

THE ACTIVIST



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SAFETY ALERT

Currently a Wellington based DSG shunt locomotive and a Picton based DSJ locomotive have bans on them preventing them being operated in remote mode. Both locomotives have suffered unexplained brake failures of the remote equipment. In other words the brakes have failed to apply under command from the control box and the locomotives have collided with wagon rakes.

The remote gear on the shunt locomotives is very old and so serious questions are being asked by members as to its ongoing fitness for purpose.

It is important for members to remember that when a remote controlled locomotive fails and the remote gear is isolated the locomotive may be driven in manual mode but the ground gang manning level must be restored to normal manning levels. In other words, if a remote loco has an RCO and 1 rail operator as its normal "on the ground" gang then if the RCO moves into the cab there must be 2 persons on the ground and so another member will need to be provided. If a loco engineer with a shunt loco certification is used to operate the shunt loco in manual mode then the RCO and the Rail Operator may remain on the ground.

PORTS FORUM

The next RMTU ports forum is being held in Wellington on 4 and 5 May 2010. The

Forum will occur at St John's church and we hope to have reps from all of the Union's port branches. A very full agenda is planned and delegates will be working hard.

COALITION AGAINST THE USE OF METHYL BROMIDE

A coalition against the use of Methyl Bromide has been formed and we plan to hold a series of demonstrations where a group of people will be dressed in the masks and suits shown in the image below. There will be speakers at each of the demonstrations, so if on the day you are near any of the locations below, please think about coming along for half an hour or so.



Six Nelson port workers have died of motor neurone disease in recent years. A cluster of deaths such as this is 25 times the international average for the general population. One thing they all had in common was their workplace, where methyl bromide is used to fumigate logs for export.

Professor Ian Shaw, Toxicologist and Pro Vice-Chancellor at the University of Canterbury, asserts that methyl bromide may have caused motor neurone disease in the Nelson Port workers.

The bromine from methyl bromide is also 60 times more destructive to ozone on an atom-per-atom basis than the chlorine from CFCs. So not only is it bad for workers, it's bad for all of us.

There are much safer alternatives to methyl bromide including heat treatment, irradiation, water soaking and debarking and microwave treatment.

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

The Coalition includes the following organisations:

- Soil and Health New Zealand Association
- The Green Party
- The Rail and Maritime Transport Union
- New Zealand Council of Trade Unions
- The Safe Food Campaign
- Guardians of the Sounds
- The Pesticide Action Network
- The Maritime Union of New Zealand
- Friends of Nelsonhaven and Tasman Bay
- The Alliance Party of New Zealand

Protest Schedule

Picton

Date: Friday April 23

Time: 12.00

Location: Shakespeare Bay Lookout
(meet at Le Café, London Quay, 11.45am)

Wellington

Date: Monday April 26

Time: 12.00

Location: The footpath outside of the Bluebridge entrance (Waterloo quay, over the road from the railway station)

Tauranga

Date: Wednesday April 28

Time: 12.00

Location: Corner of Totara St and Hull Rd. It is the first intersection from the wharf.

WORKERS MEMORIAL DAY

International Workers Memorial Day is 28 April 2010. As well as its usual theme of remembering those workers, especially RMTU members, who have been killed whilst at work this year we will recognise the issues surrounding the use of methyl

bromide within the log exporting industry across our wharves.

All members are requested to attend a memorial service near them.

As usual we ask all members to stop what they are doing at midday to Honour the dead and to think about how important safety is to us all going home safe at the end of our days work. It is customary for all trains to stop at midday for 1 minute.

The services (that we have been informed of) will be held at;

Dunedin – the memorial garden 1200hrs

Christchurch – Garden Behind Science Alive 1200hrs

Hutt Shops – 1200hrs at the memorial garden

Napier 1000hrs Sth end of the port behind the seafarers mission

Mount Maunganui – 1200hrs Saturday 1 May Seafarers Centre

Hamilton - memorial Tree – Grantham and Victoria streets 1715 to 1815hrs



“NZ WORK FOR NZ WORKERS” – LETS USE HUTT AND HILLSIDE WORKSHOPS

CAMPAIGN

The RMTU has commissioned a study on the economic benefits to NZ Inc of having new rail rolling stock built at the rail workshops (Hillside and Hutt) in collaboration with other local suppliers rather than the work going overseas. The Study is being funded 50/50 by the RMTU and the DCC.

We are also doing posters to promote the work of the workshops and to show the public what we achieve. Most people do not realize the skill and passion that it takes to operate a railway where the most modern locomotive is 30 plus years old. A petition also is being finalised for the gathering of

signatures of support for building the new rail rolling stock in NZ.

Watch out for the posters and the petitions near you. If you want to assist by gathering the signatures then contact your branch officers.

ANZAC DAY SERVICE – RAILWAY STATION FLAGSTAFF - PETONE

The Petone Community Board has extended an invitation to all RMTU members to attend the flag ceremony at the ANZAC Memorial Flagstaff, Petone Railway Station at 0700hrs on ANZAC Day Sunday 25 April 2010.

Wreaths will be laid during the ceremony by KiwiRail, RMTU National Office and the Hutt Shops Branch.

Please attend and show your comradeship and support for railway men and women who fought during the wars.

UNIONAID ATTACKED BY GOVT

Some members may have heard the comment by Minister McCully on Morning Report on 20 April that he is intending to scrap the KOHA-PICD scheme and establish an alternative fund controlled by MFAT officials (and the Minister). This new scheme would also have a different criteria because the KOHA-PICD scheme has "too much emphasis on union rights".

Cuts are also being made to the Council for International Development.

It is the RMTU's view that UnionAID should not plan on any Government funding after 30 June this year.

Obviously this is a very serious development for UnionAid supporters and reflects the experience of our Australian brothers and Sisters in the Australian union scheme APHEDA under the Howard Government.

HELL HERE NOW

Hell Here Now, A musical interpretation of the Gallipoli diary of Alfred Cameron by Wellington musicians Catherine Mckay, Slava Fainitiski and Brenton Veitch with readings from the diary by Robin Kerr.

The performance takes place in front of Bob Kerr's large painting of Gallipoli.

Performances at Pataka in the exhibiton space (Cnr Norrie and Parumoana St, PORIRUA CITY). Saturday 24 April 2pm, Sunday 25 April 1.30pm and 3pm. Entry is free but limited to 30 seats per performance so booking is essential. Telephone Pataka reception 237 1511 to confirm your place.

ROAD SAFETY COMPROMISED BY DRIVERS' LONG HOURS AND LOW PAY

The Rail and Maritime Transport Union (RMTU) is backing calls for an investigation into truck drivers pay, and says that road safety will always be compromised when low pay and contracting arrangements force drivers to break the law to make a living.

Yesterday the Sunday Star-Times highlighted the pressures that owner-drivers face, with low pay leading to long hours, speeding and fatigue. Labour MP Darien Fenton has called for an enquiry on the links between poor pay and road safety.

"Our members also hear horror stories about long working hours leading to compromised safety conditions on the road," RMTU General Secretary Wayne Butson said.

"Most truck drivers in New Zealand are owner-drivers, and although their business arrangements are that of self employed, they are entirely dependent for their income on the big logistics firms, where they have no real bargaining power over their remuneration."

"This leads to all the unsafe practises that yesterday's article highlighted, such as disregarding maintenance requirements, being on the road for longer than is allowed and skipping on breaks."

"Our road safety will always be compromised while we have driver contracting arrangements that forces people to break the law to make a living, and we are supportive of an enquiry on this matter."



UNION YOUTH VIDEO

See (use) the link below to see the International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC) for young workers on Unions. Lee Cooper has written sub titles in Maori which accompany the video. It will be on the CTU website soon, meanwhile use the link here <http://www.youtube.com/v/PWvuOqCEU9U&hl=mi>

4100's TO 4578's

The OOCL New Zealand has been on our coast this week as part of her maiden voyage to NZ. The 261 metre, 4578 TEU ship is the largest container ship to visit this country as part of a scheduled run.

Does this mean our guys get more money for working bigger ships? There's a thought!

FORESHORE & SEABED REVIEW

As you will be aware, the Government has released a consultation document on the Review of the Foreshore and Seabed Act 2004. To access this document see:

<http://www.justice.govt.nz/policy-and-consultation/reviewing-the-foreshore-and-seabed-act-2004/key-documents>

On Tuesday, 6th April, Sharon Clair and Thomas Webster and Peter Conway met with Chris Finlayson, Attorney-General to discuss the consultation document. The CTU has asked Ross Wilson to prepare a draft submission.

The CTU has, over a considerable period, developed a policy position on the foreshore and seabed and this will be the initial basis of any submission on the review.

Unfortunately the deadline for submissions on the consultation document is 30th April.

It is our understanding that a Bill will be finalised in the June/July period and be introduced into Parliament in August. Submissions on the Bill are therefore likely from August onwards.

NO SELF LOADING BY SHIP'S CREW

All RMTU members are reminded that;

- Dockers work is done by dockworkers
- Seafarers work is done by seafarers
- **It's that simple!**

Dockers work is all cargo handling. This includes lashings. No ship is to be allowed to sail without all cargo lashings having been completed by dockers. We have had a number of reports of ships putting to sea without all of the cargo lashing having been done and the ship's crew being directed by Captains to undertake the work – usually just to meet the tide. This must cease.

AUSTRALIAN MARITIME UNION WINS COMMITMENTS ON SAFETY

The MUA has secured a number of commitments on safety in the wake of the tragic death of a Sydney dock worker. Members of the Maritime Union of Australia participated in a series of urgent "yard" meetings on 30 March in response to the death of Nick Fanos. Fanos, a Patrick Stevedores docker based in Port Botany, was crushed to death on 28 March while loading containers.

The union members' meetings discussed ways of ensuring that other workers' lives were not put at risk. As a result, the company agreed to review the union's demand for safety facilitators to be introduced around the clock seven days a week for a three-week period. It also stated that it would put in place a safety management system with mechanisms and frameworks to identify all risks and hazards, as well as action plans to minimise or eliminate them.

In addition, the company pledged to train three representatives to be involved full time with the safety management system personnel over the following eight weeks, with recommendations to follow.

Other changes included: a new exclusion zone outlining a "no go" area for all staff in the bay where work was being carried out and adjacent walkways and for ship inspections to take place before work begins.



The death of Nick Fanos follows that of docker Brad Gray who was killed in Brisbane on 20 February; meanwhile on 8 April three workers in the port of Kembla narrowly escaped death when a 28 tonne slab of steel from a crane came crashing down onto the wharf.

MUA national secretary Paddy Crumlin commented: "It is obvious we have a serious deficit in worker welfare on our wharves and yet another tragedy shows that deregulated performance based arrangements are clearly not working. The need for stronger enforcement and compliance mechanisms is now urgent." "What is required is a genuinely national and properly regulated approach to stevedoring safety to make and sustain the cultural shift required to achieve safe workplaces in the Australian container and break bulk stevedoring industry," he added.

MAINFREIGHT CROSSING

When Mainfreight built their new distribution centre at Westfield, there was an absolute certainty that KiwiRail engineers (professional, not real) would make a hash of the civil engineering aspects of the job. Some absolute certainties are just that and so no one was disappointed or surprised when the hash became reality.

After two years of trying to get the situation remedied, patience ran out and KiwiRail was given 14 days notice of a stopwork meeting by the Auckland Branch of the RMTU to discuss the issue.

Where previous all requests for meaningful dialogue had been declined by KiwiRail Lo and behold, suddenly they wanted to talk to us. In meaningful gesture of good faith the branch withdrew the notice of meeting on an undertaking that KiwiRail would come up with a plan for consultation by 1st April.

What happened? Well, Nothing. Yes you guessed it, as soon as the heat of the stopwork meeting was off, Kiwirail reverted to type and went back to sleep.

Angry at being snubbed yet again the branch gave KiwiRail 7 days notice of a stopwork meeting. To everyone's surprise (yeah right), KiwiRail again agreed to meet.

This time an agreement was reached, but they were advised that the meeting would proceed regardless. Westfield RMTU members stopped work to hear a report back from their delegates on Thursday 15th April, and the meeting was subsequently adjourned, to be recalled if KiwiRail nods off again.

The outcome? Westfield members now know how to get the attention of their Takapuna managers. Unbelievable as it is that in 2010 the only way you can get Auckland managers to talk to the Union is to serve notice of industrial action, bizarre when you think about it.

This crossing has been and is a serious health and safety issue. Sooner or later someone would have been hit by a train or a truck at the crossing. Perhaps a member of a customer may have been killed, and yet KiwiRail had to have a gun put to its head to get any meaningful action.

Lesson learned????????? Time will tell!

CAMPAIGN TO STOP THE SEARCH AND SURVEILLANCE BILL

The law on searches and surveillance is inconsistent. Over the years all kinds of agencies have acquired various powers to enter your home or other private premises to gather evidence to support legal action.

We're not just talking about the Police and the Serious Fraud Office here; the Pork Board, the local dog catcher and scores of other agencies are authorised to put you under various forms of search or surveillance. And right now this situation is being "rationalised" with a Search and Surveillance Bill which is currently going through the parliamentary machine, pulling all the rules about different kinds of warrants into a single (though not coherent) document.

The overall effect of this Bill will be to increase police powers and give every law enforcement agency all the search and surveillance powers (with few exceptions) currently held by any one agency. What is presented as a rationalisation of the law is in truth a huge expansion of the power of the state.

This means that Pork Board inspectors and dog catchers will have a raft of new search and surveillance powers. Not only will they be able to knock on your door and come in saying they have the right to check on dogs or pig-meat, as they have been able to in the past. They'll now be able (if they suspect a breach of the legislation they enforce) to get warrants allowing them to break down doors, covertly install bugs and cameras and so on.

Even parts of the establishment are worried about this Bill. As you might expect, the Privacy Commission and the Human Rights Commission have reservations, but even the Chief Justice was sufficiently worried to criticise the Bill.

Belly Gully, an establishment law firm, argued that the "premise that each of the government agencies to which it applies ought to share common search and surveillance powers is flawed." They note that this Bill represents a considerable expansion of surveillance powers, and is "likely to lead to circumstances in which the powers are used in unexpected ways."

Another who is worried is President of the New Zealand Law Society, John Marshall QC. Marshall said in his submission that "The proposed homogenisation of powers would result in a dramatic expansion of powers for certain agencies The Bill's approach is still observably 'one-size-fits-all'.... [I]t is difficult for the Society to comprehend why non-police enforcement agencies require, or are suited for, such a striking expansion of powers."

While John Marshall might be concerned about the increased power of minor law enforcement authorities who inherit the search and surveillance powers of the Police under this Bill, in fact that may be a less serious development than the increased powers of the Police themselves, who are slated to acquire the powers of the Serious Fraud Office.

The Serious Fraud Office was established in 1990 with certain powers considerably stronger than those of the Police, intended to address high-level and complex business crime. The SFO can get warrants which allow them to make you give them documents, and to interview you without your normal right to silence, both on pain

of imprisonment, essentially even if this will incriminate you. So powers designed to untangle complex large-scale white-collar crime will now be available to the police if they have reasonable grounds for suspicion that you are involved with two or more others in planning any offence (past, present or future) punishable by imprisonment, which is the majority of NZ offences. This is a scary thought for many, including activists, trade unionists and journalists. Under the Bill for example, Police could force a journalist to give up their sources. They could get a warrant against an organiser of a picket (if they "reasonably suspect" the picket will involve say trespass, disorderly behaviour or unlawful assembly) which essentially says, either you give us the names of other organisers, tell us the detail of your plans, and give us any associated correspondence, or you will go to jail.

This Bill is no minor consolidation of existing powers, but a new departure.

A public meeting is organised for 8 April, 7.00 pm, in the Old Government Building Lecture Theatre 2 (VUW Law School) Wellington to discuss the Search and Surveillance Bill which is due to be reported back to Parliament on 1 May. Warren Young, deputy president of the NZ Law Commission and Michael Bott, prominent civil rights lawyer and representative of the Council for Civil Liberties are the presenters. The moderator for the programme will be Dr. Sandra Grey, Senior Lecturer, School of Social and Cultural Studies, Victoria University.

UNIONAID FUNDRAISER

We would like to draw your attention to an exciting UnionAID film fundraiser taking place in Wellington on Monday 26th April and Auckland on 3 May.

The documentary is called Breaking the Silence: Burma's Resistance and the wellington screening will be its New Zealand Premier. UnionAID is a registered charity that helps vulnerable workers in the Asia-Pacific region to realize their rights and get a fairer deal. One of UnionAID's key projects works with Burmese migrant workers on the Thai border. If you would like to purchase tickets please:



Make an electronic transfer to account: **01-0533-0208365-00** Under Particulars please indicate 'Burma Film' and under Reference please write your full name so that you can be identified. Please also send an email to unionaid@nzctu.org.nz detailing how many tickets you would like and where you would like those tickets sent. Tickets will be sent when your payment has been received.

Or;

Write a cheque payable to UnionAID and post along with your contact details and postal address to: UnionAID, PO Box 6689, Marion Square, Wellington, 6141

Please consider friends and whanau that may also be interested in this event. Get in quick to avoid disappointment.

WELFARE WORKING GROUP LACKS UNDERSTANDING OF BENEFICIARIES

The Council of Trade Unions is disappointed that the Welfare Working Group announced yesterday hints strongly at a 'blame the beneficiary' approach to welfare reform.

"Where are the representatives of organisations with first-hand knowledge and understanding of the problems beneficiaries face, such as the Child Poverty Action Group?" asked CTU Secretary Peter Conway. "The whole tenor of a group focused on 'welfare dependency' but lacking anyone who really knows what it is like to be welfare dependent is biased towards blaming beneficiaries in some way for their situation."

"The Government needs to clarify what it means by welfare dependency and represent the true scale of any problem. For example, over half of the total welfare bill is accounted for by NZ Superannuation, and only 6 percent is made up of through unemployment benefits."

"The CTU has a major concern that this Group will end up criticising people who are ill, invalidated, unemployed or caring for children as sole parents, instead of recommending active labour market policies that create real opportunities for decent work and respecting the important

role that sole parents, for instance, have in caring for children."

"The number of unemployment beneficiaries fell from 162,000 in 1999 to only 18,000 in 2008 thanks to economic growth and policies which supported people into work. The recent rise in beneficiaries is down to the recession and insufficient investment in employment programmes. The CTU has already called for action on the report of the Public Advisory Group on Restructuring and Redundancy, which made recommendations on helping the recently unemployed back into work or retraining. Without a serious look at this side of the equation the Welfare Working Group cannot properly address the task of helping people off benefits and back into productive employment."

"The suggestion that some sort of unemployment insurance be introduced removes the social protection of beneficiaries by the Government and privatises it as an individual benefit entitlement based on prior payments. This would be an extremely worrying scenario."

WIN A DELUXE COFFEE MACHINE - UNION MEMBERS ONLY

Union Plus (in association with Sovereign) is giving you the chance to win a Deluxe Coffee Machine valued at over \$2,000. There are also 25 coffee packs to be won. There is one condition - you must be a current Union member to enter.

Text the word CUP109 and your Name & RMTU to 382.

You will receive an auto-responder message to confirm your entry and that 'an adviser will be in touch'. Don't worry, the only contact you will have is from the Union Plus Member Benefits team to ask if you wish to opt-in to receive their monthly member benefits updates.

The competition ends on June 30th. www.unionplus.co.nz

CONTRADICTORY MESSAGES ON CORPORATE PROFITS, CONTINUED IMPROVEMENT IN ACC AND SUPER FUND SHOWN



IN GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTS

Lower corporate profits are driving tax revenue below forecast according to Treasury, says CTU Economist and Policy Director Bill Rosenberg.

"This is a different picture from what we saw just two weeks ago in the Balance of Payments," said Rosenberg. "There, corporate profits to overseas investors were rising again, leading to a steep worsening of the current account deficit. We wonder if different pictures are emerging on the health of the overseas owned and domestic businesses."

"Meanwhile, the investments of ACC and the New Zealand Super Fund continue to improve, leading to the Government's operating balance being \$1.1 billion better than forecast with a deficit of \$1.6 billion. While government debt continues to increase, at 26.6 percent of GDP it is far behind countries like Japan for which the OECD forecasts government debt of 197 percent of GDP, or the U.K. on 83 percent. ACC's investments are now worth \$786 million more than forecast."

"There remains room for the Government to assist those in difficulty due to unemployment and to maintain government programmes that add to activity in the economy."

WOMEN ELECTED TO DOCKERS' UNION ROLES

Canadian dockers elected two women to senior roles at the ILWU (International Longshore and Warehouse Union) Canada convention last week.

Mandy Webster was elected as vice president at large, while Jane Sansom was newly elected as an executive member of ILWU Local 500, and as a delegate to attend the next Canadian Labour Congress convention.

Dock work is a largely male dominated industry, but women are starting to progress through union ranks. Last year, three women were elected onto the ITF African regional dockers' committee.

This election shows that dockers are amongst the progressive groups of the labour movement, said Frank Leys, ITF dockers' section secretary. "I congratulate these women and wish them luck."

DOCK WORKERS CHEAT DEATH IN STEEL SLAB CRASH

Three MUA dock workers were lucky to escape death after 28 tonnes of steel fell from a crane at Port Kembla. The workers were on board the Panamanian flag of convenience vessel Cos Knight at the BlueScope Steel and Patrick Stevedores wharves loading slabs of steel bound for Korea, when the wire on the ship's crane snapped, sending a 28-tonne steel slab and parts of the crane falling several metres to the wharf below.

MUA branch secretary Gary Keane said the three men had just seconds to jump clear before the steel hit the wharf less than a metre away from them. "They'd just taken a step back. As the steel load came down they dived out of the way. The steel wire itself could have sliced them in half. One bloke dived into a hole between two loads of steel, the others jumped onto another load," he said.

The accident came just a day after the funeral of Sydney dock worker Nick Fanos, who died on March 28 after being crushed while loading containers onto a ship at Port Botany and a week after a Melbourne dock worker was hospitalised with life-threatening injuries after a workplace accident.

Dock workers across Australia, including those at Port Kembla, held stopwork meetings on Wednesday to push for the establishment of a Federal Government Stevedoring Safety Task Force and a National Stevedoring Safety Code of Practice.

SOLIDARITY WITH LOCKED OUT RIO TINTO WORKERS IN BORON, USA

The ILWU from the US has contacted us regarding a dispute they are having with Rio Tinto, a multibillion dollar mining company. Rio Tinto has locked out about 570 hourly

workers from the Borax mine in Boron, California following a refusal from the workers to accept the company's concessionary contract ultimatum.

Rio Tinto has responded by replacing its experienced, skilled workforce with workers from its other facilities and with contract workers supplied by a company that specialises in providing strike breakers to firms engaged in strikes or lockouts.

The ILWU has called on the ITF and mining workers global federation ICEM to provide solidarity support and many ITF dockers' unions have already pledged support.

How you can help

Rio Tinto is holding its Annual General Meeting on 15 April in London and on 22 April in Melbourne, Australia. The ITF and ICEM are coordinating a rally and a visit from an international delegation from US, UK, Netherlands and Belgium.

1. Let us know if you can attend the rallies in London or Australia (mailto:dockers@itf.org.uk)

2. Send a message of protest to Rio Tinto between 15-22 April, when the AGMs in London and Melbourne will take place (<http://www.itfglobal.org/solidarity/rio-tinto.cfm/letter/48/>)

3. Send letters of solidarity to our Brothers and Sisters in Boron. Let them know that they and their families are not alone and have the support of a worldwide family here (<http://www.itfglobal.org/solidarity/rio-tinto.cfm/letter/49/>)

IDEOLOGY AND CORPORATE PROFITS DRIVE PPPS, NOT ECONOMICS

Experience in the UK and Australia shows that Public Private Partnerships are a recipe for profiteering, higher costs to the taxpayer, and loss of control for school principals, said CTU Economist and Policy Director Bill Rosenberg today.

"Even with the levels of the debt that the government carries, which are considerably lower than most other OECD countries, it

would be lower cost and a better deal to stay with public provision," said Rosenberg.

"Examples from the UK are sobering. In January this year the UK's Independent newspaper analysed 667 schools, hospitals and other public assets in similar 'Public Finance Initiative' schemes, and showed that they would pay 262 billion pounds over 30 years for assets with a capital value of 55 billion pounds. Another detailed analysis of six such schemes in 2008 showed that the private interests were earning astronomical returns - 17 to 23 percent rates of return. Three of the projects (hospitals and a college) could have been built for half the cost through normal government borrowing, and 'huge savings' could have been made on the other projects, including 11 schools."

An analysis of PPP roading projects showed the additional cost of PPP projects over public debt was up to 40 percent of the revenues for the roads.

School principals have expressed their frustration at having to wrangle with building owners. They may also lose control of the use of school halls and other potentially money-making facilities. Authorities find themselves left with the bill if numbers of pupils fall or the company pulls out.

"No contract can cover all contingencies," continued Rosenberg. "Contracts become hugely complex and are a gold mine for lawyers and accountants, both in drawing up the contracts and in finding loopholes for contractors to ask for more."

"Contrary to the rhetoric, this is a recipe for increasing government debt and communities losing control of their schools and other facilities."

PORT CHALMERS NEW STRADDLES

Recently Port Chalmers undertook a major restructuring at the port which resulted in 28 union members (mostly RMTU) being made redundant. The restructuring was, according to the Port Company, as a result of a loss of trade at the port and diminishing cargo volumes. It is therefore a major surprise to learn that the Port Company is splashing out and purchasing new Kelmar straddles. Apparently there has been increased

container throughput in the port recently and so we look forward to the recruitment of local labour to drive the machines.

YOUTH DRIVING PACKAGE NOT BOLD ENOUGH

The youth union movement Stand Up believes the approval by Cabinet today of an increase in the driving age and accompanying provisions will not significantly improve young people's driving skills because the package lacks any commitment to making professional driver training accessible and cheap for young Kiwis.

Stand Up Convenor James Sleep, said today that whilst the Government has the right intentions it has failed to commit to the most important factor concerning young people's ability to drive safely.

"Cabinet's approval today lacks any commitment to help bring the costs of professional training down in order to make it more accessible. The Government's proposals are simply not bold enough," says Sleep.

"The Government wouldn't expect young people to master maths, English or science in secondary school if it cost \$100 per lesson and wasn't available in every community. A similar expectation needs to be applied to the important skill of driving."

"Thousands of young people are going without professional training, at the expense of lives. The Government must recognise this and commit to training subsidies for first time drivers."

Stand Up also believes increasing the driving age will hurt thousands of young people across the country that need access to work, education and community activity.

"The Government's failure to commit to exemptions for young people, particularly those in the heartland of our country, will harm the social and economic fabric of these communities," concluded Sleep.

CTU SUPPORTS CALLS FOR TRUCKING ENQUIRY

The CTU supports an inquiry by the Transport and Industrial Relations Select Committee into the working conditions of truck drivers.

A recent article in the Sunday Star Times reported that truck drivers routinely fall asleep behind the wheel, drive up to 100 hours a week, don't take any breaks and scrimp on maintenance.

CTU Secretary Peter Conway said: "This report comes as no surprise. In April 2003 a major study of labour market issues affecting truck drivers was released which highlighted a number of problems leading to long hours, safety concerns, and low pay. It was prepared for the Road Transport Forum NZ, New Zealand Forest Owners' Association Inc and the Log Transport Safety Council by Ron Oliver, Peter Baas, Dr Tom Ludvigson and Hester Bolitho."

Issues identified included purchasers of truck transport services taking a short-term view leading to haulage rates being squeezed below those required to maintain the general health of the transport industry and its long-term sustainability; established truck transport operators taking a short-term and unrealistic approach to tendering for work; and many new entrants to the truck industry being undercapitalised and not fully appreciating the economics of sustainable truck operation leading to undercutting cartage rates needed for sustainable operation.

Conway said, "The CTU has been calling on the industry to act on this report. Now we think it is time that the Select Committee took up these issues."

BITS AND BOBS

- **\$100m in rail freight orders**, United Group Ltd has announced that its Rail division has secured three freight rolling stock orders with Queensland Rail worth around \$100m. The three orders include:
 - 4 locomotives for the Hunter Valley
 - 160 wagons for the Hunter Valley

- 200 wagons for the Bowen Basin
- The Swedish Rail Administration's (Banverket) must surely get the award for most sympathetic employer of the year. Recently the company issued a second warning to a 52 year-old employee after the signal operator's litany of workplace transgressions led to numerous delays. And what was he doing to cause high speed X2000 trains, cargo trains, and passenger trains to regularly run late - visiting pornographic websites and gambling sites while logged in at work with his rail administration account. Additionally, the signal operator's porn habits led the administration's local computer network to become infected with viruses. The decision to issue a formal warning was not however unanimous, two trade union representatives argued that a warning was too harsh a measure. Instead, they felt that a more appropriate course of action would have been to serve the employee with a written reminder of his duties as a rail administration employee!
- Bombardier Transportation's new railway vehicle manufacturing site in India has completed the production of its 100th MOVIA metro car. Inaugurated in November 2008, the new plant represented a €33 million investment and was designed and built from scratch following the most modern industrial standards worldwide. Presently the site is executing the production of a contract to deliver 424 MOVIA metro cars to Delhi Metro Rail Corporation (DMRC). This new site incorporates the most advanced manufacturing techniques, such as spot-welding robots, making Bombardier the first railway company in India to use robotic welding technology for rail car manufacturing. Source: IIFL
- Some Scottish rail workers are due to take part in a three-day walkout over First ScotRail plans to employ ticket examiners rather than conductors on the new Airdrie to Bathgate line. The RMT and ScotRail accused each other of "intransigence" after talks involving the conciliation service Acas broke down last week. ScotRail said it would operate 95% of services during the strike. The union has argued conductors, or guards,

are best equipped to deal with serious incidents and claims the plan will "jeopardise passenger safety". However, First ScotRail has dismissed the safety concerns and insisted the trains will be no different to those which have operated in Strathclyde for 25 years. RMT general secretary Bob Crow said: "First ScotRail and the Scottish government are still refusing to face up to their responsibilities to the travelling public and their staff and are prepared to slash corners on rail safety in the dash for cuts and the drive for profits.

Source: BBC

- GE Transportation has signed a Memorandum of Understanding with Kazakhstan's Joint Stock Company Locomotiv (JSC Locomotiv) and Joint Stock Company Kurastyru Zauty (JSC LKZ) for 150 shunt locomotives. The first five shunter locomotives would be manufactured at GE Transportation's Erie, Pennsylvania (USA) plant. After the prototypes are manufactured and validated, the additional shunter locomotives would be assembled at Joint Stock Company Kurastyru Zauty's plant in Astana, Kazakhstan with kits from GE Transportation. Locomotive delivery is anticipated for 2012.

Source: GE Transportation

Note: The locomotives are to be built locally (Kazakhstan's right next door to China) in a Joint Venture after the first batch of 5. It appears only Kiwirail is silly enough to build locomotives in China and have all the hard earned kiwi Tax dollars stay overseas with no benefit to NZ long-term - other than getting second rate loco's. A recent survey showed that the vast majority of rail rolling stock remains being built in either North America or Europe.

Let's Be Safe Out There & Remember.....

"WE'RE STRONGER TOGETHER"!

