

THE ACTIVIST



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LATEST STATS

Statistics New Zealand issued the labour cost index on Wednesday, which showed that salary and wage rates were 2.8 per cent higher in the June 2009 quarter - the lowest annual increase since June 2005, and a drop from a 3.3 per cent increase in March.

The number of people in fulltime work has decreased steadily since the last quarter of last year, with the percentage drop in the latest June quarter being the largest fall yet.

Job cuts in the construction, wholesale and retail trade sectors had driven fulltime employment figures downwards, Statistics New Zealand said.

A 3.7 per cent fall in part-time employment came about through cutbacks in seasonal employers such as cafes, restaurants and accommodation providers.

Total paid hours have also fallen, with seasonally adjusted figures showing they had decreased by 3.4 per cent in the year to June 2009, Statistics NZ said.

The number of filled job vacancies also dropped 2.1 per cent in the June quarter, reflecting the reluctance of businesses to take on new staff in tough economic times.

The RMTU is expecting "official" unemployment to rise to at least 6% when figures are released later this week.

LONGER, HEAVIER TRUCKS

Government says that using bigger trucks will result in fewer vehicle movements based on the increased capacity of the

longer heavier trucks. To some this massive oversimplification may seem true but it is woefully wrong. Increased efficiency will enable competitive road transport operators to reduce their costs and compete more fiercely with rail and coastal shipping.

Clearly if bigger trucks take additional freight/market share from rail/coastal shipping to road, then the number of road vehicle movements is likely to increase, not decrease. Should this scenario occur then it is highly likely that vehicle emissions will increase and also that our roads will become even more congested and the likelihood of truck related vehicle accidents will increase with the ability to survive reduced by the

fact that the truck is now bigger and the forces so much greater in the collision.

Help us to fight this madness now? Join with us and thousands of others to prevent the rule change from going

through. Go see your local MP and tell them that they support this at their peril. Write a letter to the Prime Minister saying no to the rule change.



ONTRACK-NZRC MECA RATIFICATION

Between 10 to 14 August ratification briefing meetings will be conducted throughout New Zealand for RMTU members who fall within the coverage of the MECA. Meeting locations and times are listed in the back of this issue of The Activist. The employer is fully supporting the meetings and they are paid stopwork meetings so all members should attend.

This is for the information and guidance of RMTU members only!

Ratification ballot papers have been issued from National office this week. The ballot closes 28 August 2009.

Remember if you wish to **ACCEPT** the deal (ratify it) then destroy your ballot paper and do nothing else.

If you wish to **REJECT** the deal then complete the ballot paper and send it back in the reply paid envelope.

If we receive more than 33% of the papers issued back as rejections then the settlement is rejected by the Union. It's that simple.

RAIL SAFETY WEEK

However, preceeding this had been a question time in our nations Parliament. For your education we publish the transcript of one part of that day Question Time. It is question 11 and Darien Fenton MP is the Labour party spokesperson for Transport Safety;

11. DAVID BENNETT (National-Hamilton East) to the Associate Minister of Transport: What work is the Government undertaking to improve rail safety in New Zealand?

Hon NATHAN GUY (Associate Minister of Transport) : Tena koe, Mr Speaker. This week the Government is supporting Australasian Rail Safety Awareness Week to raise the profile of rail safety and, in particular, to encourage motorists to take seriously the risks posed by level crossings. Over recent years education and the improvement of infrastructure have led to a steady reduction in the number of train collisions with vehicles, pedestrians, and cyclists, but more work is needed. The Government contributes \$1 million per year to upgrade level crossings with warning lights, bells, and half-arm barriers. This contribution is made up of \$500,000 from the Crown and \$500,000 from the New Zealand Transport Agency.

David Bennett: What can the public do to make a difference to rail safety?

Hon NATHAN GUY: Although the Government is taking a leading role in improving rail safety with the Chris Cairns

Foundation, it is important for the public to use common sense to keep themselves safe. I urge all motorists to treat level crossings as stop signs. People need to realise that level crossings are as dangerous as intersections on the open road. Even if a crossing is equipped with barrier arms and lights, drivers need to check for themselves that no train is approaching. Pedestrians also need to be aware that the tracks are for trains; there is no reason for people to put their lives at risk by walking along the tracks.

Darien Fenton: Tena koe, Mr Speaker. What will the Minister say to locomotive drivers traumatised by the doubling of level crossing accident rates this year, given that his Government intends to remove accident compensation cover for the mental trauma drivers suffer in such accidents?

Hon NATHAN GUY: As I alluded to in the primary answer, this Government is focused on trying to make level crossings safer. Indeed, this week we have had a rail awareness focus with the Chris Cairns Foundation. The Government is working very closely with ONTRACK to ensure that we are upgrading the level crossings. At the moment about 10 level crossings are upgraded per annum, and the focus this week on rail safety improvement and awareness will ensure that there are fewer accidents and collisions in the future, resulting in less trauma for the drivers of the locomotives.

Ignoring the obvious failure by Mr Guy to answer the question and his resultant failure to explain just why the National led Government is planning to remove cover for post traumatic stress disorder from schedule 2 of the ACC scheme (after Labour inserted the cover following major representation from the RMTU and other Unions with members who are faced with trauma in their daily working lives). The facts are that there has not been one claim lodged by a Locomotive Engineer since the cover was provided in 2008 as luck would have it. Its removal will not result in any significant cost savings for the ACC scheme. It will just mean that in the future if there is a Locomotive Engineer or other worker who cannot continue in the career they love through no fault of their own and are diagnosed with post traumatic Stress

SHAME ON YOU NATIONAL

disorder they will not be covered by the ACC scheme for either lumpsum compensation, earnings related compensation or rehabilitation costs. The cost will be borne out of either vote health or by the worker and their family themselves. Just like what happened to our old workmate Brownie Bristowe who worked with us to publicise and promote the issue to the public and to the labour led government of the time.

If you are keen to assist the Union in mounting a campaign to oppose this revocation of cover when the nat's finally table the changes then please let us know?

By the way, the latest stats are actually trending up and so the problem (of level crossing collisions and trespasser events/fatalities) is getting worse not better here in NZ.

138,000 PEOPLE OUT OF WORK NEED ACTION

The Government needs urgently to expand its programmes to counteract the largest quarterly rise in unemployment since 1988 and assist those hit, says the CTU. "In the current financial year the Government has spent \$800 million on tax cuts but only \$40 million on youth job initiatives," said CTU Economist Bill Rosenberg.

"The rise to 6.0 percent unemployment is a shocking result, much higher than most predictions and the largest quarterly rise at 1.0 percent since September 1988. There are now 138,000 New Zealanders out of work, an increase of a fifth (20.6 percent) or 24,000 people in the quarter. This is half as big again as this time last year – a rise of 48,000."

"We are now very worried that Treasury's May forecast of a peak of 8 percent in late 2010 will be exceeded. At this rate it could reach 190,000 or 200,000 people seeking work."

"The Government should expand assistance across the labour market, including investment in clean, green and other job creation schemes. There should be an

increased investment in skills both in the workplace and in tertiary institutions."

Women have been harder hit by unemployment, their numbers rising by 15,000 in the quarter compared to 8,000 for men. Unemployment among women is now at 6.3 percent. Over the year, 25,000 more women lost their jobs – an exceptionally large rise of 59.4 percent.

"We note that the size of the labour force has increased, itself probably a sign of financial stress in households as further members seek work to compensate for job losses and falls in income," added Rosenberg.

Youth unemployment (15-19 year olds) now has reached 36,600 people or 22.9 percent, getting close to a quarter of the youth workforce. There are now 62,100 young people (aged 15 to 24) unemployed, a rate of 16.3 percent, emphasising that the Government's youth package announced on the weekend needs to be greatly expanded.

Joblessness has also risen steeply, by 38.5 per cent over the year to 236,100 people out of work and wanting a job. There has been a fall in full time work and a rise in part time work, with the result that the number of underemployed people – part time workers wanting full time work – has also risen to 114,300 or 22.2 percent compared to 16.5 percent at the same time last year.

QUEENSLAND GOVERNMENT FAIL TO LEARN PRIVATISATION LESSON

The list of infrastructure resources on the Queensland Government's books is set to become a lot shorter after Premier Anna Bligh announced the state would sell off key assets to plug a \$14 billion hole in revenue. Bligh confirmed the government would sell;

- the Port of Brisbane, and;
- QR's above and below rail coal business QR National Coal, and;
- the Abbot Point Coal Terminal, and;
- Queensland Motorways, and;
- Forest Plantations Queensland over the next three to five years.



QR chief executive Lance Hockridge said QR was working with a Queensland Treasury sale team, which was in the process of appointing advisors. "In a letter that the Treasurer has given us...the key things are: the government is looking to find the structure which is optimal, and secondly, to reinforce, that in the meantime, it is business as usual for QR," he said. Australian Transport and Energy Corridor chairman Everal Compton has called the government's decision to sell the infrastructure assets "courageous" and "correct".

"In the interests of the future prosperity of all Queenslanders, QR must be totally privatised as a matter of urgency," Compton said. Earlier this month Compton announced he was amassing a \$500 million investment fund to bid for the railways and ports being put up for sale by the government. Compton said, "None of Queensland's infrastructure has ever been developed and operated to its maximum capacity because railways and ports run by bureaucrats will never ever reach full potential."

"Private enterprise will double the freight carried on our railways and through our ports."

Sound familiar? We recall the same words being said about NZ Rail and Tas Rail. Just look at the huge success the privatisation of both of them are/were? So successful you would argue that the Government's in each case has had to buy the asset back. You have to wonder about those bloody Queenslanders don't you?

TE KUPENGA MAHI, ANNUAL HUI

We give advanced notice that the proposed dates for our Te Kupenga Mahi, annual hui are: 16 – 18 October 2009. The organisers are holding a booking for: Tapu Te Ranga Marae, Island Bay, Wellington, which is the proposed venue for the hui.

The hui will be celebrating 20 years of Te Kupenga Mahi. If you have been part of TKM's journey, thus far, or you wish to be part of TKM going forward, book these dates into your diary, and join the celebration. Equally, if you know anyone who has been part of TKM in the past,

please pass the message on to them, we would love to see them at this hui.

Confirmed details will be emailed to you and posted in the newsletters in the near future. For now lock in the dates and plan to be a part of it. If you have any questions, please contact Sam Kahui via any of the contact details below. Sam Kahui, Telecommunications Technician | ONTRACK Infrastructure Ltd NZ, email sam.kahui@ontrack.govt.nz, Fax 04 498 3007 | DDI 04 498 3109 | Mobile 021 242 6055

NATIONAL MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE (NMC) BALLOT RESULT

The final and confirmed NMC Results for the term 2009-2011 are as follows:

National President Jim Kelly (KiwiRail Mechanical Hillside)

North Island Ports Representative & National Vice-President Aubrey Wilkinson (Port Tauranga - Elected unopposed)

South Island Ports Representative Ruth Blakeley (Port Chalmers - Elected unopposed)

Northern Region Rail Representative Bernie Snook (KiwiRail Freight – Loco Engineer)

Central Region Rail Representative Howard Phillips (KiwiRail Passenger Mechanical)

Southern Region Rail Representative Doug Blakie (KiwiRail Freight – Yard Op's)

National General Representative Randolph Sladen (Veolia Transport – Loco Engineer)

Congratulations to the above named RMTU members. The Union thanks all of the members who put themselves forward for election and were unsuccessful. Without members doing this democracy cannot occur. We wish to formally acknowledge the contribution of Alby Barr, Tim Spence and Wally Wallbutton to the Union during their time on the Union's National Management Committee.

A full report on the ballot result has been sent to delegates from the National Returning Officer and is available for viewing and/or download from the Union's website.

RAIL IEA'S

We have received a considerable number of calls from members who are employed under individual employment agreements with KiwiRail about a letter they have received from KiwiRail corporate. The letter states that in order to provide consistency across the various KiwiRail business groups the sick leave entitlement will go from 5 days to 10 days per annum but is accruable up to 20 days maximum. Domestic leave to a maximum of 5 days per annum and this is not accruable.

There is no doubt a range of entitlements, amongst the various IEA's for sick leave ranging from unlimited for long termers to 5 days per annum for newer employees. There is also a range of accrual limits from unlimited to the minimum 20 days by law.

The best advice we can give members is to not agree to these changes. Your terms and conditions can only change by agreement.

This again raises the issue about members either opting to return to the Collective under the salary option or for the Union to negotiate a supervisor/manager collective agreement which contains the core terms and conditions similar to what is done presently with the policy statement attached to the IEA's. There is tons of empirical evidence that shows that collective bargaining delivers superior terms and conditions outcomes to individual bargaining. Food for thought and over to you.

LOCO FUND INVITES NEW MEMBERS

The Chairman and Trustees continue to invite enquiries and applications from prospective members to apply for membership of The New Zealand Locomotive Engineers' Sickness, Accident & Death Benefit Fund, 'the Fund'.

Benefits payable include a range of Loss of Certificate Medical Retirement benefits payable based on age of joining and age at date of loss, as well as a Death Benefit.

Applicants must:

- Hold a Locomotive Engineers Certificate,
- Be a full time Employee of KiwiRail Ltd, United Transport Ltd (previously Alstom Transport NZ Ltd), or Veolia Transport (previously Connex Auckland Limited), and Taieri Gorge Railway Ltd, and
- Have completed medical examination within four (4) months of application.

There are no changes for Existing Fund Members who will continue with their current arrangements and receive benefits as detailed in the First Schedule of the Trust Deed.

For further information and an application form contact the Secretary Julia Harrison on (04) 499-2066 or email jharrison@rmtunion.org.nz



TOLL NETWORKS (TOLL TRANZ LINK)

In a letter to the RMTU Toll Networks (TN) CEO Greg Miller stated that for the last 12 months trading for the company has been difficult due to the corporate greed created global financial meltdown. TN has experienced significant work volume decline. To date revenue is 20% down. The company has conducted a review of its operation and proposes a restructure which will see up to 30 positions made redundant nationwide with not all branches being affected. He said that the company had held off as long as it could on shedding staff.

The procedure for redundancy is clearly stated within the Collective agreement and all branches and delegates have a copy of the CA sent to them. Please contact your regional organiser for any assistance during this depressing time. As usual the greedies cause the chaos but it is workers who pay the price.

PORT HEDLAND PULLS CLEAR AS AUSTRALIA'S BIGGEST PORT

Trade through Port Hedland and the port of Dampier in Western Australia's Pilbara region reached a record 300m tonnes in the

2008/09 financial year. Tonnage at Port Hedland, where iron ore makes up 97% of trade, rose 21.9% from last year to a record 159.4m tonnes.

The result confirms the port as Australia's largest by volume, ahead of the port of Dampier which has held the mantle since 2006/07. Dampier increased its trade to 140.8m tonnes for the year, up from 133.5m tonnes in 2007/08. Iron ore makes up 80% of trade at the port of Dampier, with gas products such as liquefied natural gas contributing 15% of total tonnage.

GOVERNMENT MUST REIN BRASH IN – EPMU

The Government must call on Don Brash to resile from comments made in his speech at AUT or remove him as the Chair of the 2025 Taskforce on productivity says the Engineering, Printing and Manufacturing Union.

The call comes after the former National Party leader made it clear that he believes attacking the rights of working New Zealanders is a key part of increasing productivity – an approach that saw workers' pay and conditions collapse when it was last implemented in the 1990s.

EPMU national secretary Andrew Little says it is clear from his speech released yesterday that Brash has predetermined the outcome of the productivity investigation and it will be disastrous for Kiwi workers.

"The policies that Brash is advocating are exactly the policies that saw a massive increase in the wage gap with Australia in the late eighties and nineties and there's absolutely no evidence to suggest the results would be any different this time.

"There's no doubt that there needs to be an investigation into productivity but it needs to be done as a non-partisan exercise. Brash's speech clearly shows he is unable

to approach the issue with anything other than a hard-right perspective.

"If the Government expects any real result from this group other than tired and elitist dogma then they need to remove Brash or pull him into line. Any other response is an implicit collusion with his attacks on the rights of working Kiwis."

PRISON OFFICERS NEED ASSURANCES, NOT JUST APOLOGY

The Council of Trade Unions today deplored the threatening of three corrections officers by ACT MP David Garrett as they made a submission to the Parliamentary Select Committee hearing on prison privatisation. Mr Garrett implied that the officers would not be offered employment in a privatised service.

"These officers deserve more than an apology for this disgraceful intimidation," said CTU President Helen Kelly. "They must receive categorical assurances that their future employment prospects will be in no way affected by their contribution to an open democratic process."

"These workers were there to offer Parliament a unique insight based on their experience working in privately run prisons and the response they got will put other workers off providing similar sorts of insights. David Garrett's comments threaten to undermine the basic right to free speech and freedom of association."

"This attack is yet another attempt to gag public sector workers and unions from commenting on the creeping privatisation agenda which seems to be emerging by the day from the Government."

Specifically, Brash argued that reasons for New Zealand's lagging productivity include "increased rigidities in the labour market as a consequence of the repeal of the Employment Contracts Act" and previous Governments' refusal to remove employees' rights to appeal against unfair dismissal.

EMPLOYMENT FIGURES SHOW MORE SUPPORT NEEDED FOR WORKERS

Today's Quarterly Employment Survey raises concerns at the levels of unemployment the Household Labour Force Survey will show on Thursday, said CTU Economist Bill Rosenberg. The QES shows that employment is down by 3.2% in the last year (to June) and 1.2% in the quarter.

Rosenberg said that although the recent announcement of support for young unemployed makes a start, these statistics show that more widespread measures are needed.

"The government should be urgently addressing further job creation, retention of existing jobs, and support for those who do lose their jobs in terms of transition and assisting them in building their skills," said Rosenberg.

"We are also concerned that people are now losing significant income through reductions in

hours worked. Average weekly paid hours decreased by 0.8 percent in the quarter with falls in both ordinary time and overtime. As a result average weekly earnings actually fell for the quarter by 0.1 percent. If this were to continue and even if inflation stays at 1.9 percent over the next year this would represent a fall in real earnings of approximately 2.3 percent or about \$22 a week or \$1136 a year for a person with average weekly earnings."

Wage increases are down to 0.3 percent for the June quarter, the lowest since June 1999. Unions are finding it a tough environment in which to bargain for wage increases but many settlements are being made in the 2-4 percent range.

MPS SEEK NZ-BUILT RAIL STOCK

Reprinted from the Otago Daily Times

Dunedin South MP Clare Curran and Hutt South MP Trevor Mallard are lobbying

KiwiRail to build more rolling stock in the Hillside and Woburn workshops. The Government this year announced funding of \$115 million for 20 new locomotives and 17 passenger carriages for KiwiRail's Tranz Scenic fleet. The 20 new locomotives are coming from China.

While at the workshops, in Dunedin, he noted several refurbished carriages for the Auckland Metro line were sitting awaiting bogies to arrive from China.

"In my view, there is nothing there that couldn't be built at Hillside. In a parallel way, the 10 new locomotives being imported immediately, and the remaining 10, could be built there."

The Woburn workshops were in Mr Mallard's electorate.

The former state-owned enterprises minister said that the first few locomotives would be more expensive to build than import and that it would take time to get the systems in place.

However, building them in New Zealand would create jobs, get people off the dole and because

the locomotives were built in New Zealand, the long-run maintenance costs would be lower.

"Skill development is something we have to do. It has been traditional for railways to be a major skill developer."

There had been a tradition of rivalry between Hillside and Woburn, but the two workshops were just about through that, Mr Mallard said.

The management of both workshops was meeting regularly, as were union representatives.

Both workshops had skills the other one did not have.

Working together would give an added strength to KiwiRail, he said.

Asked what he could do as an opposition MP to get the building programme started, Mr Mallard said the main thing he could do was join with Ms Curran and lobby hard for it to happen.



**MADE from
NEW ZEALAND**

Informally, the MPs would talk to everyone they could about the idea.

Mr Mallard said he knew the board had the issue on its table as the last Labour government had introduced the idea before the election.

"In a funny way, having a recession should be helpful to us making the decision of doing things in New Zealand rather than exporting jobs.

"There will be more support for being New Zealand-centred rather than being purely free market."

The project to build rolling stock in New Zealand, rather than import it, had to be thought about in the longer term rather than over the next two years, he said.

PRIVATE PRISONS: POLICY NEEDS RETHINKING

There is no evidence either from New Zealand or internationally to support the Government's belief that private prisons operate better or at lower cost, the CTU told the Law and Order Select Committee today.

"Any apparent cost reductions in private corrections facilities come at the unacceptable cost of reduced working conditions and service," said CTU President Helen Kelly. "The negative consequences of this fall on the corrections officers, on prisoners and on public safety."

Appearing before the Law and Order Select Committee today to submit on the Corrections (Contract Management of Prisons) Amendment Bill, the CTU voiced its opposition to the introduction of privately managed prisons in New Zealand.

"We are very concerned that there is no real commitment by the Government to fully understand all the difficult issues around prisons. Instead it seems determined to pursue private prisons purely on ideological grounds. The cost and the consequences of such a change are

enormous. The Government needs to rethink its position."

"It is the role of the State to run prisons and this duty cannot be delegated to private businesses that have profit motives. No matter how good the contract is, they can't provide the type of protection, accountability and responsibility that the publicly managed prison service provides now."

IT'S AGM TIME

All branches of the Union will be holding their Annual general Meetings during August and into early September. Members are urged to ensure that they attend their branch meeting so as to participate and have a voice in Union affairs and also the election of officers and delegates.

CTU WELCOMES REDUNDANCY BILL

The CTU has welcomed the drawing of Darien Fenton's Employment Relations (Minimum Redundancy Entitlements) Amendment Bill from the member's ballot today.

CTU Secretary Peter Conway said: "The introduction of this bill is very timely when so many workers are losing jobs without proper notice and with no entitlement to

compensation."

"The CTU calls on all Parties to support this Bill."

In May the CTU called on the Government to act on the report by the Public Advisory Group on Restructuring and Redundancy which was completed in June 2008 and recommended the Government investigate statutory redundancy compensation and provision of redundancy support. The report was compiled by representatives from Business NZ, the State Services Commission and the CTU, but the Government has declined to act upon the recommendations.



MARITIME UNION DEMANDS FISHING INDUSTRY INQUIRY

The Maritime Union says information revealed in a New Zealand documentary on the fishing industry must be followed up by a Government inquiry.

The documentary *The Great New Zealand Fishing Scandal* by investigative journalist Guy Henderson screened on Sky last night and today, and covered developments in the industry since the 1990s. Maritime Union General Secretary Trevor Hanson says the documentary was accurate and he believes there is much more to be uncovered. He says fishing industry bosses are driven by "unconstrained greed" and Government had kowtowed to powerful private interests. He says the treatment of overseas crew on foreign and joint venture "flag of convenience" vessels had been appalling and was an ongoing problem. Mr Hanson says the system is being used to drive New Zealand workers out of the industry. He says he is disturbed at how some quota holders, including Maori quota holders, were using overseas crews and refusing to train young New Zealand workers in this industry especially at a time of increasing unemployment. Mr Hanson says it is standard practice for ship owners to crew vessels with officers and crew of different nationalities, with crew members picked up by corrupt labour hire agencies in developing countries. Foreign seafarers were often so desperate for work they signed up on oppressive terms and conditions, often went unpaid and were away from their home and families for sometimes years. There had been numerous documented cases of crew members not being paid, being underpaid, having their wages eaten up by agency fees, and being verbally and physically abused. Mr Hanson noted the case of 33-year old Korean fisherman Vo Minh Que, who was drowned in January 2004 in waters 70 kilometres south of Stewart Island. The victim was flipped overboard from the 'Tasnui' by a trawl wire

after equipment failure and had bobbed in the ocean nearby to the vessel while a "series of hideously inadequate and half-pie" rescue attempts were made, according to the *Southland Times* (2 October 2004), whose editorial comment described the incident as a "disgrace" and a "squalid tragedy." The Maritime New Zealand report on the drowning of Mr Vo noted how the poor condition of the vessel and the lack of safety gear or procedures contributed to the fatality - problems that had previously been reported by Maritime New Zealand but not acted upon. "The Maritime Union has done what it can to assist in the incidents that we have come across, this is done entirely on a solidarity basis simply because these crew members have no one else to look after their interests." Mr Hanson says if New Zealanders want to see the reality of free trade promoted by the Government, they should look no further than the fishing industry a few miles off their own coast.

"We don't have to go to the Third World to see Third World conditions " the Third World conditions have come to us."

"The fishing industry is a graphic demonstration of the race to the bottom in working conditions. Add this to the damage to fishing stocks and we really have a social and environmental travesty - out of sight, out of mind."

He says the Maritime Union will continue to campaign on the issue which was also the focus of a campaign by the International Transport Workers Federation, comprised of 654 unions representing 4,500,000 transport workers in 148 countries.

Bits & Bobs

- A mechanical test train has been operating on the Midland line this week trialling the operation of 45 wagon coal trains. This is a major jump in train size as the current maximum is 30 wagons. The trains will have 21000hp on the head of the train and will have major in train forces with all the horsepower being at the front rather than distributed through

the train as is the norm overseas in terrain like NZ. We will have more in the next issue of The Transport Worker on the train.

- The Ontrack wages and progression and Hours of work working party met in Auckland today and tomorrow. The working party is looking at the market relativity of wages within Ontrack and is also examining ways of moving track workers to being shift workers.

Let's Be Safe Out There & remember these few key pointers.....

- Maintain situational awareness at all times;
- Ensure all are aware of the work to be performed;
- Make safety your first priority;
- Make sure you will go home safe and sound at the end of your shift;
- Make sure your workmates will go home safe and sound at the end of their shift;
- Do not allow yourself to be distracted;
- Do not make assumptions;
- Safety is not someone else's responsibility – IT'S YOURS!

**“WE’RE STRONGER
TOGETHER”!**

Ontrack Ratification Report back Meeting Schedule

South Island

DATE	RMTU REPS	START TIME	WHERE
Monday 10 August	Phil, Buzz, Scott	07.30	Greymouth includes Hokitika
		14.00	Blenheim
Tuesday 11 August	Phil & Buzz	07.30	Christchurch
		11.00	Timaru/Invercargill
Wednesday 12 August	Phil & Buzz	07.30	Dunedin
		13.00	Invercargill

North Island

Monday 10 August	Sam Kahui & Geoff Young	08.00	Wellington including Upper Hutt and Woburn stores
Wednesday 12 August	Scott & Jerry	07.30	Whangarei including Mangatanoka
	Scott, Jerry & Paul Bryden	15.00	Auckland including Hellensville
Thursday 13 August	Scott & Albie	7.30	Tauranga
	Sam Kahui	10.00	Whanganui
	Scott & Albie	13.00	Hamilton
	Sam	13.30	Palmerston North including Taihape
Friday 14 August	Scott	08.00	Taumaranui including Te Kuiti & Ohakune
	Sam Kahui	09.00	Napier (including Wairoa)
	Scott	12.00	Stratford including New Plymouth