

THE ACTIVIST



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SUPPORT THE LOCKED OUT OCC WORKERS

Collections of money and or non perishable food items and food vouchers are needed to enable the 36 workers to succeed in keeping Talley's "low road" model out of the dairy industry.

- Monetary donations can be banked direct to "Solidarity Fund" Bank of New Zealand # 02 0320 0082084 026."
- Supermarket vouchers (Countdown is the closest supermarket). Food items can also be dropped at the Hamilton

Trade Union Centre 34 Harwood St.

The picket is located outside the Open Country Cheese plant at Waharoa just north of Matamata on the main Auckland to Rotorua/Tauranga highway (27). Please contact Mark Apiata Wade (021 939 634) prior to visiting to ensure timing of visit.

AND MORE FROM THE DAIRY WORKERS UNION....

If Open Country Cheese has any credible evidence whatsoever that Dairy Workers Union members were involved in an environmental spill over a week ago, now is the time to front up with some proof, and stop locking workers out. Open Country is now defying a Court injunction by refusing to let workers back to work. An Employment Court ruling late on Friday found that the lockout of workers was

illegal. These workers are still being prevented from returning to their jobs, for no good reason. The company says it has concerns about environmental sabotage. A healthy pinch of salt needs to accompany these allegations, which come from a company that was fined \$55,000 in 2007 and \$11,000 earlier this year by Environment Waikato for willful environmental damage, including dumping 250,000 litres of rotten milk in a large pit they dug. Our members want to return to work. They want Open Country to show

some leadership and come back to the negotiating table with a willingness to respond to their desire, and right, to have a collective agreement that covers their work and some basic job security protections.

The Court has told Open Country to stop the lockout. If there is surveillance footage, release it.

It's time to put up or shut up.

Q+A - JOYCE

Some of you may have seen or heard about Sunday's Q and A programme and the less than supportive, for rail, uttering's of National Cabinet Minister for (Road) Transport Steven Joyce. Here are the web links for anyone who wishes to be subjected to it again:

<http://tvnz.co.nz/q-and-a-news/q-steven-joyce-interviewed-guyon-espiner-15-47-3021919>

<http://tvnz.co.nz/q-and-a-news/q-panel-steven-joyce-interview-8-07-3021950>



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

<http://tvnz.co.nz/politics-news/kiwirail-told-pay-its-own-way-3021941/video>

<http://tvnz.co.nz/politics-news/kiwirail-told-pay-its-own-way-3021941/video?vid=3022522>

The RMTU is very concerned at what the Minister and this National Led government is saying about KiwiRail and their apparent withdrawal of any further financial support for much needed rebuilding after 16 years of privatisation neglect. It seems clear that the Minister for (Road) Transport Steven Joyce will not be dissuaded from pouring ever growing amounts of money into more roads, more congestion and more for his mates in the road transport lobby. It appears to us that Joyce is entirely unrepentant for his Governments slashing of coastal shipping support (Seachange). Now that Labour's legacy of rail funding allocations is at an end, it appears to us that he is focusing on forcing the state owned rail company into cutting back on upgrades and ripping up unprofitable lines. Perhaps, in this way KiwiRail's Board will be forced into carrying out the politically unpopular systematic destruction of the current configuration of rail in this country rather than Joyce as the Minister.

We all know that a major line by line review is being conducted by rail management at present and so a lot of lines will be under the microscope. The lines to watch, in our view, will be the Rotorua Branch, Taneatua Branch, NAL north of Helensville, Stratford-Okahukura, Napier-Gisborne, Castlecliff and the Wanganui Branches.

The irony is that if such a review as this had been conducted 15 or twenty years ago then the most profitable and productive lines in the network today would actually not exist. They would have been ripped up. This is the major risk in making decisions today, for a tomorrow we don't know, with strategic assets that once gone are too expensive to replace.

The future for rail looks bleak under Joyce and this current Government and so we only need to look at the 1990's to see where we are perhaps headed. The remaining sections of the network may well end up falling into such a state of disrepair, with further decreases in maintenance due to lack of funding, and then rail will eventually fold because it simply can't compete with any other transport mode. Transit times are more of an issue as the roading network is improved with road straightening programmes.

The Rail industry has only ever asked for a level playing field with other transport modes. The road transport industry **is in our view** heavily subsidised by the NZ taxpayer and so we ask that a similar subsidy for the infrastructure be paid to rail.

This Government said they would not sell KiwiRail in their first electoral term but they didn't say they wouldn't destroy it!

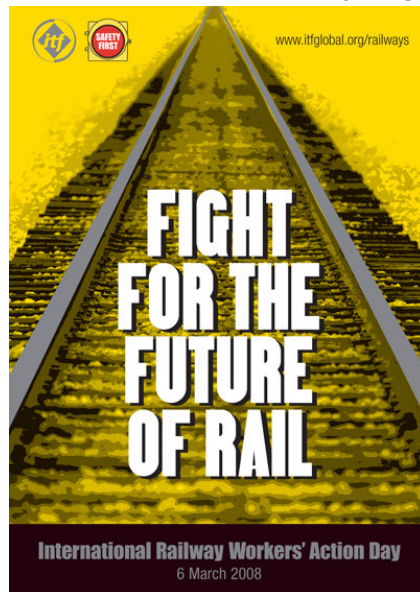
We believe that most Kiwi's would support KiwiRail receiving Government funding for the infrastructure asset similar to the framework for roading (the trucks don't pay the full cost for them and yet they do almost all the damage).

Funding for the rail highway itself was what was lacking during the 16 years of privatisation and what appears to be lacking today under crown ownership. Yes, it may have been repugnant to give a subsidy from the NZ taxpayer to a foreign multinational but surely in these global warming times it is acceptable for the taxpayer to support an environmentally sustainable transport mode in the best interest of NZ Inc. It appears

that National/ACT ideology says the answer to that question is a big fat NO!

Time for those of you who didn't vote in the last election or voted for National/Act to be feeling a tinge of anxiety as if you work in rail you may have voted or (in the case of those who didn't cast a vote) not voted yourself out of a job!

Our only hope is that Labour gets back in at the next election so that we again get



central planning that thinks of NZ inc and the creation of a sustainable transport system which does not have dependence to peak oil at its core.

BIGGER TRUCKS COULD BE BIG TROUBLE

Bigger trucks will make at least 620,000 trips on our roads each year meaning drivers should brace themselves for more road carnage, and more road damage, Green Party Associate Transport spokesperson Sue Kedgley said today.

"Truck operators have sought permission to carry 33 million tonnes of freight a year by huge, 53 tonne, 72 foot trucks. If the Minister of Transport approves a pending rule change, we can expect to see at least 620,000 trips by heavy trucks a year on our roads," said Ms Kedgley.

"This is an alarming number of trips by heavy trucks, and it will have a devastating impact on our roads, on the road toll, and on the viability of rail and coastal shipping."

"Already trucks are involved in 18 percent of all deaths on the roads, even though they comprise only four percent of the vehicle fleet. Imagine what will happen to the road toll if thousands of heavy trucks are allowed on our roads."

Hundreds of thousands of journeys in 53 tonne trucks will exponentially increase the damage to our roads. However, the Government's recently released National Land Transport Programme reveals declining maintenance budgets for state highways over the next three years while the budget for local roads is remaining flat.

"If Central Government has made no allowance for increased wear and tear, who will be picking up the bill? Local ratepayers?"

Freight volumes are forecast to grow by around 75 percent between 2006 and 2030 and the vast bulk would go by heavy truck unless Transport Minister Steven Joyce directs his Ministry to take a more strategic look at moving freight by more sustainable alternatives.

"Rail freight and coastal shipping are more sustainable, safe, and energy efficient

modes for moving freight. Yet there has, to date, been no analysis of how allowing bigger trucks will undermine our rail and sea freight systems," added Ms Kedgley.

In a report from the Treasury obtained under the Official Information Act, Treasury does not recommend a lifting on the restriction of heavy vehicle limits "until a more detailed analysis has been undertaken which considers the broader costs and benefits".

"Potential short-term productivity gains should not blind the Minister into taking a more strategic view of our transport networks," said Ms Kedgley.

NON PAYMENT OF TEA AND COFFEE ALLOWANCE

Due to an over sight, a number of KiwiRail staff at Westfield were not receiving their tea and coffee allowance. The explanation was that, somewhere along the line a manager had forgotten to "tick the box". Fair enough, these things happen. When the issues were raised, there was no dispute over what had occurred or that back pay was due. The issues were put in the hands of the pay office and the problems, procrastination, avoidance, duck shoving began.

Finally after months of requests, inquiries, follow-ups and threats the money was paid, the result was that eleven Westfield staff received back pay of up to \$1,159.07. This may not be an isolated incident; members should all check that they are being paid the allowance.

TELCO DISPUTE – UPDATE

We have received the following from the EPMU - Firstly, thank you for your donations for our members involved in the Telecom dispute. So far we've raised around \$140,000 but we have needed every cent over the last couple of weeks as nearly every one of our members have been made redundant and hardship payments have exceeded \$180,000.

Because of the sacking of our members, the last few weeks have seen significant outages in Northland and delays and difficulties in Auckland as Telecom and Visionstream have failed to employ enough skilled workers to cover the jobs.

But Telecom has not yet given in. We've found out they've been using private investigators to spy on and follow our members and both Telecom and Visionstream have started pushing untrue stories to the media about intimidation by our members. Rather than negotiate with us these companies are trying to tough it out in the hope they can break our members' resolve.

Despite this we still have more than 300 members standing strong and saying no to these dire contracts and we are still supporting them to do so. Visionstream need about 600 workers and are currently employing contractors at a considerable premium to try to keep the network functioning.

But to support our members and their fight we need to keep the donations coming in. If you can spare another donation it would be greatly appreciated by us and our members. The longer we hold out the better the result will be for our members and the bigger the warning to other companies that they try these tactics at their peril.

GOVERNMENT URGED TO BACK REDUNDANCY PROTECTION BILL

Labour's Associate spokesperson on labour issues Darien Fenton launched a campaign to boost support for her Bill to give workers fair and decent redundancy protection.

The campaign, called Fair Deal in Hard Times, has the backing of Labour, the Maori Party, the Green Party, unions and community groups and aims to drum up additional support in Parliament to get the Redundancy Protection Bill to the select committee stage.

"The need for a fair and decent system of redundancy protection is becoming increasingly urgent as more people lose their jobs across New Zealand," Ms Fenton said.

"We're seeing hundreds of people lose their jobs every week, including many with no or little redundancy pay, and that's leaving people struggling to pay their mortgages and support their families.

"My redundancy protection bill is designed to offer these Kiwis a reasonable financial buffer to help them keep their families together while they look for new work.

"Redundancy protection legislation is urgently needed and this campaign is about letting the voting public know that this is the Government's chance to do something positive to help every working New Zealander get through the recession.

"Over the next few weeks we'll be taking the Fair Deal

in Hard Times message out to as many Kiwi workers as we can and will be encouraging them to talk to their local MPs and to the Government about how important this issue is to their lives.

"The Government has talked about the importance of supporting Kiwis through these hard times. I urge it to do the right



thing, show it means what it says and back this bill," Ms Fenton said

The Redundancy Protection Bill is based on the recommendations of the Public Advisory Group on restructuring and redundancy, which advised the government to consider introducing minimum redundancy protections for all workers.

More information about the Bill and the campaign is available at www.hardtimes.org.nz

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

CALL FOR NOMINATIONS – KIWI RAIL NETWORKS (FORMERLY ONTRACK) INDUSTRIAL COUNCIL - INFRASTRUCTURE TRACK WORKER REPRESENTATIVE

The Union called for nominations from members for the **KiwiRail Network Track worker Rep – National**

At the nominations close we have received 3 correctly completed nominations for the above one position. A postal ballot in accordance with Rule 42.4 of the Union's rules and standing orders will be conducted under the supervision of the national returning officer. The voting will be preferential. Ballot papers will be issued out of the Unions national Office during week commencing 5 October 2009. Completed **Ballot papers must be received in the Unions National Office by 0800hrs Friday 23 September 2009.**

THE KIWI RAIL INDUSTRIAL COUNCIL (KIC) – NOMINATIONS CALL RESULTS (4 POSITIONS)

At the close of nominations - 28 September 2009, 0830hrs we had received one nomination for each position on the KIC Council.

Passenger Rep - Tranz Metro Wellington Operations

Hayden Smith – Declared elected Unopposed

Locomotive Engineer Rep – Central Region

Wally Wallbutton - Declared elected Unopposed

Locomotive Engineer Rep – Southern Region

Murray Dunlop - Declared elected Unopposed

Terminal Rep – Northern Region

Dean Ngatai - Declared elected Unopposed

The full council therefore for a 2 year term is;

Locomotive Engineer Rep

☞ Northern – Bernie Snook

☞ Central – Wally Wallbutton

☞ Southern – Murray Dunlop

Terminal Rep

☞ Northern – Dean Ngatai

☞ Central – John Maguren

☞ Southern – Doug Blakie

National CT rep – Garesh Sukha

Tranz Metro Pass rep – Hayden Smith



Passenger LD rep – Brian Armstrong

FACTS ABOUT OPEN COUNTRY CHEESE DISPUTE

This is not a pay dispute it is about the right of workers to join a union and bargain collectively.

✎ Open Country Cheese was established by Wyatt Creech with some other "Industry names" and has attracted foreign (Singaporean) investment. The major New Zealand food company Talley's after achieving a majority shareholding have effectively become the management of OCC.

✎ OCC are using a seasonal work approach to run OCC plants and their other plants at Whanganui and Awarua. Long work hours, family unfriendly rosters and using high numbers of temporary workers often for years on end, make employment precarious for workers deemed "non essential".

✎ Waharoa OCC workers have only recently become unionised after some frustrations of dealing with OCC and concerns over job security and proposed company changes to their terms and conditions.

✎ Once bargaining was initiated OCC immediately formed a sham Labour hire company (same directors) and shifted the temps to their books to deny them access to the bargaining process.

✎ The bargaining process failed despite the union dropping any major monetary claims and simply seeking a collective agreement with some job security and a say over any proposed roster and hours of work changes. OCC are totally opposed to workers having a collective agreement and have been aggressively threatening workers with dismissal if they belong to a union.

✎ The union's 14 day strike notice was

responded to by OCC with a 6 week lockout notice. The day the strike was to commence at 6 pm the company marched the workers off the site at 1.30pm and have been running the site with management, temporaries and scabs.

✎ OCC falsely allege sabotage by union members in an attempt to shift the blame for their bad environmental practice (spill in the news) and the fact that a manager is under investigation for assault on a worker. To illustrate their attitude to workers a temporary worker was dismissed on the spot for being seen on the picket supporting a family member.

✎ Despite the workers lifting the first strike notice and offering to return to work, OCC have suspended them and continue to operate with managers, temps and scabs.

✎ A legal case over the use of scabs and the legality of the suspension and

lockout is being heard on Friday the 25th September, pending that result workers are still being denied the right to work. OCC are still refusing workers the right to negotiate a collective agreement. OCC workers need your help to stand up to OCC anti worker tactics and behaviour

BALANCE OF PAYMENTS: IMPROVEMENTS GOOD; REASONS BAD

The improvement in the Balance of Payments to June 2009 is rare and to be welcomed. "It is most regrettable though that the improvement is almost all due to the difficulties that New Zealand faces in the current recession, and the level of international private indebtedness," says Bill Rosenberg, CTU policy Director and Economist.

The current account deficit fell \$1,508 million from the March 2009 quarter when adjusted for seasonal patterns. This was due

**PUT
PEOPLE
FIRST!**

**JOBS,
JUSTICE,
CLIMATE**



**There's work to be done,
together.**

to a fall in income on foreign investment in New Zealand – largely a result of falling company profits due to the recession. For the year to June 2009 there was a welcome fall in the deficit from 8.1 percent of GDP to 5.9 percent, the lowest since September 2004.

Rosenberg noted that “as usual, the banking sector has been a big influence on the situation”. In unadjusted values there was a surplus on the current account of \$124 million in the June 2009 quarter: the first actual quarterly dollar surplus since the March 2003 quarter. But this was only because the BNZ booked a company tax provision of \$661 million during the quarter – presumably due to the court finding against it for previous years’ tax avoidance. Without that, there would have been a deficit of \$537 million. The tax provision was paid out of the bank’s retained earnings, and so shows up as a withdrawal of investment from New Zealand.

Banks were responsible for a rise in New Zealand’s net overseas debt, increasing their indebtedness by \$8.2 billion. They are responsible for 77.0 percent of the net international debt. However there is a welcome reduction in the short term exposure New Zealand has to international debt markets. Of the total overseas debt, that with a time to maturity of one year or less was 44.2 percent at June 2009, compared with 51.4 percent at June 2008. It is likely that this is in part due to Reserve Bank prudential rules requiring banks to reduce their use of short term funding.

The net international liabilities position improved from \$173 billion or 96.4 percent of GDP at March 2009 to \$171 billion or 95.2 percent of GDP. However this was largely due to the revaluation of assets and liabilities as a result of the rising New Zealand dollar, which is hurting exporters. Our gross international liabilities stand at \$306 billion, and both gross and net levels are significantly higher than in June 2008.

The value of exports and imports of goods dropped equally during the 3 months to June (by \$771 million and \$772 million respectively, seasonally adjusted), and there is not good news there on prices. Export prices dropped 11.6 percent during the quarter – the largest fall since the March 1957 quarter. Dairy prices fell 24.1

percent, and so did non-food manufactured goods and

forestry products. Although the value of imports fell equally, their prices fell only 2.9 percent. There was a large fall in intermediate goods imports, reflecting the low activity levels in New Zealand firms. For the year there was a surplus on goods trade, but import prices rose 4.3 percent and export prices fell 9.4 percent.

“However in raw terms it is worth noting that net investment income of \$1.600 billion for the quarter almost wipes out the net earnings from goods exports over imports of \$1.768 billion,” said Rosenberg

“While dairy prices have risen since these June results, the falls in our export prices do not bode well for a recovery in New Zealand’s export sector. Despite selling higher volumes, export income is still retreating.”

GDP FIGURES ADD TO MIXED SIGNALS FOR WORKERS

GDP figures out Wednesday 23 September alongside other economic indicators are leading some commentators to say the recession is almost over.

This is despite predictions that unemployment will peak above 7% in 2010 or even 2011.

Peter Conway, CTU Secretary said today that “there are mixed messages for workers at the moment. On the one hand they are hearing that the worst is over: on the other hand the labour market environment is harsh”.

“Although many employers have adopted a reasonable stance both in respect of maintaining jobs and negotiating on pay increases, there is a much more aggressive stance by some employers with increased lockouts and a refusal to consider even minimal pay adjustments.”

As dairy farmers celebrate an improved payout some dairy workers are facing a

6 week lockout to secure a basic collective agreement. Many top executives are receiving massive pay increases while some workers are being told that they should not expect a pay increase this year. However unions are settling collective agreements with many employers – including a wage rise.

GDP figures published on Wednesday 23 September show a 0.1 percent lift in production GDP with the expenditure measure up by 0.4 percent. However the annual contraction in GDP is 1.8%, compared to +2.5% to June 08 and is described by Statistics NZ as "the largest annual contraction in economic activity since the series began in June 1987". Statistics NZ also note that the 0.1 percent quarterly lift is "so close to zero, no significant conclusions can be drawn that this is a turning point".

Peter Conway said at the time that "the figures out today show there is a long way to go. However there is sufficient optimism in these figures that even the most hard-nosed employers need to reconsider their approach to worker issues at this time".

The Government also needs to increase the scale of economic stimulus to head off the increasing level of unemployment.

SUE BRADFORD ANNOUNCES RESIGNATION

Green MP Sue Bradford announced her resignation from Parliament today after a decade in the House, but confirmed she would remain a member and supporter of the Green Party.

"Sue is a very experienced and very successful MP and we'd like her to continue," Green Party co-leader Russel Norman said, "but we also respect her decision to step down."

Ms Bradford said her decision, effective October 30, was prompted by the Green Party's co-leader contest earlier this year: "The Party made a clear and democratic decision, but of course it was personally disappointing and I'm ready for a change."

The four-term MP said she would remain active with community groups and unions: "I'll always be politically active and

Parliament is just one vehicle for political change. I'll be going back to the grassroots."

The 57-year-old Aucklander said it had been an honour to provide a voice in Parliament for communities that were often without representation, including children and young people, low-income workers and the unemployed.

Green Party co-leader Metiria Turei said Ms Bradford had been a champion of Green social justice policy: "Sue has been strong and determined in representing the Green Party's commitment to speak for the underrepresented and the most vulnerable."

The Green Party's new MP will be Aucklander Dave Clendon, a sustainable business advisor who is of Ngapuhi/Te Roroa and Pakeha heritage. "The Green Party has been in the House for ten years now and so new faces and new energy are to be expected," noted Dr Norman. "Importantly, all of our MPs are committed to the same values, as in any established political party."

Ms Bradford had the unique distinction of seeing three Members' Bills passed into law in the last Parliament. Respectively, they lifted the youth minimum wage to adult rates, extended the length of time some mothers in prison can keep their babies with them, and amended s59 of the Crimes Act so that children receive the same legal protection from assault as adults.

"I've also been privileged, through Green Party budget bids, to secure support for the Community & Voluntary sector, for example, securing substantial extra funding for the Community Organisations Grants Scheme (COGS) and initiating the Community Internship Programme," Ms Bradford said.

The RMTU has sent a message of regret at her resigning and wishing Sue best wishes for the future.

TELCO WORKERS TAKE LIGHTNING STRIKE ACTION

More than a hundred telecommunications engineers in Auckland's North Shore have started lightning strike action to protest moves by Telecom to force them into

becoming dependent contractors – a situation that would dramatically decrease their incomes.

The workers are responsible for the North Shore's phone, internet and eftpos provision and say they will strike until Telecom fronts up to them.

EPMU national secretary Andrew Little says the strike action is part of an ongoing national campaign and Telecom can expect more over the next few weeks.

"Our members have had a gutful of Telecom and its contractors attacking their terms and conditions and are determined to fight back with sporadic strike action around the country over the next few weeks.

"For members in Auckland and Northland the fight is particularly urgent because they've been told they'll be redundant by Telecom contractors Transfield and Downer EDI and picked up as dependent contractors by another Telecom contractor, Visionstream.

"The dependent contracting model represents a serious threat to our members' incomes and their income security and they are determined to refuse to transfer to Visionstream until they have a proper employment offer.

"It's time for Telecom to front up and work with union members to develop long-term and stable employment to ensure a stable future for the telco industry and the New Zealand network.

"We understand that this campaign may result in disruption for members of the public but we have committed to working with Telecom's contractors to ensure emergency services are not affected."

Today's action follows a two-day strike by Downer EDI telco workers in Northland on Monday and Tuesday and national strike action by Transfield workers a week and a half ago.

GET OUT OF BURMA, ACTU TELLS JETSTAR

By Samantha Hawley for AM - The Australian Council of Trade Unions says Jetstar is being immoral and fuelling the military dictatorship by continuing to fly into the country. The ACTU says it wants the Federal Government to pressure Jetstar and other Australian companies to stop doing business in Burma and to step up sanctions against the military dictatorship. Jetstar flies to Burma four times a week - and for the union movement it is four times too many. The ACTU's Sharan Burrow will today launch the campaign against Australian businesses involved in Burma. It coincides with the Burmese Prime Minister's scheduled address to the United Nations General Assembly. "It is immoral. You are propping up a military regime that is oppressing people," Ms Burrow said.



AFRICAN RAILWAY UNIONS STEP UP TO KEY CHALLENGES

Railway unions across Africa met in South Africa last week to plan for the future and share experiences. The 27 delegates from nine countries across Africa, discussed key challenges facing unions in Africa at the ITF Africa railway section conference in Johannesburg from 14-15 September. The challenges included job losses, organising difficulties and railway infrastructure problems. The unions outlined how they were addressing those challenges and pointed out some of their key achievements. The Uganda Railway Workers' Union, for example, highlighted how it had signed a recognition agreement with Rift Valley Railways Limited and secured an agreement on an HIV/AIDS policy in the workplace to ensure against discrimination. Its opposition to the casualisation of the workforce also led to the appointment of some 235 casual workers to permanent positions. Against the odds, the union recruited 575 employees,



bringing workforce representation to 71 per cent.

Meanwhile, the Botswana Railways Amalgamated Union described how it had negotiated a better redundancy package for workers who were losing their jobs and the South African Transport and Allied Workers' Union (Satawu) outlined progress in a number of areas including improved maternity rights and sexual harassment policies.

The conference, which was opened by Satawu president Ezrom Mabyana, was addressed by ITF president Randall Howard, who emphasised the need to rebuild stronger railway unions in Africa. ITF Africa regional secretary Joseph Katende said: "Railway unions in Africa must pursue merger possibilities with other ITF affiliates. This is the best way to ensure a viable service to their members, whose numbers have dwindled due to the shrinkage in railway services following the mismanagement of restructuring processes by investors and governments."

Bits & Bobs

- Reefer Annapurna, stranded in Auckland for a month after being arrested by court officials, is set to be sold, and its Myanmar crew will get to go home. Aozora Bank has a mortgage over the ship, owned by New York company Eastwind Maritime, which has gone into bankruptcy. Geoff Fraser, a broker appointed by the High Court to deal with the ship's arrest, said progress had been made in the past two weeks. "There is now an order for the boat to be sold," he told NZPA. "We haven't decided how it will be sold -- that decision will be made at the end of the week." Mr Fraser said the crew members were being paid and 13 of them would get to return home later this week. The other 10 will stay to prepare the boat for sale before heading home.
- THE number of tankers storing clean petroleum products rose by almost 25% over the last month to 64 ships, ahead of the northern hemisphere winter, writes Martyn Wingrove. Time charter rates for long range two product tankers climbed by 20% in two weeks to

\$17,000 per day because of the rising demand for product storage.

- The number of inactive, idle or laid-up tankers has soared to the highest level recorded since 2003. London-based shipping consultants Drewry said it had identified a sharp rise in idle and inactive tanker tonnage since April. Tankers in lay-up comprised 700,000 dwt in July, according to Drewry's monthly Tanker Insight, and reached 800,000 dwt in August. There were none identified in lay-up four months ago. "The tanker market has crashed, so owners are seeing if they can scrap or, if their tonnage is more modern, put it into lay-up until signs of improvement," said Drewry consultant and Tanker Insight editor Parul Bhambri.

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

- Maintain situational awareness at all times;
- Make safety your first priority;
- Make sure you and 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!"

