attending the University of Otago to study first year health sciences in the hope of being accepted into medicine in 2008. I am very excited to be starting a new adventure and to be doing what I am passionate about! Thank you once again.



Yours sincerely
Bridget MacDonald

Dear Sir,
Thank you so much for awarding me the Ernest William File Scholarship.

I am very grateful to have received your support for the next three years.



I have already commenced my first year at Victoria University Wellington and this year I am studying Law, Media, Film and Theatre. I will use the money for text books and accommodation costs. I am discovering that being a student is financially challenging so your scholarship is really appreciated. I intend to make the most of my opportunities and will keep you informed of my progress over the next three years.

Thank you again.
Warm regards
Elyse Moore

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Getting sorted with KiwiSaver

FROM July 1st all employees changing jobs, will have to start thinking about KiwiSaver. Employees in existing jobs may want to consider 'opting in' to KiwiSaver also.

Tax credits and employer contributions added to KiwiSaver in the Budget have made KiwiSaver more attractive for some working New Zealanders.

But the changes have also made it even more vital that New Zealanders understand their own financial situation and know exactly how KiwiSaver will affect it.

Affordability is now the key issue workers will have to consider when deciding whether or not to opt in - can they afford to contribute 4% of their pay? Do they know what effect this will have on their overall financial situation?

The Retirement Commission has launched a suite of resources aimed at helping workers lift their financial literacy and get their finances sorted so they are in a better position to decide whether KiwiSaver fits their individual financial situations.

"To make sound financial decisions, people need a good understanding of personal financial management and their own financial situation," says Retirement Commissioner Diana Crossan.

"We are helping New Zealanders improve their knowledge of money matters at the



point they will be considering KiwiSaver, and we hope their employers will play a part," said Ms Crossan.

Tools for getting Sorted

The Retirement Commission has developed several tools and services for employers to offer their staff to help them increase their financial knowledge.

■ **Intranet Tools** - links to all resources on www.sorted.org.nz, the Retirement Commission's website to help New Zealanders get sorted on money matters.

■ **The Sorted KiwiSaver Decision Guide** - this will take workers through the main details of KiwiSaver and offers some issues to consider when deciding to opt in or opt out of KiwiSaver (e.g. affordability, employer contributions prior to 1 April 2008, first home subsidy, age, debt levels) It is available in different formats:

- Online, including calculators to help make an informed KiwiSaver decision
- Brochures, available in various languages
- Posters, featuring a summary of the

Sorted KiwiSaver Decision Guide

- KiwiSaver decision-making seminar content (including facilitators' guide and participants' handbook), designed for all literacy levels.

■ **Sort Me** - a link to the online personal financial check-up tool, Sort Me, which allows employees to assess their financial situation by answering simple multi-choice questions. It's a good idea for workers to complete Sort Me when considering whether KiwiSaver is right for them.

■ **0800 SORT MONEY (767 866)** - providing one-on-one help with budgeting. Callers will speak to a trained budget adviser from the New Zealand Family Federation of Budget Services and receive a pack with information and resources for preparing a budget.

■ **Calculators and general information** - covering a range of financial topics including debt management, saving, investments, and KiwiSaver

If you would like to order or download Retirement Commission resources, or receive Sorted information to help your staff make well-informed decisions on KiwiSaver, register online at <http://www.sorted.org.nz/kiwisaver-registration.html>.

To find out how KiwiSaver works, both employers and employees will find information on the Inland Revenue Department's KiwiSaver site (www.kiwisaver.govt.nz).

National - Wainuiomata

Adrian Douglas 04 498 2066
10-11 March 08

North Island (50th) - Otaki

Chris Taurua 027 342 0433)
6-7 Oct 07

South Island - Geraldine

Val Smith 03 359 8883
September 07 Denfield

Auckland

Dave Armstrong 09 271 3464
Colin Findlay 09 579 7312

1 April 07 - Waikare - 0830hrs

15 April 07 - Hauraki - 0900hrs

13 May 07 - Waiuku - 0830hrs

10 June 07 - Maramarua - 0900hrs

1 July 07 - Waikare - 0900hrs

29 July 07 - Waiuku - 0830hrs

19 August 07 - Hauraki - 0900hrs

9 September 07 - Waikare - 0900hrs

30 September 07 - Huntly - 0900hrs

4 November 07 - Waikare - 0845hrs

2 December 07 - Onewhero - 0800hrs

Waikato - Matamata

John Loveridge 07 846 8563)

25 November 07

Manawatu - Palmerston North

Ross Adams 06 351 6761

3 February 08

Monday's Palmerston North - 0845

Wellington

Chris Taurua 027 342 0433

31 March 07 - Masterton

12 May 07 - Martinborough

09 June 07 - Carterton

14 July 07 - Trentham

11 August 07 - Featherston

09 September 07 - Levin

03 November 07 - Te Marua (District Champs)

Canterbury (60th) - Weedons

Colin Sweeney 03 339 3973

16th February 2008

MARLBOROUGH RAIL BRANCH

*Marlborough Rail members (l to r) back row: John Maurice (delegate), Nigel Briggs
Front row: Robert Fergusson (delegate), Harry Tipene, Phil Webby, Geoff Neal, Paul Karena.*



I would like to say this is a happy workplace but it's not. It seems there are a couple of good reasons. One is service

it being brought to their notice and several with 30 years service. Rumour has it there is a manager looking into it – another Toll mirror-gazer it seems!

There is however, one exception. A staff member was told to spend \$200 and

forward the receipts to the manager. Puzzling? Maybe he was cheapest? It certainly rubs salt into the wounds when we see the write-ups in the company newsletter from other areas of staff members' milestones.

Another observation - there are two operations controllers who work day shift when very few trains run, but during the busiest part of the night there is only an RCO and a second

man. Woe betide them if there is a train delay and they are forced to split and while one shunts the trains, the RCO works by himself. The company in this case, puts money before safety – out of sight out of mind!

Timaru is a very busy yard and the staff do a great job but the company just does not know the simple things that make us happy like being made to feel a bit special at times of milestones in our careers.

Every week, it seems, we see a new face in the driver's room as relief drivers come in from Dunedin. Maybe time for another one in Timaru - sure would be cheaper! That's enough of my ramblings - take care out there.

TIMARU BRANCH

milestones. We have a manager who is quoted as saying "I don't get service recognitions so why should anybody else?" Consequently, it appears most staff here feel they are owed something. Apparently it is company policy to recognise these milestones in a person's career. I believe there is a staff member with 40 years service who has still not had an approach from anyone in the company despite

ONCE again – and I guess we're all in the same "boat" as it were, for those in the shipping biz – the shipping season is well upon us and indications are, that at the Port of Napier we will surpass last

will be passed down - yeah right!

This certainly indicates the growth that is going on locally, in the apple industry especially. The port had to fire up remote generators to cope with the apple container volumes as we fell short of fixed plugs. This also impacted on yard space creating bottlenecks in reefer locations - difficult

when busy but that's a local issue. I'm sure you all get the picture when management see it one way and us t'other.

With this growth we are all hearing that the time to expand the port is on the near horizon with a new wharf and the necessary infrastructure. As a consequence, I guess there will need to be some thought about staff increases, which we hope will be recognised as the most important resource as

the growth continues.

However, the usual concerns come to the fore as history dictates – and I suppose this applies to both ports and rail - that management like operating on minimums, both financially in terms of wages and in permanent staffing.

This type of thinking unfortunately, brings about continued casualisation within the industry, with employers still making the most of it; the ramifications of such practices as we know are disastrous. Let's hope we have some positive outcomes from the parliamentary panel currently looking at the casualisation on the waterfront.

Lastly, by the time this gets to print, we may be one step closer to being one voice on the waterfront, with MUNZ attending our next ports forum. Interesting times ahead.

PORT NAPIER BRANCH

year's container volumes. We hope this has a good financial outcome for the company and the fruits of our efforts trickle down to those that make it happen, especially as we are up for contract renewal at the end of September. Interestingly, our annual report indicates that those at the top end of earners within the port and the board have done very well in their increases, with one achieving around 10%. Here's hoping that sort of recognition

KIA ORA brothers and sisters. First and foremost the branch bids farewell to Jim King whose departure will create a void in the branch executive. The wheels are in motion to fill the vacancy. It is noted, with keen interest, that there is a changing of the guard on the Metro management front, with the loss of Geoff Norman who leaves for his new role in the Mana Bus Company. On

WELLINGTON RAIL BRANCH

this most auspicious occasion it would be fair to say "Our loss is their loss". With all his acquired inside rail knowledge he should be able to comfortably acquit himself. Time will tell.

Also of interest has been the sudden resignation of Rueben Creighton, with a short term career in rail as a customer service supervisor and the resignation of Leo Hemara. Many may remember Leo in his locomotive engineer capacity and latterly as a customer service supervisor. Makes you wonder when, over an 18-month period, we have lost five customer supervisors out of a total pool of four!

The branch executive has been afforded the pleasure of viewing the newly completed Wairarapa SW carriages prior to their service commissioning in the not-too-distant future. In short, the branch is most impressed with the overall design package and the high quality of workmanship. Much kudos must be afforded to the engineering sector. Well done all!

ANZAC Day commemorations were held at the Petone Station flagstaff memorial in recognition of the railwaymen and women who sacrificed so much for their respective countries in our hour of need. It is pleasing to see an ever-growing turnout to this service. Since completion of the flagstaff renovations with an initial re commissioning service of five members, to a polished service of 50 plus, one can be best described as most heartening – most heartening indeed.

Tena koutou, tena koutou, tena koutou katoa.



(l to r) Jim King and Mani Raumati.

Farewell Jim King

IT is with much regret that Wellington Rail Branch bids farewell to activist Jim King. He departs Tranz Metro for the blue seas of the Interisland Line. Jim has a long seafaring history – as his father and brothers before him. Given this history it was obvious that he would become interested in the principals of unionism and the benefits thereof.

Although Jim has enjoyed his time in the rail sector, he has always acknowledged an underlying, long term desire to return to sea. Recently the opportunity arose and he applied for an AB's position within the Interisland Line. With his AB ticket in hand he was successful.

Through his various roles as a train manager and train examiner, RMTU activist, delegate and branch chairman, Jim has formed many friendships with his fellow workers and warmly acknowledges an affection for the rail sector.

We wish Jim, Helen and family all the very best with their future endeavours and we hope and trust that we have not seen the last of him yet.

LYTTTELTON PORT BRANCH



The Lyttelton Port Company's newest mechanical apprentice Nick Gould helps mechanic Kevin Fitzgibbon with repairs in the engine room of the pilot launch "Canterbury".

PALMERSTON NORTH RAIL BRANCH



Palmerston North UG mechanical engineer and RMTU delegate Graeme Berquist pose for the working shot, of course under working conditions the appropriate eye protection would be donned!

SEVERAL weeks ago we nearly had some more fatalities in our rail corridor. Two deadbeats chained themselves to the tracks, concreted themselves under

CANTERBURY RAIL BRANCH

sleepers and welded themselves together. The locomotive driver spotted their prank and was able to bring his train to a stop. The protesters were complaining about the habitat of the snails at Happy Valley on the West Coast being shifted so that Solid Energy could get high grade coal. These two nearly visited another happy valley had the train not been able to stop. Protesters have now cost Solid Energy \$35 million. They have also caused the cancellation of 4 to 5 trains a day from the coal fields. Toll Rail earnings will be severely affected and it does nothing to promote our rail system. They also threaten jobs in Canterbury and the West Coast. The reduced train timetable could be as long as 2 months. One positive aspect is that Toll should be pressing staff to reduce their outstanding annual leave which accumulates in some cases to very high tallies. So come on guys get your annual leave down now. This is a perfect opportunity to get some R+R.

ONTRACK Board manager Cam Moore visited employees recently and gave a stirring commentary on where he would like to see rail be promoted in Canterbury. He is very passionate about rail's future. His vision is to have trains carrying passengers in from Rolleston and Rangiora with tracks out as far as the QE2 centre and a terminal in Moorhouse Avenue where the old railway station still exists. He also would like to see

the Christchurch City Council reserve ground now for dedicated, bus-only routes. Then say, in five years, take the buses out and put rail in its place. With a new mayor to be elected shortly we need to have this person singing from the same song book as Cam. He is good for rail in Canterbury with his positive attitude for the future of rail New



New member Kelvin Head with one of the new ONTRACK diggers.

Zealand wide. To move things along a bit quicker we need to be grabbing several of the diesel units and start running them from Rangiora and Rolleston for a trial period to gauge public reaction – especially from those now witnessing traffic jams each day.

Sitting in the Midas Place depot is one of the three new Hi Rail Excavators that ONTRACK has bought together with three hi rail 3-way tipping trucks. The work for these new tools has been long overdue. Paying an arm and leg to contractors to do this work will save ONTRACK millions of dollars. It makes good business sense to have this type of plant which will enhance the permanent way, cleaning and repairing culverts and drains which in turn prevents costly maintenance. Clean ballast gives the track a good top and gives our trains maximum running

speeds, and our customers good and reliable service.

Workers' Memorial Day was very successful. Paul Corliss and MP Ruth Dyson gave good speeches as well as staff from the Nurses Union. Christine Clarke was remembered for paying the ultimate price to ensure workers were given a fair deal. Christine was driven over in an act of road rage, fatally injuring her. "We all remember you" the Story Board was unveiled but the member who was to unveil this memorial did not turn up. Our good old mate Ian Wilkie had suffered a heart attack prior to this event. Buzz Terrey, branch chairman, stepped in. Ian is making good progress and we hope to see him back shortly – get well quick my ol' China.

It has not taken long for our new ballast wagons to be tagged. The vandalism is appalling. The new wagons were brand new and were at the Islington ballast pit to be loaded when they were hit. We have spent thousands of dollars on these wagons and now they are covered in this trash.

The United Group has won its case for a 5th week holiday. Well done Wayne and your band of legal eagles. However, please do not store your annual leave up to mountainous proportions as it makes it very very difficult for your bargaining agents during a wage round to gather more. Take it now. You might even enjoy it.

Footnote - Cam Moore says that he would like to see freight via rail do Auckland-Christchurch in 12 hours. He says don't write off Clifford Bay yet which had its resource consent recently renewed. The only way freight will make the journey in 12 hours is extensive track realignment and Clifford Bay. Watch this space folks.

TARANAKI RAIL BRANCH



Toll Rail regional manager central Ivan Johnston listening to Stratford LE Terry McQuillan: "How soon does Toll Rail need me at Westfield?"

(l to r) Richie Ransfield Toll Rail team leader at New Plymouth with Wayne Seed (ex NZ LE). Richie has reached his 30-year service milestone with the rail companies.



GREETINGS from Port Chalmers. As I write we are well and truly into our busy season with an increase in volumes of containers and more ships calling. This is great for Otago but along with this

PORT CHALMERS BRANCH

comes a very stretched and tired workforce with long hours being worked to ensure smooth operations and quick ship exchanges. We are assured come June 30 things will settle. Personally I don't believe it.

Maersk continues to play ports against ports and collectively we have to stand up and reduce their stronghold. Multi-global companies like Maersk will continue to erode workers hours and conditions through various ways. One good reason to endorse the amalgamation of RMTU & MUNZ!

The glasshouse is looking a lot fresher as the first major refurbishment in 30 years starts to take place. In typical style, the upgrade started on the floor that predominantly works 8am to 5pm.

There really seems to be a lack of understanding about what shift work involves. It goes without saying that it is always nice to get a makeover but why the hell would you

do it at the busiest time of the year?

It was done with little consultation and regards to those that have to work in a safety-critical environment and we are still astounded that one of our workstations has been moved to a position that eliminates direct vision of the operating area under its control. After a number of issues

were highlighted to those in the office, no notice was taken and it went ahead anyway. I guess H&S played no part in the final decision. The only outcome is that there is now a disgruntled workforce who must make the most of a badly-planned result!

It was with great sadness that we learnt of the death of Miriam Porter, a member of the RMTU for almost 20 years. Miriam was a hard-working member, a straight shooter – you knew exactly where you stood with her. She was a lady who had principles that she stuck to no matter what! Miriam was the “pay lady” for a number of years and in the days of payslips she never let your birthday go by without a personal “Happy Birthday” written on your payslip. The respect that people had for Miriam was apparent by the large number who gathered to farewell this very vibrant lady. We will miss Miriam and our heartfelt condolences go to Russell and

all their extended families, “Memories are Forever”.

It was great to see such a good gathering of workers from around the Otago Region at Workers' Memorial Day. We had the privilege to have a number of MPs and the NZCTU president Ross Wilson. It was a very sobering moment to hear from families that had lost loved ones in workplace accidents. We released far too many black balloons in remembrance of those that had died at work.

A number of red balloons were also released as a special tribute to Cynthia McWilliams. Cynthia was a very active member of the union movement around Otago and New Zealand and will leave a huge gap to be filled. She passed away in March after a long illness.

I was recently at a forum where the Minister of Labour Ruth Dyson spoke about Health & Safety in the workplace. I was shocked to hear her say that 700 people a day seek medical help in regards to workplace accidents and we have more people die at work each year than die on our roads! We all have to take some responsibility to make sure all our workmates get home safely. No job is too important it can't be performed safely.

That's about all for this quarter, be safe out there!

THE scribe/s apologise for missing the cut-off for the branch notes for the last issue!

It would appear that the southern lads work too hard, or is it that our track ma-

OTAGO BRANCH

chinery is too long in the tooth? The last sleeper lays of 2006 were deferred until the Ballast Cleaner and Cat 6 Tamper were duly repaired. Any further work would have brought about even more restrictions. Surely someone could have foreseen the need to update or replace the said museum pieces or even recommend the purchase of a dynamic unit that would obviate the need for speed restrictions after a re-sleepering and tamping exercise?

After many years of inactivity at the Mihiwaka Tunnel, it appears as though the “Bulge” has resurfaced on someone's to-do

list. With several “boffins” appearing on the scene to “ooh” an “ahh”, measure and scan; to determine a fix. Strange, it was apparently ignored when outsourced.

Seems that you can have your cake and eat. Neil Carraher, who was on active duty overseas with the army, had not only been granted special leave but promoted in absentia. Seems he is now the branch manager with the departure of Grant Lemin to take up the lofty position of branch manager in Christchurch. We wish them well in their new roles.

Can't get outa dis place. Geoff Sheridan, formerly of TRL Refrigeration, and latterly of Hall's, has reappeared as a sales rep for good ole Tranz Link.

Waianakarua sleeper lay, the first for the year, and many staff gave up the opportunity to have a long weekend. It went well, no breakdowns of major plant. Extreme heat,

plenty of fluids consumed with in excess of 100 litres of juice dispensed.

The Workers' Memorial Day was celebrated under high overcast skies on Saturday April 28. It was pleasing to see a splendid attendance, and being Saturday there were more family groups present. Ross Wilson was present representing the CTU, and said it was a sad day when the news media was reporting on the 32 deaths at Virginia Tech, in all its gory detail on the front pages or on screen, yet in the same week we had 32 deaths in the coal industry in China, and many other industrial-related incidents that didn't even rate a mention. Lee Vandervis, who represented the council, said that although he had attended previous memorials, this year it really came home to him as a close friend had been killed in a workplace accident. The Kiwi attitude of she-will be right has a lot to answer for

Continued on the next page

BRANCH NOTES

IN penning this I realise that half a year is almost gone. Hillside has had a steady workload. High points were the delivery of the first SW cars to Wellington for which

HILLSIDE BRANCH

there was a lot of good feed back. It was good to hear the customer was really happy. Hats off to all involved.

When you think about it, that is everybody, because while all these cars were being worked on, the rest of the site continued doing its part for Hillside. Also a milestone was reached with the successful completion of the YJ Ballast wagon for ONTRACK. This was a great success as well. This writer went to the handing over ceremony with a few of the workers to hear and witness this. It was great to hear those representing ONTRACK speak about how good the wagons were and how well they have been received.

Workers' Memorial Day was held on April 28 on a splendid Dunedin day, one of the many lately. The profound thing about this brief moment in time is what it is all about: Acknowledging those who lost their lives while working. An array of speakers like Ross Wilson from the CTU and a few politicians. The message of the day is that these tragedies could have been prevented. Even though there is a reduction in the number of lives lost at work there is still a way to

go. It showed the importance of our Health and Safety Committees and their roles. It is important that we all look after one another at work and make sure that we do our part by reporting incidents. Don't let people frighten you off.

Remember there is supposed to be a no-blame attached.

An aside from this is our latest development with on-site drug testing of anyone who has had an incident. It is driven by management's commitment to rid our site of

clear to all yet. Balanced with the fact that we have a really strong Seed programme to support those who get into trouble, it may come out right in the end. Our manager said at the road show that it is a real problem on this site and was a major concern.

His printed figures in the weekly newsletter said we had 20 people failed the tests over the last two and half years. It would be good to know how this stacks with other parts of the company.

On a happier note it is good to see Jim



Built by union labour. *The team of Hillside RMTU members standing proudly in front of one of the YJ wagons that they built. Another example of NZ's capability to produce high quality small order rolling stock.*

this type of behaviour. It has caused a great deal of debate around the site in all areas. I think the debate will continue for a while. The long and short of it is, is that it is not

Kelly on the comeback to full duties. He is very much alive and well nowadays and back to business.

Otago notes continued

as he recalled how a chainsaw just missing his face, and several other incidents. It was time for sobering thought, and yes, take the time, do it right, do it safe and come to no harm. The usual gaggle of politicians were also present, and drew parallels to ANZAC day. But when you went to war it was known that many would not return. When you go to work there is an expectation you will return home safe and well.

The event was also used to unveil an additional plaque in the memory of Cynthia McInnes, who played a major role in the establishment of the memorial. She unfortunately passed away earlier this year.

TAURANGA PORT BRANCH

Port electrician John Whitehead.

Mechanical fitter Blair Hammond.



Mani gives each member of the Japanese group a traditional welcome.



4th Japanese exchange tour

By Mani Raumati

A Japanese workers' delegation were welcomed on Sunday February 25 by the RMTU as part of a combined union welcoming committee organised by John Maynard of the Postal Workers Union. The 12-person Japanese delegation, comprising ten men and two women also included a rail worker who had been sacked along with 1,046 others after campaigning against the privatisation of Japanese National Rail (JNR) in the 1980s.

Others were from various local government entities, such as garbage disposal, water reticulation, postal and banking. This was the fourth such visit to NZ organised by the Asia Pacific Workers Solidarity Links (APWSL) as part of a fact-finding, friendship and solidarity mission. Of primary concern to them was the impact of privatisation on workers and families in New Zealand and the long term effects of this to the country. It was the delegation's hope to gain a body of knowledge from the hard-learned lessons of this country's privatisation experiences in the hope of avoiding similar mistakes and hardships by empowering and organising other workers.

In true Kiwi style, a warm welcome was afforded to our brothers and sisters at Wellington's Cobblestone Park opposite Trades Hall. Among the welcoming speeches was an RMTU Maori welcome, inclusive with hongi, from local Wellington Rail

branch secretary Mani Raumati. Formalities closed with rousing union chants and solidarity tunes from the Brass Razoo Solidarity Band.

As part of a very busy week-long schedule, the delegation toured a number of Wellington worksites and meet with union delegates from the postal, rail, hospital and cleaning sectors. Places of historical significance were also visited, such as the original site of Samuel Duncan Parnell's 1840's warehouse – the founder of the 8-hour day in New Zealand, Parliament Buildings, CTU headquarters and, of course, a meeting with the RMTU, where a presentation was given on the privatisation of New Zealand rail.

The RMTU, in conjunction with local Wellington delegates, arranged a worksite visit to Tranz Metro Wellington, with the highlight being a most amusing and satisfying trip to Johnsonville on an early English electric multiple unit. It would be fair to say, that the delegation were somewhat in awe that such vintage rolling stock are still in existence, let alone operational. Needless to say, while receiving an en-route running commentary on the history of the line and rolling stock, both cameras and translators worked hard in an attempt to record the journey's events.

To the delegation's credit, it must be noted that much use of public transport was made throughout their visit. We hope and trust that their visit to Aotearoa was most memorable and informative.



Wellington Rail branch chair Mani Raumati speaks on behalf of RMTU at the welcoming ceremony.



Brass Razoo, the trade union band strikes a chord with the assembled.

