

THE Transport Worker

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Conference report 2008



INSIDE



**LE
REUNION
BRINGS
OUT THE
SMILES**

Retired LE Pat Hickton has trouble wiping the smile from his face during the Labour Weekend celebrations.

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Solidarity the key issue

THE Union's 14th Annual National Conference was held at the Police College, Porirua from 14 to 16 October 2008. There were 53 delegates, observers and staff (approx 1 rep for every 80 members) from all over New Zealand. International guests included Michael Forbes from the Transport Workers Union of Australia; Ian Bray from the West Australian Branch of the Maritime Union of Australia and Andy Reed from the UK Train drivers Union - ASLEF.

The Deputy Prime Minister the Hon Dr Michael Cullen opened the Conference and used the opportunity to announce an infrastructure stimulus project of work between North and South junction on the NIMT railway line which is situated just north of Wellington and also to explain the NZ Labour Party's finance policy to delegates. He also elaborated on Labour's vision for rail.

Other guests on day one were:

- Geoff Davenport - a partner with McBride, Davenport James. Geoff outlined 'The Sources of Good Faith Principles' to delegates;
- Mark Cairns the CEO of Port of Tauranga who spoke on the future for NZ ports and his views on the need for port rationalisation;
- Helen Kelly, president of the NZ Council of Trade Unions who set the scene for the 2008 Election; and,
- Chris Flatt the NZ Council of Trade Unions' National Campaign Organiser who gave tips and techniques on engaging members in politics and this election.

Day two began with the international guests' presentations summarising their own domestic situations and also why globalising solidarity is so important in the globalised modern economies our countries operate in. After the presentations a panel discussion was held on issues raised and globalising solidarity. Delegates

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RMTU – NZ's Largest Specialist Transport Union

CONFERENCE

entered into strong and productive debate on the issues and unanimously supported the RMTU continuing to play a role in international affairs.

Just before lunch we took the conference photo whilst the sun was in the right spot.

Afternoon on day two was given over to the Ministry of Transport's programme manager from the Seafreight Development Unit Michael O'Rourke who gave a presentation on the 'Seachange Strategy' and what it means for the RMTU and its wider membership. Some delegates saw the strategy as being anti rail but it was explained that the projected freight task for New Zealand is of such a magnitude that for rail to just maintain its current 17% market share of freight volumes will require it to carry 75% more freight than it does now just to maintain the status quo.

It was then to learning workshops which included such topics as:-

- Dealing with emotions;
- Effective meetings;
- Negotiating 101;
- Understanding a company financial statement/balance sheet;
- Beating apathy;
- Recruiting members - overcoming obstacles;
- Handling a personal grievance; and
- Meeting the boss and organising versus servicing.

Late afternoon on Day 2 saw Geoff Aylward from Unions Plus give delegates a presentation on its benefits.

Day three began with a group of delegates singing 'Solidarity Forever' (they had been practising til the wee hours) and the presentation of the Union's financial statements and budget for the year. (see page 27).

A resolution to increase the union fee by 4% was passed resoundingly by the delegates.

Other remits passed at conference included rule changes and technical resolutions such as appointing an auditor, trustees for the LE Trust Fund, NZ Harbours Superannuation Plan, Runanga and Railways Welfare Trustees.

The acting chief executive of KiwiRail William Peet explained to delegates the company's structure and future followed by the Green Party spokesperson on labour Relations MP Sue Bradford on why the Greens are worthy of our members' party votes.

Before lunch there were a series of notices of

motion and in the afternoon Roy Cowley spoke on the returns from the two Funds the Union manages - the NZ Harbours Superannuation Plan and the Loco Engineers' Sickness and Accident and Death Benefit.

Lawyer Ben Thompson informed delegates of their rights under the HASIE and ERA Acts and gave examples of recent cases and Hazel Armstrong reported to delegates on the recent ACC Futures seminar and its outputs.

The NZ Council of Trade Union secretary Peter Conway gave the closing address and spoke



Geoff Davenport



Michael Forbes TWU



Mark Cairns, Port of Tauranga



Michael Cullen



Bert Katene, Go Wellington



Hazel Armstrong



Chris Flatt, CTU



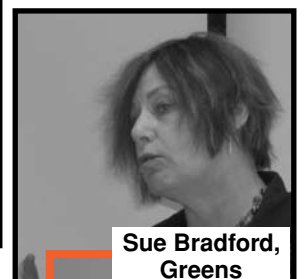
Helen Kelly, CTU



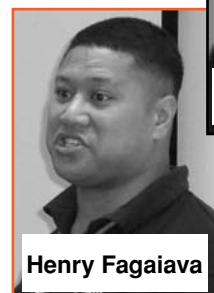
William Peet, KiwiRail



Mike O'Rourke, MOT



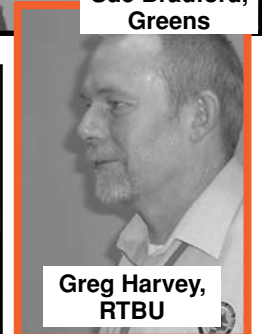
Sue Bradford, Greens



Henry Fagaiava



Ian Bray, MUA-WA



Greg Harvey, RTBU

on current topical issues confronting NZ workers.

All delegates completed a questionnaire on this year's Conference the results of which have been collated and will provide valuable input into what delegates are looking for at future Conferences.

Looking forward to Conference 2009.



HISTORY

CELEBRATIONS surrounded the anniversary of last spike in the North Island Main Trunk Line (NIMT) took place last month following special return train journeys taking guests from Auckland and Wellington to the central North Island.

The ceremony recreating that act took place on November 15 under the auspices of ONTRACK and KiwiRail, in association with Ruapehu District Council.

The last spike, which can be viewed at Maunganui o te ao – half way between Ohakune and National Park on SH2 – was driven into place by the then Prime Minister, Sir Joseph Ward on 6 November, 1908.

It marks the meeting point at which the northern and southern railheads met.

The inspiration for the project came from Sir Julius Vogel in 1870 and although a section of line from Auckland to Mercer opened in 1875, the “first sod” wasn’t officially turned until 1885.

In 1900 the Government finally settled on the Central North Island route instead of an alternative route through Taranaki.

The first through train was the Parliament Special which travelled on temporary tracks through the Central North Island in August 1908 to take parliamentarians to Auckland to greet the visiting American “Great White Fleet”.

Sir Joseph was presented with a specially made silver spike which is now held by Te Papa.

The re-creation of the ceremony was headed by KiwiRail Board chair Jim Bolger who drove a replica spike (chromed rather than solid silver) beside the original spike, assisted by the Mayor of Ruapehu District Council, Sue Morris, who unveiled a plaque marking the occasion. 🌐

LAST SPIKE



Jim Kelly and former Labour MP Harry Duynhoven.



(above) KiwiRail Board chair Jim Bolger, Ruapehu District Mayor Sue Morris and Auckland Regional Council chair Mike Lee.



(left and below) Views and viewers of the ceremony.



THIS year has been a difficult one for members, delegates and officials of the Union. We have all been very busy and hardworking. Without your loyalty, commitment and steadfast willingness to be a Union member and to stand up for one another this Union would not exist – nor would it be held in such high regard by our comrades within the trade union movement, both here and internationally, and by employers. I thank you for your loyalty and commitment and I am proud to be your general secretary.

Mood of the nation

I don't think our Union can be seen as either hard line left or right wing – we are first and foremost New Zealand mainstream working men and women. We live within communities and we reflect those community values and beliefs. We are part of the mood of the nation. If I am to consider our Union's vast majority of members' political or philosophical leanings I would have to say that we are mostly centre left and this is what I thought was mainstream New Zealand. After 8 November I am no longer sure. I hope we do not all pay a price for our failure to vote on election day and that John Key and his coalition government will maintain the country's general direction since 1999. It is clear from the election statistics that Labour voters did not vote National in this election, they just did not vote at all. The voter turnout in key seats was very disappointing and so we are left with all of our hopes falling on the Maori Party to offset the influence of Act and Roger Douglas – and that Key will stay with the commitments he made during the election campaign. There will be analysis on why the voting trends were the way they were or what caused people to not vote, but in my trips around branches I know there was very real dissatisfaction with Labour and its coalition partners over things like the 'smacking' legislation. If there are lessons for us in what happened they will be learned – and life will move on as we prepare for 2011.

Historic

During the year we have had the historic re-nationalisation of the NZ Rail industry and another part of our economy will cease



Wayne Butson, general secretary

to see hard earned profit and NZ dollars leave the country to land in the pocket of Australian rich fat cats. United Group Rail has been advised that their contract will not be renewed and that the wagon and locomotive maintenance will be in-sourced back into KiwiRail. What is disturbing are reports that the UGL Australasian chief, Andy Summers, flew to New Zealand soon after the election and met with Bill English to lobby hard to retain the contract.

It is not surprising that UGL wish to retain what is a very good 'cost plus' contract but that they see an opportunity with a change of Government that the re-nationalisation and rejuvenation of rail focus shifting under National.

Promised money

To date there is only a guarantee of NZ\$120m which is targeted for new wagons, locomotives, Tranz Scenic cars for the Tranz Alpine and Overlander, safety work on Picton and Wellington Ferry terminals and CTC on the Midland Line to name the major items. What we really need is the rest of the NZ\$1.2b promised to put right the decay and neglect of the privatisation. If the National-led government does not carry through with these funding commitments then you are all probably better off heading across the ditch to Australia where the rail industry is at least marching to a very clear vision of growth, reinvigoration and sustainable transport by

encouraging modal shift. It is of concern that all of the public statements on infrastructure and the need to improve transport in NZ by the incoming Government have not included rail – neither freight nor passenger. Major questions must hang over Auckland and the proposed electrification, the airport link and the CBD tunnel etc. The Seachange strategy and coastal shipping is also a concern as so far the fund has NZ\$18m in applications with the 2008/09 amount available being NZ\$6m and no mention of coastal shipping and ports in Government statements to date.

Notable events

This year has seen the 100 years for the North Island Main Trunk Line and for locomotive engineer unionism. It gave me great pleasure to be associated with, and attend, both events. It shows the importance of history and reinforces that we need to learn from it. The Last Spike ceremony (page 3) was a notable event of the time as it heralded the nationalisation of the national rail system and followed the purchase by the crown of the last private rail section – the Manawatu and Wellington Rail Company. The irony of the event being celebrated just after the re-nationalisation of rail by the chair of the board of KiwiRail who was the prime minister of the country at the time rail was privatised was, I think, lost on a few on the day. I mentioned this to Jim Bolger and we shared a wry chuckle. When I questioned him on what the future may hold for rail he professed to know no more than me.

Back to the coal face

Some of the things 2009 will bring is, us, all back at the coal face ready to meet the challenges no matter what they are with our usual passion, drive and determination to succeed. So have a great Christmas and New Year break. Enjoy your families and let them enjoy you and your company. Keep an eye on safety, the safety of you and of all those around you, and make sure that the break is one of celebration and not of commiseration or sorrow over the injury or loss of a loved one whether family or friend.

2008 has been a great year but through unity, solidarity and comradeship we will together make sure that 2009 has even more to offer. 🌐

Death

Dear Editor,
I am writing to let you know that Jim Kane passed away August 1. He was secretary of the NUR Hillside workshops. He retired in 1985. He enjoyed the magazine you sent and the last two I read out to him. I enjoyed knowing what was going on myself. If you put something in your magazine would you please send me one to put away for the family. Catherine Kane Mosgiel

Retirement

Dear Editor,
Due to ongoing health issues and with consultation with my family I have decided to take early retirement. I am also looking into doing casual work until my wife, who is also considering retiring next year, to maybe or most likely retire back to the Islands. My confirmed date is set for September 5. I take this opportunity to say a big thank you to all when there were times that I'd needed your support. A big mention to Mani, Kev the farmer Jones and also Gary Piwi Riddell in Wellington A Box. Also best wishes to RTMTU staff. Farewell to all. B T Kameta ex-operations support

Dear Editor,
With this letter I hereby give notification of my withdrawal from the RTMTU. Thank you very much for being there - keep up the good work. Merry Christmas to all your staff and members. Michael Babour Automotive engineer, Valley Flyer.



Somali pirates threaten

THE international shipping industry is dismayed by recent comments, attributed to leaders of the Coalition Task Force operating in the Gulf of Aden, that it is not the job of navy forces to protect merchant ships and their crews from increasingly frequent attacks from pirates operating out of Somalia. The pirates are now attacking ships on a daily basis with machine guns and rocket propelled grenades, and currently holding over 200 seafarers hostage. The pirates are operating with impunity, and governments stand idly by.

This apparent indifference to the lives of merchant seafarers and the consequences for society at large is simply unacceptable, says a spokesperson for the shipping industry.

"The shipping industry is utterly amazed that the world's leading nations, with the naval resources at their disposal, are unable to maintain the security of one of the world's most strategically important seaways," he said adding that since 9/11, the industry has spent billions of dollars to comply with stringent new security requirements, but when those same ships are subject to attack the response of many governments is to ignore the problem.

The arming of merchant ships, as suggested by the Task Force, will almost certainly put the lives of ships' crews in greater danger and is likely to escalate the level of violence. It would also be illegal.


The international shipping industry, in the

strongest possible way, urges governments to commit the necessary navy vessels now, and to ensure they have the freedom to engage forcefully against any act of piracy in the Gulf of Aden.

Governments, they say, must issue clear rules of engagement to allow naval forces to intercept and take appropriate action against the pirates and their 'motherships', as

permitted by UN Security Council Resolution 1816 and existing international law about the rights of States to repress criminal acts on the high seas.

The situation is now so serious that major shipping companies, who are currently negotiating with charterers to avoid transiting the Gulf of Aden and the Red Sea/Suez Canal all together, will decide to redirect their ships via the Cape of Good Hope. This would add several weeks to the duration of many ships' voyages and would have severe consequences for international trade, the maintenance of inventories and the price of fuel and raw materials. This would also affect not just those countries to which cargoes are destined but all global seaborne trade, a consequence which, in the current economic climate, must surely be avoided.

"We need action, not words or rhetoric," says the Task Force. "What is at stake are the lives of merchant seafarers and the security of world trade." 



In boats like this Somali pirates hijacked the world's largest oil tanker last month.




Call for global union lobby on world financial crisis

THE ITF's executive board has urged global union leaders to spearhead a campaign of action to demand that international financial institutions protect the world's most vulnerable workers.

The executive board, which met on 23-24 October in London, issued a statement on the global economic crisis, calling for a concerted campaign to support the establishment of a new financial system. It would also call for institutions such as the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund and the World Trade Organisation to include social protection for the most vulnerable on their agenda.

Greater use of 'workers' capital' mechanisms should also be made; this would ensure that workers' representatives play a major role in controlling the assets accumulated in pension schemes and other funds, which form the basis of the financial system. It was agreed that the ITF and its global union partners needed to develop strategies to take forward these objectives by working with trade unions, civil society as well as other organisations that defend workers' interests.

The theme of the ITF's next congress in Mexico in 2010 will reflect growing concerns regarding climate change and sustainable transport. 

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

14th Annual Conference

14-16 October, 2008

RMTU president Jim Kelly gives his annual summary of the state of the union and its place within New Zealand society.

IT has been a very busy year for all staff and they have all worked very hard and delivered for members in ports and rail. This year there have been a raft of collective agreement negotiations with all of our rail agreements expired as well as most of our port agreements. These agreements have involved all the staff and have been re-negotiated with, hopefully, successful outcomes. They perform way over and above simply doing the job. They are not nine to five workers; they are personally committed and always go the extra mile in defending, supporting and advancing the cause of members. This year has been no different. On behalf of the National Management Committee and all members, our thanks and appreciation of your efforts and commitment over the last 12 months. You are all a credit to our Union.



proved working environment which was achieved through successive generations of struggle, you would agree that we have come a long way.

However those achievements are always under attack. Given the current economic environment, there is little cause to believe that these attacks will stop. As long as a capitalist market economy has existed, greed has been a huge

force. But it is the new ways in which this greed manifests itself that ensures that our union movement will never be redundant. Those of us who understand the mission of trade unions in terms of fighting against oppression and exploitation, fighting for equality and the creation of a society based on the principle of citizens with rights, also know that we face enormous challenges in the context of globalisation.

With the ever-quickenning pace of capital movement across the globe, in addition to the increasing sophistication of financial products, the events of recent months in the US, the UK and in Europe, where banks are falling over, where building societies are going bankrupt, where pensions funds are being lost, all point to the extent to which the global economy is ignorant of the true size and scale of its activities in the global trading system.

We are living in an 'information society' where news and data is openly available and accessible. However it is strongly arguable that we have never before been as ignorant and in the dark as to the true nature of capitalism as we are today. The collapse of the sub-prime mortgage market (high risk loans with little or no guarantee of the borrowers

Thank you

Once again I acknowledge the efforts of all our voluntary and committed RMTU delegates, officers and activist members who make the RMTU the proud and effective organisation it has become. We say it every year, but it needs to be said, we are a strong and active Union only when our members are strong and active. Thanks to you all.

I also recognise and acknowledge the efforts of our paid staff. Industrial officers – Brian Cronin in Christchurch, along with Libi Carr in our Lyttelton office, Todd Valster and Henry Fagaiava in Wellington, Scott Wilson in Auckland and Phil Spanswick in Tauranga and our General Secretary and New Zealand ITF Convener Wayne Butson. Wayne's involvement nationally and internationally has had a huge impact on the RMTU's image and reputation for being a well organised, knowledgeable and respected Union. Thank you Wayne and our industrial staff for your continued support and commitment on behalf of our RMTU members.

Last, but certainly by no means least, the two head office staff who somehow manage to make sense out of all the chaos around them, Leonie Stieller and Julia Harrison. You are both such a critical part of the success of this Union. And while you tend to work behind the scenes be assured your efforts do not go unnoticed or unappreciated.

Under attack

If you were to compare the conditions of our forefathers with the greatly im-

ever being able to pay them back) in the US shows the smoke that hides financial transactions in world markets. The frightening thing about this financial crisis is not the sight of banks scurrying to get fresh injections of money, but the extent to which they knew so little about the mess that was unfolding.

Despite deliberately trying to ride the tide of profit-making through irresponsible and shonky lending practices, the banks have been ignorant as to the true size of the consequences. And if the banks were so uncertain, then how are ordinary workers to know of the risks or even be able to secure their jobs?

It remains to be seen whether the instability in the US financial markets will cause a global recession but the need for better regulation to control global capital is obvious.

No respect

The free market international capitalist system is increasingly becoming a monster out of control. In a growing trend towards business mergers across international borders, these conglomerates are the real monopolies. The profits of these firms often far exceed those of the country they are located in. In fact they can often dictate the terms and conditions of their operations with little or no respect for international law or fair and decent working conditions.

Trade unionism as a social force is the great equaliser in a market economy. This role is all the more crucial in this era of globalisation, which is characterised by the intensification of power and wealth in the hands of a few. The concept of the 'citizen with rights' has been replaced with the market concept of the 'consumer with spending power'. It is in this context that trade unionism, as a social and economic movement, must act as an opposing force. Our movement must lead the call for a change in capitalist development. Trade unions are a civilising force which can push for the participation of ordinary people in workplace affairs. In other words, trade unionism acts as a counter-weight in the unequal power relationship between employers and workers.



International solidarity – [l to r] Ian Bray MUA-WA, Jim Kelly, Wayne Butson, Michael Forbes TWU, Andy Reed ASLEF-UK and Greg Harvey RTBU.

Without the labour movement, which incidentally is the largest voluntary organisation in our society, progress on the issues affecting the lives of ordinary people, would not be a political priority and exploitation would go largely unchallenged.

Market vs people

Such has been the influence and control of those of the hard right in this country over the past two decades, that there exists a market ideology which, even after nine years of a Labour-led Government, prioritises immediate gain for the individual over public good. For example mention tax cuts and first of all people tend to think: 'What's in it for me?' rather than: 'What services will they cut in order to afford tax cuts?'. The sad reality is that this type of individualism all too often leaves citizens short-changed. The question arises as to what this state of affairs means for society. The illusion of the individual making their own way in life is betrayed by the reality that those who can afford to pay are well provided for, while those who have limited means are left to struggle. The key to combating inequality and unfairness in work and society lies in the degree to which workers can successfully organise collectively in unions.

Even Adam Smith, the father of the capitalist free market, was keen to assert the proper role of trade unions in organising labour. He pointed out the hypocrisy of opposition by employers to workers uniting

in collective voice while at the same time Masters are always and everywhere in a sort of tacit, but constant and uniform combination, not to raise the wages of labour above their actual level. In other words employers often support one another in trying to keep wages down. Not much has changed since Adam Smith was writing in 1776: trade unions continue to be slagged for fighting for the interests of workers whereas the power and greed of employers is seen as no problem.

After nine years of the Labour-led Government we have come a long way. Not far enough maybe, but if we look at where we were in 1999 and where we are today we can see that we have improved as a country.

For the record

Let's remind ourselves of the improvements with a few examples.

- In 1999 there were 49,577 industry trainees, in 2008 there are 133,264.
- Unemployment rate from 7.1% to 3.9%
- Minimum wage from \$7 to \$12
- Min. Wage for 18 year olds from \$4.20 to \$12
- Net Government Debt/GDP from 21% to 1%
- Health Spending from \$6.8 billion to \$12.2 billion
- Paid parental leave from 0 weeks to 14 weeks
- Total No. of Beneficiaries from 362,914

President's report continued

to 242,000

- Minimum Annual Leave from 3 weeks to 4 weeks
- Introduction of Kiwi Saver
- Started Kiwi Bank
- Bought Kiwi Rail
- Since 1999, 6,000 more teachers, 4,000 more nurses, 900 more doctors
- ACC is back in public ownership
- Interest free loans for students
- Working for Families Package
- Income related Rents for state housing

Grim prospects

As I write this at the end of September, it's still difficult to know all the National Party policies.

So what do we know?

- We know they will introduce a 90 day period for new employees whereby the employee can be sacked without any personal grievance rights. Protection for employees in this country is already well below international standard and they want to make it even worse.
- They will allow collective agreements to be negotiated without union involvement. Unions will once again be demoted to the position of just another bargaining agent. This is back to ECA days.
- They are unhappy with the role of the mediation service. They see it as too worker friendly. They will attack it.
- They will allow workers to have their annual leave 'bought' back. This probably means you have four or five weeks leave but one or two are built into your hourly wage rate. In other words when you change jobs you only have three weeks – take it or leave it.
- They will change the automatic right of union access to workplaces.
- They will change the Holidays Act. Which probably means among other things, getting rid of relevant daily pay.
- They will privatise ACC which means, among other things, the tax you pay in ACC contributions will go into the pockets of a foreign company.
- It's also worth remembering the last National Government privatised ACC and to get it back into public ownership it cost the tax payer \$40 million.
- They will subsidise even more private education at the expense of public education.
- They will attack the public health system and promote and subsidise private health.
- They will attack the minimum wage system.
- They will attack Kiwisaver.
- They are likely to attack the level of NZ superannuation.

Remember, the National Party are the party of the employing class. They are the servants of the Masters. They are in the business of doing what their Masters tell them and that is frankly not good news for anyone here, or for working people anywhere. 🌐

Father of 8-hour day recognised

IN a new book ex-RMTU member Paul Corliss has recognised the contribution of Samuel Parnell, the grand old man of the New Zealand labour movement and the father of the 8 hour day.

Published in association with Unions Canterbury & Purple Grouse Press, the book is described as a "delightful" record of Parnell's contribution.

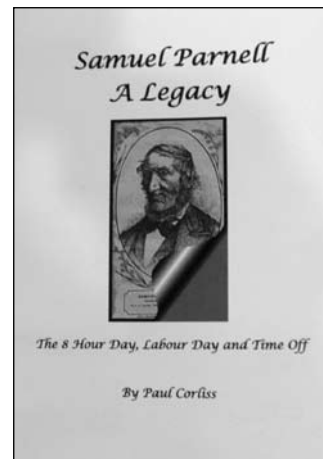
CTU president, Helen Kelly, says Corliss, provides an extensive list of reference material together with his own analysis: "Its colourful description of Labour days past and the recording of industrial disputes make this book great reading."

The book documents Parnell's legacy and puts his deeds into an international and historical context pointing out that he placed New Zealand far ahead of other industrialising countries.

Although many readers may appreciate how precious those gains were for working people, they should also be mindful of how easily they can also be lost when not protected and nurtured.

The text is also accompanied by an array of photographs, newspaper clippings and memorabilia, along with other historical accounts and internet links providing a comprehensive account of a man who left an indelible mark on New Zealand's history.

E-mail order to pcorliss@paradise.net.nz or to Purple Grouse Press, 38 Bellevue Terrace, Mt Pleasant, Christchurch. Copies cost \$10 plus actual postage. 🌐



RMTU supports 'sustainable'



Wayne Butson handing over a donation of \$5000 to Roland Sapsford, the Greens Party president.

AGMs



Marlborough

Left - [l to r] Grant Herbert (branch chair) and Murray Burgess (branch secretary).

Right - view of some of the members of the combined port and rail workers.



Nelson



(right) Nelson branch secretary Colin Lowe listens to Roy Cowley's report on the Harbours Super Fund.



West Coast



Duncan Brown, Christchurch train manager on Greymouth Station platform.



Greymouth members doing what they do best - not working.

RMTU

Life members

Bonar, H
Boyland, E
Buckley, L J H
Burgess, D J
Carmine, J N L

Carroll, C E T
Carter, K E
Church, L A
Corliss, P S
Darling, M J
De Maine, A B
Dickson, E J
Donaldson, W R
File, E W

Foran, Ted
Fredericks, J C
Frude, J
Gargiuto, G
Gibbs, C G
Gordon, A D
Grant, D S
Hanna, L
Harris, P R

Hawes, A J
Hocking, G
Jenkins, I S
Jocelyn, W
Jones, L
Jones, N F
Kennedy, D
Lowndes, R D
Maxwell, R G

McLachlan, R J
Menzies, J M
Miller, D R
Murfitt, J R
Nobbs, T
Piper, R E
Quinn, A P
Ross, W A
Ryan, C J

Sabine, A R
Sisarich, M
Smith, R
Spark, H E
Stewart, B
Stewart, C W
Swift, I C
Thompson, H
Walsh, J E

Wilkie, J I
Williams, S V
Wilson, G K
Wilson, H
Wilson, J R
Winstanley, J
Woodcock, R E
Woodward, F L

Plenty of steam at LE reunion

WHAT a splendid success! That's how the Reunion Committee feel the 100 year Centenary of Locomotive Driver Unionism was.

Past and present locomotive drivers from all over New Zealand and from Australia travelled to the Garden City to be among their colleagues, comrades and friends at this once-in-a-life-time event.

The celebrations began with a 'get together' on the Friday evening at the Riccarton Park Venue. It was a wonderful sight to see old mates greeting each other – in some cases for the first time in many years. The liquor flowed freely to a point where the caterer became concerned at the stocks on hand for the weekend.

Yarns of yesteryear were in abundance and old memories and 'incidents' re-lived. The wives and partners of these social and wonderful men, many of whom had gone through the difficult years of supporting them during the hard times and long working hours of the steam days, also caught up with their old friends.

On the Saturday it was off to Waipara for an excursion train ride through the Weka Pass. The train was hauled by an A class steam locomotive (number 428) and many a near-nostalgic tear was shed by those who once worked on this fine machine.

A tour of a local winery and lunch provided by the local school trustees finished off the day. The formal event began at 1800hrs with a sit down meal and speeches. One speech was from our General Secretary who reminded us that the same principles that forged the bond of unity and solidarity among locomotive men in 1908 applies for locomotive men and women of today. To be united and getting today's men and women drivers to 'pull together' will mean there will be a 200 year Centenary, he said.

Bill File gave a wonderful speech of his time as General Secretary and Tom Clement spoke on behalf of the oldest Canterbury branch member present, Russell Thomas, aged 92 years.

Sunday saw the official farewell function



[l to r] Francie O'Brien and John Valvoi (Westport) and Alan Hucker (New Plymouth).



Ian MacDonald (Foxton Beach) and Bill Matson (Dunedin) on the Weka Pass train.



Slim Somerville (Palmerston North) and Don Stewart (Western Australia).

at the racecourse. The farewell was tinged with a certain sadness when it was realised that not all present will be gathered at our next Reunion. The sadness was however overcome by the sheer exuberance of the gathering whose fraternal craft bond was forged in the hard times of the past.

Many of the younger attendees must have noticed this camaraderie and hopefully they will undertake an active role in their trade Union and carry on the tradition of forging unity, strength and lasting comradeship.

The Organising Committee thank all who attended and for the letters of appreciation and expressions of heartfelt goodwill. We all look forward to meeting up again when the fire will burn hot and there is always hot steam aplenty. 🚂



Pat Hickton.

REUNION



Pat Hickton (Palmerston North) describes the finer points of life to retired former LEA president Kevin Hope (Greymouth) and Harold Robinson (Thames). Inset: Trevor Gullery (Picton), Bob Wolfendon (Palmerston North) and Tony Mark (Napier).



Peter Daly (WA), Trevor Gage, Des Burleigh, Dave Corbett, Alan Austin (All ChCh).



(above) Ken Gibbons (WA), Eddie Bishop & Tom Clement (ChCh), Peter Daly (WA).



Our very special guests of honour: Russell Thomas & Josephine Head.



Ross and Dell Gee (Rotorua)



(above) Steve Cox, Chris Hengst, Allan Scott (ChCh) White Water Rafters Extraordinary and solid Woolston Club Bar Bangers!



OLD Invercargill mates Wayne Butson and Gavin Mortimore.



West Coast Terrors Sparkey Dey, Chris Stoop, Ian Coates.



West Coast Workmates: Johnny Prince & Terry Martin .

TRAINING



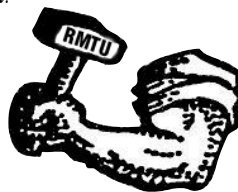
(l to r) Greig Rowan, Roger Kemp, Howard Phillips & John Heka.



Sajjad Abmad, Steven Hay & Vaughan Colgan.



Robert McDougall, Rhys Lowe & Dewald Boshoff.



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ACC as important as ever

With a National-ACT pledge to reform or privatise ACC Sir Owen Woodhouse's report becomes ever-more pertinent

THE author of a report which is the precursor of the ACC legislation, says that the ACC scheme is still the best way of supporting workers who are injured.

Sir Owen Woodhouse, retired president of the Court of Appeal and Law Commission president, who was author of the Woodhouse Report: Compensation for Personal Injury in New Zealand, said in his speech to the ACC Futures Seminar in Wellington recently, that 5000 New Zealanders lodge a claim with the ACC every day and at some point most of us have benefited from the scheme.

He said its five principles of community responsibility, comprehensive entitlement, complete rehabilitation, real compensation and administrative efficiency are as relevant today as they have ever been and that politicians from all sides of the political spectrum have always agreed with these principles.

He said if ACC were privatised and opened up to private insurers they would have a conflict of interest.

"Their commercial and sensible purpose is profit and they would be under pressure to minimise the amount of compensation paid out which would undermine workers."

He pointed out that the recent Price-waterhouseCooper report called ACC "world-leading" and comprehensive.

Sir Owen said people didn't realise that about \$90 of every \$100 that the ACC receives goes out to those who are injured.

"In other words, ACC requires only 10 percent for administration. I can't think of any private insurance company in the world that would not need a minimum of 30% to 40% to cover administration, marketing and the costs of litigation, let alone profit."

He said that for these reasons private insurers would be obliged to make it more expensive for both employees and employers



Former Labour minister for ACC Ruth Dyson and Sir Owen Woodhouse.

to get personal injury coverage.

He also warned there would be more litigation if private insurers took over.

"ACC has never been an insurance system in the commercial sense and was never meant to be. It is a part of our social welfare system."

He also said that at considerable cost ACC looked after people with long-term disabilities for many years, assisting with their ongoing income and health needs.

"For good practical reasons private insurance companies always want to meet and finish with a responsibility right away. How could such long and continuing obligations be handled by insurance companies and who would ensure they were met?"

In his speech he said that "previous worker compensation schemes had always involved far too much litigation even though the benefits were both meagre as to amount and limited in duration. It was because the insurance industry had a direct money interest in the outcome of every case".

As was said in the 1967 Woodhouse Report.

He also said common law action based on negligence (suing the employer for neg-

ligence) became a lottery with long delays in negligence actions and that it was expensive and uncertain.

In the late sixties only one in every 100 negligence claims was even partially successful.

Sir Owen said that criticisms of the cost of ACC "have been answered by actuaries and statisticians, but the results were rarely given sufficient publicity".

He said that a lot of those criticisms were based on a lack of knowledge and he welcomed any publicity it was receiving after calls to privatise the scheme.

Sir Owen said he favoured not only retaining the present scheme but also extending it to provide wider cover for non-earners such as housewives, and also to cover the more serious incapacities due to sickness. "It was to be introduced in steps," he said.

The Woodhouse Report – recommended incorporating all kinds of injury and extending cover to illness.

"These things can't be done in a rush. It was necessary to deal with the injury problem first, because its size and methods of costing it could be seen."

He added that there is a 1988 Law Commission Report – Personal Injury: Prevention and Recovery – which expanded on the original thoughts in the Woodhouse Report on this issue:

"It shows that sickness incapacities could be brought within the injury scheme without a wholesale retreat from the principle. . . it could be done in stages."

He said the principles such as community responsibility were still relevant today.

"I think we are a caring society in New Zealand – these issues [about ACC] arise because they are not widely enough understood."

SOURCE: PSA Journal

New to annual



Andy Kelly:

The whole conference has been great. I enjoyed meeting the other delegates from around NZ especially the rail delegates. I have learnt a lot about the RMTU and appreciated having the chance to have a say.

Bill Tamaki:

Totally awesome, the whole three days. We are like a family. I was learning the whole time throughout.



Chantal Martin:

the conference was a great networking opportunity for rail and other delegates. I met Ian Bray, the M... across the country and it was a great opportunity to meet people from other regions.

like more interactive workshops.



Chris Steel:

I'm new to the rail industry and it took a while to get to know all the other delegates. The workshops were great and from now I'm keen to become more involved at my own pace.



Gary Shukba:

It's been good, interesting - lot's of reading. The overseas guests were very informative. It was great meeting other delegates, I enjoyed the workshops.

Libbi Carr:

Conference has been interesting, our delegates are of a high calibre and quality with intelligent questions to speakers which were well articulated. Our people are really friendly, the program is well structured.



Blair Parlane:

Meeting new people and gaining new knowledge will help me. Standout speakers for me were Ian Bray and Sue Bradford. I enjoyed the workshops which gave me the necessary tools to help recruit new members more effectively.

One thing I will report back to my branch is the strength our Union has and that we are very organised.



Karen MacDonald:

Very interesting conference. I didn't know what to expect but am keen to come back now. I will be taking back what I have learnt to our members in the Taranaki region.

John Scott:

Very good conference and a good mix of speakers. I enjoyed the social interaction especially with the international guests.

Conference

Charlotte

sb: Enjoyed depth of delegates' knowledge, working with both and port delegates particularly enjoyed Bray's speech from MUA who came across as down to earth to which I could relate. I would join in ps.

Phil

Spanswick:

My highlights were meeting delegates and gaining new friendships. I was surprised by the large number of branch delegates there. My standout presentation was from Helen Kelly who was a clear leader. Workshops were really good and led well. I gained a good understanding of how the RMTU works.



John Marsh:

I thoroughly enjoyed the speakers and the information I gained from them. I thought Ian Bray's speech was passionate. The workshops were good and informative and I learnt how to do things. Conference also gave me the opportunity to quiz the Union heads to get honest responses.



programme was
ed, relevant
and varied.



Les Ingram:

Amazed by the interaction and friendliness from delegates, meeting the port delegates and learning about their issues. It was enlightening. A great conference.



Kerry Downer:

My highlights was the association with fellow reps and the willingness to help each other. Dr Cullen's speech was a stand out for me while the workshops were a good learning experience and very enlightening. I will take back to my branch the strong Union unity and its strength. When I travel overseas I want to attend a union meeting to offer our solidarity.



Ian Bray MUA:

Your conference is good as the process delivers structure back to rank and file members. The RMTU has a great focus that acknowledges the importance of international solidarity by it's members.



Kevin Gubb:

Refreshing meeting all the delegates from around NZ and I was overwhelmed by the surroundings (police college). Looking forward to the next one.





Matangi – the new Wellington Electric Multiple Units project

PBT team, management and Rotem at Hutt Shops in front of the mock up.

MATANGI means wind or breeze in Maori and is a very appropriate name for the new units as they will go like the wind and, through the consultative approach so far, a breeze to introduce.

The Matangi project is the single largest investment in new passenger rolling stock for many decades with 48 two-car units in the final design stages and expected to start arriving in Wellington in 2010. The project is huge.

It is not just the trains, it is also the infrastructure improvements needed to run them including significant work on the Johnsonville line with the lowering of the seven tunnels, passing loop extensions, platform height and length alterations, increasing the overhead traction power capacity by doubling the number of substations in the Wellington Electrified Area and changes to the signalling system for the new AC propulsion systems. There are other planned improvements for the Wellington suburban system which include a third mainline from Kaiwharawhara to Wellington and double tracking with electrification to Waikanae from Paraparaumu. (ed: Provided the National-led Government doesn't change the funding).

The RMTU team, calling themselves 'Passenger Best Design (PBD)', have been working with the Greater Wellington

Regional Council (the owners), KiwiRail Professional Services Group, Rotem Matsui representatives (the builders), Interfleet (engineering consultants) and TDI (ergonomic design experts), Tranz Metro (the operators) together with other component suppliers like Faverley who are providing the braking equipment.

PBD is made up of elected reps from on board train staff members including locomotive engineers, train managers, mechanical engineers and with support from RMTU national organisers.

The co-operation between all is excellent and exemplifies the much vaunted 'can do' Kiwi attitude. An inclusive 'mock up' process is giving an effective opportunity for the PBD team to work hard to make sure these new trains are operator and user friendly


and that members can have their say. The special attention to maximising sight lines from the cab whilst maximising protection



Barry Wealleans, Metro LE.

for the locomotive engineer has been a well thought out balancing act. PBD has also been participating in ongoing risk assessments to make sure all potential hazards are identified and addressed.

As we go to print two further mock up reviews are scheduled. The latest version of which is set up in half a carriage with the cab attached and standing alongside a mock platform. The last review for the year will include all of the actual equipment built into the plywood shell.

While it has been a long time since any purchase of new rolling stock has occurred in New Zealand, the RMTU will be looking for the same level of Union input into any future new trains/locomotives. 



Control desk mock up.

CentrePort example of sensible management

COLLECTIVE AGREEMENT (CA) negotiations went well at CentrePort (CPL) this year with settlement very nearly reached prior to the expiry of the CA. Ratification and signing of the now expired CA was completed two weeks after expiry of the previous CA. This may not seem that impressive to some but it was only five or so years back when negotiations went for over nine months and a 48 hour stoppage was needed to protest to this employer that members were not going to accept their jobs being sold off. Since those dark days in 2003-5 the leadership of CPL changed for the better. Liz Ward, the first female Port CEO in New Zealand took the helm and worked with the unions to build a productive, high trust employment relationship. A good example of this is the first negotiations after Liz Ward took over in 2003.

She attended every bargaining meeting to gain a thorough understanding of what was going on rather than get it second or third hand from her management team. Also from 2003, workable employment relationships have been enhanced with regular monthly consultative meetings between the unions and CPL senior management. A further example of the Ward approach is CPL's development of their Drug and Alcohol policy and guidelines. It was, of course, fully inclusive of all the CPL unions and time spent ensuring that it is a policy that all will support. Liz has now left CPL after five years. The RMTU wishes her good luck for her future endeavours. We hope CPL keeps moving forward and doesn't go back to those dark days of trench warfare. 🌐



Outgoing Centreport CEO Liz Ward, MUNZ general secretary Trevor Hanson, RMTU general secretary Wayne Butson and EPMU's Thomas Webster.

Promise, promises . . .



CPL CEO Liz Ward and John Murfitt - When John Murfitt retired from CPL he was promised a book titled 'Port of Wellington'. John has been gone a couple of years now but had not received the book. While he has gone from CPL he is certainly not forgotten and when it came to the farewell for Liz Ward, somehow it turned into a presentation of the promised book to John!

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thereafter for just \$2.50 per year. There are no medical questions to answer and this is only available because you are a union member!

AIL also offers full family benefits plans on a Union-Only basis including supplementary Life Insurance, Accident Injury Benefits (Hospital/A & E/doctor treatment), and Cancer Protection.

To take advantage of this service please fill in a yellow **AIL** reply card. MEMBERS MUST SEND BACK A NEW CARD TO GET THESE BENEFITS. Or contact **AIL** directly on freephone

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Employer militancy

Bus drivers locked out; RMTU members suspended

SEPTEMBER 25 2008 will long be remembered as a day of infamy within NZ Bus's Go Wellington operation. On this day the bosses locked out the Wellington bus drivers after limited industrial action over collective agreement negotiations. The driver's industrial action had limited effect on Wellington commuters being only an hour's duration and in reality was no more severe than a trolley bus overhead traction line failure – which is an all-too-frequent occurrence. By contrast the employer's massively aggressive action severely disrupted Wellington commuters for the whole day. The drivers received widespread support locally, nationally and internationally with some supporters gathering at the NZ Bus Kilbirnie depot. Within NZ the support was led by NZCTU's Helen Kelly and internation-



ally, via the ITF, with Wayne Butson as the NZ ITF Affiliates Country Convenor calling for ITF affiliates globally to register condemnation by writing to the general manager of

the company.

RMTU members, operations controllers, at the depot refused to cross the picket line on Health & Safety grounds. NZ Bus responded by immediately issuing suspension notices to all of them irrespective of whether they were on rostered duty or not. By contrast NZ Bus told non-union workers to not come to work on the day of the lock out and they would be paid in full.

NZ Bus is owned by Infratil, a publicly listed company on the NZ Stock Exchange. On the NZ Bus website there is the following quote: "Infratil believes that sustained quality people performance and positive relationships and involvement in communities where its businesses are based are key determinants of its financial performance."

Given the Company's attitude toward, and its interaction with, the RMTU to date its financial performance is sure to be 'under perform'. 🌐



Hutt Shops

Former Prime Minister Helen Clark and former Railways Minister Trevor Mallard visit Hutt Shops.



[l to r] Former Minister for the Environment MP David Parker, GM passenger group KiwiRail Ross Hayward, LE Pru Bardell (Palmerston North), loco manager Robin Simmons (Palmerston North) and loco engineer Bryce Adams (Palmerston North).

Fuel saver programme

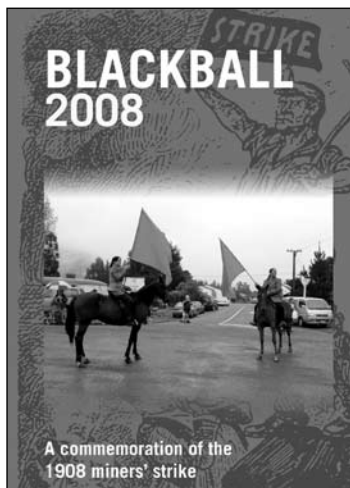


Blackball recalled

Blackball is still a very special place and continues to be an icon for working-class history, mythology and ongoing organising. Dean Parker reviews the DVD from last Easter's celebrations.

BLACKBALL 2008:
A commemoration of the 1908 miners' strike on DVD

IN 1908 three young men in their twenties took work at the Blackball mine. They also formed a Blackball branch of the Socialist Party. At the first union meeting they attended they raised the matter of their lunch break. Miners were allowed 15 minutes to have lunch. The three, Pat Hickey, Paddy Webb and George Hunter, argued for the miners to take 30 minutes. The union members agreed. But when they took their 30 minutes, the three were sacked, together with another four miners. All seven happened to make up the entire committee of the Blackball branch of the Socialist Party. That night the union met and angrily struck for reinstatement of the seven defying government legislation outlawing strikes. The union was charged with breaching the law and fined. The strike continued. Three months later the company



gave in, reinstating the dismissed men and increasing the lunch-break to 30 minutes.

Wrote Labour historian Bert Roth: "This victory had an electrifying effect on unions throughout the country."

A federation of militant unions was created, openly calling for the overthrow of capitalism. A massive

strike broke out in 1913, the closest New Zealand has come to revolution, and the Labour Party was formed in 1916 taking office in 1935.

All of this stemmed from those 1908 events.

One hundred years later, over Easter, Blackball residents organised a celebration attended by people who traced their heritage to the militants of 1908. Cabinet ministers, anarchists, coal miners, environmental

campaigners, city-based academics and unionists.

Blackball 2008 is a 23-minute DVD documentary of those celebrations.

A stage play picks up its enthusiastic audience and takes it through the history and characters of the early mining town, with songs from the stage and speeches from the floor.

On the streets was a parade like the old Labour Day parades of the early 20th century – trucks, tractors and banners and marchers singing "The Red Flag" together with poets, a town fair, a sausage sizzle and historians aplenty.

Above it all, in the mist and the clouds, the old pit-head rears up like a monument of the past. This is a celebration of ordinary people, celebrating the year they began to organise industrially and politically. 🌐

• Blackball 2008 has been produced by Vanguard Films, is available from Rod Prosser, PO Box 3563 Wellington 6140 (communitymedia@paradise.net.nz). Price \$15 including postage.

✂ Please cut on the dotted line

RMTU ERNEST WILLIAM FILE SCHOLARSHIP

THE Ernest William File Scholarship was established in 1978 by members of the Locomotive Engineers Association as a tribute to Ernest William File, the retiring general secretary of the Association. The Scholarship was continued and expanded by the Combined Union of Railway Employees and the Rail and Maritime Transport Union has continued to support it on the same basis.

The scholarship is open to male or female applicants in two groups:

♦ those who are the children of a locomotive engineer; and

♦ those who have a parent who is a member of the Rail & Maritime Transport Union at the time of application.

Three years

The scholarship is tenable for a maximum period of three years at any university or tertiary institution in New Zealand, by a scholar undertaking full time study for his or her first degree or qualification. The value of the scholarship is \$1500 a third of which shall be applied in each of the three years during which the scholarship is tenable.

Written applications may be made on

the application form on the following page and should include details of your most recent scholastic achievements, career intentions, the names and addresses of two referees and sent to the address below before 31 January 2009.

The General Secretary
Rail & Maritime Transport Union
PO Box 1103
WELLINGTON

Volunteers needed

The Injury Prevention Research Unit (IPRU) at the University of Otago is currently undertaking the RID trial (Recovery via Internet from Depression) to test whether a set of web-based self-help programmes can help to reduce depression in New Zealand.

The programmes are designed to help people manage their depression by providing relevant information and/or working through a number of exercises on the internet. They are best suited for people who currently do not have a formal treatment plan to manage their depression or anxiety.

The recent New Zealand Mental Health Survey Report highlighted that up to one in five women and one in ten men have experienced a range of depression symptoms in their lifetime. About half the number of people in that group are not known to any health services.

If you are interested in the trial or know of others who might be, please visit the trial web site www.otago.ac.nz/rid for full information and the online application for enrolment. 🌐

Windmill parts arrive

EXPERTS say Wellington is the best place in the country to build a wind farm because of the funnelling effect created by the norwesterly and southerly winds barrelling through Cook Strait from the Southern Ocean. As a result, state-owned Meridian Energy, which prides itself on being a 100 percent renewables electricity generator, chose the Makara Hills west of the capital for the third and largest of its major wind farms.

Called West Wind, it will produce 140MW (enough electricity for 70,000 homes) at its full capacity when it comes on-stream at the end of next year.

The first of 62 giant turbine towers destined



for the new wind farm are set to make a trip to their new home near Wellington. The towers for the West Wind project are in sections at Shakespeare Bay, near Picton, after being shipped from South Korea.

The shipment of 10 towers is the first of five to arrive from South Korea. They are in two sections, the bottom half is 31 metres long and the top half 36m long.

Four shipments will bring the turbine blades and other components from Denmark.

The 24/7 barging job should take several months.

The project has faced strong opposition from people living nearby, concerned about the size and noise of the turbines. 🌐



All the uploading was done by the Tasman Bay Stevedores which is 100% unionised by RMTU, including Lauren Jarvis on the radio to the right of the photo.

ERNEST WILLIAM FILE SCHOLARSHIP APPLICATION FORM

Surname Of Applicant: Christian Names:

Contact postal address for academic year:

Age (yy:mm): Date of birth:

University/institute at which enrolled:

Degree/qualification(s) for which enrolled:

Student ID if known:

Which year is this of your undergraduate study? (eg first, second etc.):

References (use separate sheets if necessary):

Latest academic results (Sixth or Seventh Form and certified copy of Bursary results) – attach copies:

Parents name & signature:

Loco Running Non Loco Running: Parents please indicate

Applicant's Signature:

Date of Application:



ITF summer school – India

September 22 to 26, 2008

ESTABLISHED after the 1998 Congress in Delhi as part of the Mobilising Solidarity programme, ITF Summer Schools play an important role in strengthening the international perspective of union leaders and activists. Affiliated unions have found that many of the issues affecting their members frequently have an international dimension and require international responses. The school provides training on privatisation, transport restructuring and globalisation and more.

The 2008 School was held exclusively for unions in the



ITF Summer School participants gather beside the pool and (below) Henry with Kam Yeung Ting from the Hong Kong Seamans' Union.



[l to r] Wendy Hodgson RTBU, Henry, Mahandra Sharma ITF and Paul Keating MUA.

Asia/Pacific region in Mumbai for the first time and was hosted by the National Union of Seafarers of India.

Target the unprotected

Thirty-seven transport union activists from 13 countries agreed that organising outsourced and other unprotected casual workers was vital. They concluded that unions should target these previously neglected groups of workers through organising campaigns, particularly as outsourcing and casualisation were likely to continue. During the event all the unions explored practical ways of achieving this.

The regional focus of the summer school

provided a unique opportunity for the affiliates to learn from each other and evolve a more strategic and targeted approaches to organising, given that many of the countries have become a major force in driving the global economy.

RMTU organiser, Henry Fagaia, at-

tended the school and says he learnt that the issue of globalisation and neo-liberal policies is worldwide amongst unions and is much larger than what he initially thought.

"The need to organise the unorganised is crucial to the union movement to ensure the power we have is effective against anti union employers and governments," he said. "It was interesting to learn that our brothers and sisters from India and Bangladesh are now facing privatisation and outsourcing and the effect it is having on their memberships.

"I found the trials and tribulations that our RMTU members faced and overcame during privatisation was helpful in sharing



our experiences with our comrades, to show there is hope if we continue to strategise and campaign and never give up."

Gained understanding

He added that the summer school helped him gain an understanding of the ITF and the global network within it.

"The networks established will benefit and strengthen the strong ties the RMTU has internationally and who we can call upon to fight globalisation and international disputes with companies, countries and governments who rip off workers rights." 🌐

HILLSIDE BRANCH

THIS branch supported the new Dunedin South Labour candidate Clare Curran, who was elected with the highest candidate and party votes for Labour. National president Jim Kelly and branch secretary Les Ingram (with a few helpers) erected hoardings in the face of mindless vandalism, and a few verbal attacks. At one site a very disturbed 'citizen' even spat at them. Branch chairman Grant Donaldson and the above pounded the pavements delivering a mountain of pamphlets. During the campaign, Hillside hosted visits from Prime Minister Helen Clark and her deputy Michael Cullen.

Our branch officials are much occupied supporting injured members in their struggle to receive fair and timely treatment for their injuries due to continued and sustained 'interference' from Well NZ. We have to deal with Well NZ as KiwiRail is in the partnership programme and therefore Well NZ takes over the role of ACC in determining cover decisions under the APRC Act. Time

after time hurdles are placed in the path of members with a purpose of obstructing them from receiving treatment they are entitled to under the law. Without prejudicing ongoing claims, we have disputes where injured members have waited nearly two years for treatment with no end in sight, or others who are contacted and informed that 95% of these claims are rejected. Recently a member received an appointment to see a specialist, out of town and on a rostered day off. When he objected he had the relevant section of the APRC Act quoted at him and he was informed that he had a statutory obligation to attend. The ACC was asked what their policy was; they replied that they would give a client a choice of specialist and a time that suited both the client and their support person. We asked if ACC policy applies to Third Party Administrators (like Well NZ) under the Partnership Programme. We await the answer. These matters will be raised with ACC when KiwiRail is next audited by them as part of the renewal of KiwiRail's Partner-

ship Programme accreditation.

Recently a presentation was made to member Allan McDowell to mark 52 years service at hillside. Congratulations Allan on reaching this great milestone.

A new training facility has just been completed for skills manager Donald Ross to up-skill staff and train the growing number of apprentices. We have 13 with adverts about to be placed for more early next year. Welding bays and a 'clean' workshop for pneumatic and hydraulic tuition are included.

Hillside is about to undertake modifications to SA class train sets in service in Auckland, to up-rate the springs because of the greater than expected loadings. Specialized equipment has been designed and teams will travel and work in Auckland to complete this project. Repairs, including a new cab, are nearing completion to DFT 7008 following her collision with a milk tanker near Orari in Canterbury and now boasts KiwiRail colours and looks great, a credit to those who carried out her repair.

Best wishes to all our RMTU brothers and sisters and a very Merry Christmas.

PORT CHALMERS BRANCH

AS we head into Christmas a lot of workers will no doubt be apprehensive about what the New Year will bring. In the deep south a lot of the redundancies that were announced earlier in the year (ie: Fisher & Paykel, Cadburys and others) have started taking effect. While those redundancies are due to factors such as moving production overseas and technology changes, the current recession and financial crisis is sadly bound to see a lot more. At Port Otago we are aware we are not immune from these forces and management has recently asked

the unions for cooperation and close consultation to see us through the next 2 - 3 years. They say change is inevitable and it looks certain that we will see significant change in the short to medium future; some shipping schedules have recently been changed, some good some not so good, a change to a new coastal service from Pacifica has commenced from the Port and in the medium term the whole structure of the Port may change with a merger or some other close arrangement with Lyttelton. Add all this to the change of Government and who can hazard a guess

what the future will bring? Let's be positive. The company are putting on a Christmas shout for all staff and their partners on 9 December at a new popular Dunedin venue with transport provided to and from. Our cafeteria is getting a major overhaul and refurbishment and we're all enjoying a few extra dollars from our collective agreement settlement. Bring on the changes and challenges. Our Union, through solidarity, will see us through any hard times that may be looming. To all RMTU members a very Merry Christmas and Happy and Prosperous New Year from your brothers and sisters at Port Chalmers Branch.

NELSON BRANCH

KERRY DOWNER, our casuals' delegate attended the annual conference in Porirua and gave the branch a wad of information. Kerry found the workshops interesting and gave a full report on all aspect of the conference particularly highlighting

various Union campaigns, Health & Safety, some of the positives of Labour's nine-years plus some things we must watch out for in the coming three.

Thanks for a great report Kerry and representing the branch proud at the

conference.

I'll add here that since Kerry joined the RMTU committee as a delegate, a lot of the workload has gone off the branch secretary's shoulders because of his efforts. Thanks Kerry.

Currently the branch is going through

Continued on the next page

NAPIER BRANCH

NO doubt there will be plenty of correspondence in this issue of the Transport Worker about the election. A red/green result would be good to say the least.

At Napier port, during the week of the election, we had the local Labour MP Russell Fairbrother (also an RMTU member) and Michael Cullen give us a quick visit to talk to as many as we could muster at short notice. None-the-less it was good to see Labour MPs doing the rounds at the coal face. Some of us also attended the PM's visit to Napier at a local school. I guess the underlying factor here is Labour and the Greens needed as much help as could be given in order for us to retain our industrial rights' laws. We should all be aware by now of the consequences we face with a changed government because industrial policies and laws will change to our detriment.

Hidden messages

No surprises. It is difficult to accept, however it's done for the next three years. I guess this is where unions will have to stay hard and solid as we watch for the impending attacks on workers' rights. In listening to Key's address at the end of a long day, there were a few hidden messages in my view. The one that stood out was the ability for individuals to get ahead – and the undertones that could be construed by such comments. My thoughts (or paranoia) led me to where this will head in terms of collective agreements and what enticements may be offered to help employers break down those agreements and encourage more individual agreements. Lastly, one certainly hopes there have been lessons learned for state assets to be retained. Giving short term tax cuts,



Two views of the new rest area outside Napier Port ops smoko room which has been dedicated to Repanga (Rep) Taana who was killed at work in March 2006.



RMTU's local political arm for what seems ages.

Recently some of the boys added/built an external extension to the operations/R&D smoko room. It was decided that we would dedicate the area created to the remembrance of Repanga Taana whom we lost tragically at work in



scheduled for next April, at the expense of these assets is of huge concern.

To Peter Findlay, a BIG thanks for all your time, efforts and ongoing support helping both the Labour party and maintaining the

March 2006. We have called it "Rep's Retreat". The brass plaque on an inner wall was unveiled by Rep's brother Phil, a Napier Port crane driver. The area is utilised really well – without alcohol but good BBQs.

NELSON BRANCH [cont]

a proposal from the company in regards to shipping and lines, which seriously looks at reducing overtime within our branch and

for our members. The branch will be working very closely with Henry from national office to ensure better outcomes are achieved with this proposal. Watch this space!!

On behalf of the branch we wish other RMTU branches across the country a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!

OTAGO RAIL BRANCH

New staff

In the past few months there has been a increase in staff at ONTRACK, with the taking on of replacement staff for those who have left, including new structures staff (2), new distress gang (eventually) (4), and increased staff at Balclutha (1).

Sleeper lays

We have just completed the latest round of track renewals, with the sleeper layer consist, but lost one lay due to major plant failure. Much credit should go to the staff for the continued success of the lays, but the perennial question of RDO still raises its head after 12 days on. It is rumoured that our relay programme will be shifted to the beginning of the year instead of the end at the behest of Fonterra, as at present we interrupt services in their peak season.

Security

Yes we all have read the company documents and read in the papers about the low lives who have been thieving from the corridor and our yards. Dunedin has not been immune, with both ONTRACK and Taieri Gorge Rail being targeted, by the light fingered and the artistic (TGR being graffitied on more than one occasion), costing both organisations lots of dollars and time. So the combined yard at Strathallan Street is being turned into Fort McAllister with the installation of security cameras and fencing. Once completed the whole area will be an enclosed yard capable of being totally locked off when no-one is there.

Job security

Yes there has been a change of government and there is the question of the Government's ongoing commitment to rail. Murray Bond the CEO of Taieri Gorge Railway, has appeared in a full page newspaper spread bemoaning the lack of direction and incentive for using rail. He contends all we can do is watch this space and see what happens. It is noted that under the new Government ministries we do not feature under Infrastructure portfolio.

Christmas cheer

To all our friends and colleagues out there, have a good break, come back rested for the New Year; and be vigilant, for there are nasty people out there who don't support our existence.

TAIERI GORGE

Greetings from Sunny Dunny Din!

THINGS at Taieri Gorge are starting to get busy with the onset of cruise ship and Christmas charters, the usual double daily trips and other specials.

To help cope with the big increase in trains run, and to ease the load on the existing three full-time and one part-time LEs, we welcome full-timer LE Graham (Get) Smart, (ex Christchurch) and part-time, recently retired Dunedin LE Royce Kirk. Great to have these chaps on board as over the last few years had any LEs become ill and been unable to work, some trains would have had to have been cancelled.

In other news of TGR we recently ran our first service to Oamaru using TGRL RMTU staff, fully certified for the section (LEs Graham Smart, Royce Kirk, guard Mike Henry and train manager Allan Fraser). Under no circumstances must we ever allow a lower standard than exists on the controlled network. One standard for all!

Busy season

The start of the busy season also brings the usual start of mechanical failures with both locomotives and train generator sets causing some headaches. Perhaps if management of TGRL stopped throwing money at the 56ft blue wrecks from Wellington and spent a bit more on maintaining what they have they wouldn't be having these problems.

While on the subject of 56ft cars, it seems that concerns regarding the suitability of these cars running up the Taieri Gorge are still to be addressed.

Adding to this is the apparent blunder that no risk analysis has been done regards to operation of these cars up the Taieri Gorge. RMTU concerns, which have been raised with TGRL management, are as follows:

Cars that have no air conditioning raising concerns of heat exhaustion for



LE Royce Kirk sitting in newly rebuilt cab of "Retaieri" Gorge Railway's Dj 3424.



Passenger Jean Johnson from England. What did she think of TGRL's plan to dispose of the open platform wooden bodied cars with fully enclosed wooden framed cars? Her reply: "It's a real shame, health and safety gone mad. It will ruin the atmosphere of the trip as it's a great experience to be out there - a real thrill."



Passengers enjoying the open viewing platforms in the depths of the Taieri Gorge.

passengers due to no air flow, no open platforms and inadequate hopper windows (temp 30 degrees plus up gorge in summer).

Some cars do have air conditioning but with no opening windows or open platforms. What happens when the generator fails?

If the cars are too tight in the tunnels up the Taieri Gorge what speed restrictions will apply and will TGRL increase the timetable to allow for this?

Concerns that the near total removal of open platform viewing areas (currently 14 out of 18 cars) will damage business, as passengers love this feature.

If TGRL are to invest in new stock, why

invest in wooden framed cars? The first car was in such a poor state it would have been easier and cheaper to steel frame it!

On the good news front, TGRL recently put its second rebuild DJ locomotive back into service. Work performed on the loco included extensive de-rusting and panel work, rebuilt and strengthened cab with heavy box section steel frame, improved headlights and several creature comfort improvements.

More good news: Stage one of the TGRL radio system is up and running and has revolutionised train running and safety. It covers about 40% of the Taieri Gorge. Now we really need stage two. However, once again, it appears money is short due to



Passenger David Ratledge (45 years in British Rail) and partner were asked the same question. Reply - It's a bad decision. At the speeds you run at, what is so dangerous ? I personally think it's a bad thing, it will ruin the trip not being able to get out there . Why not upgrade the existing fleet by beefing up frames?

misguided priorities, so we will be pursuing this with as much union muscle as we can muster!

So dear readers of this excellent publication of ours, much water is too pass under the bridge, (or get steam rolled through).

National is in, the wheel goes round again. The younger generation will now face a few years of getting their teeth kicked in before waking up and voting Labour.

Until then, let's all stay united!

Solidarity and strength will hold our union together. Don't let the bastards do it to the unions again.

Oh, and one more thing.....

**HAVE A FANTASTIC CHRISTMAS AND A
SAFE AND BRILLIANT NEW YEAR**

HUTT SHOPS BRANCH

HI to everyone across all our branches, well it has been another busy year at the Hutt Shops.

For instance we had a very busy day out for Workers Memorial Day with some very important people in attendance. The Prime Minister Helen Clark and New Zealand Council of Trade Unions president, Helen Kelly, accompanied by local MP Trevor Mallard to mention a few. After the service, we held a stopwork meeting in which Helen

announced the buy back of the railways. This great news went down really well with the members as it has been a long time coming.

The struggles of outsourcing and privatisation was felt hard by our members and the challenges different employers coming in and out, such as Alstom, and United Group, brought to the table were far from ideal.

In terms of workloads and projects, Hutt has been busy with the DX overall project and on-going ARC work. Members are feeling the pinch heading into Xmas as the

company do not seem to be hiring new staff to accommodate the extra workloads.

Heading into pre election mode the branch took up the opportunity to again host PM Helen Clark and Trevor Mallard accompanied by the media. Good luck and well wishes were given to them and the upcoming elections.

The Hutt branch and its committee extends their Xmas wishes to all our RMTU branches and all the best for a safe and festive season!

Proud to be RMTU!

TARANAKI BRANCH

WELL aren't things moving along rather quickly? Another year is just about done and dusted. A year of highs and lows.

The high would have to be the Government buy back of rail. The low would have to be the uncertainty of exactly what direction rail is going to take under a National-led Government.

The Taranaki has traditionally been dictated to by Fonterra. Some of the more senior statesmen on rail have said they have never seen it quite like this in 20 years on the job. With the current economic crisis and falling milk powder prices, I don't think Fonterra are keen to give away their produce, so it's lean times for us.

Last week the CEC negotiating teams hit the Taranaki. Meetings were well attended and some positive feed back came out of the meetings. Cheers Guys.

Stratford is still waiting for the yard lighting to be improved. The hold up was ONTRACK's bid. Well, music to my ears! We got their bid and it was nearly twice the price of a local electrical firm! Can't really say the wait was worth it. More bureaucratic crap while the issue is to be resolved. The Stratford yard is down a man with Ray Foster requiring knee surgery after having twisted his knee walking in the yard some months ago. Look after yourself Ray and get that knee right.

New Plymouth

Hmmmm haven't heard from Glenn Hughes so things must be all right up there. The staff have changed to a new roster to accommodate customer requirements and while there were some grumbings it seems to have been accepted and its working out well.

Whareroa

Well what can I say? There is always something going on at Whareroa. This update is no different. The staff welcomes Morgan Field, Kieran Diack and a DSC and farewells the DAR, which is Northland bound, Jenny

Gray who is being made redundant and Pete Bodnar who has headed to Sulphur Point at Mount Maunganui for fresh challenges both at work and on the golf course. Thanks guys, your experience and efficiency on the job will be missed.

One of the two quad bikes was taken in to be serviced. It was discovered that the chassis was bent so a decision was made by management not to repair or replace it. Over a short time frame it was painfully obvious that Whareroa needed two, resulting in the reversal of the decision. Good work guys on sticking to your guns.

Taumarunui

A ban was placed on the use of the turntable at night because of insufficient lighting. Within a week there was a new floodlight up on the tower, giving the guys plenty of light should they need the turntable at night. Bloody amazing. When the issue was brought up to management, it appeared the only way to get things achieved was by banning it. Management's reply was the ban had nothing to do with the new flood light going up on the tower. Must have just been a coincidence.

Yard conditions at Taumarunui have been going from bad to worse. Road Four has been closed due to the potholes, flooding and mud that has set like concrete on the rail head which could possibly lead to a derailment. The contractor can't get his forklift positioned properly on Road Four and is now swinging on to Road Three so that's getting dug up. Management seem to be squabbling over who is responsible and

who's going to front up with the coin. Once again, while this bureaucratic crap is going on, the yard is slowly being closed due to working conditions and a very good contract is being placed at jeopardy.

Entertainment

Radios on the locomotives are causing the crews grief. These are brand new radios placed on locomotives fresh from the Hutt Shops. Many of the locos have no radio station reception so of course the next best thing is to place a CD into the player. Big mistake! They gobble them up and it's nil return when the eject button is pushed. Some LEs are frustrated with the ARGO radios and the poor set up and design causing some dangerous situations. Management has tried their best to sort out a safer solution but at the end of the day it comes down to poor design. Rail operators are unhappy with the new TEMs and the awkwardness involved in carrying and installing them on to wagons. Once again another poorly designed decision which isn't operator friendly. Let's hope the new locomotives don't fall in to the same category.

The ONTRACK boys have been flat out fixing faults and making our lives a lot easier. Take a bow guys! Your work ethic is simply outstanding. Never seem to grumble about much, you just get on with it.

Karen MacDonald and I attended the recent national conference in Porirua. It was fantastic to catch up with other branch delegates and to discover once again that forming a untied front on key issues is one way to force through national issues.

Merry Xmas to all out there.



Taranaki/Stratford Rail Branch members – Back [l to r] Carl Marriner, Kevin Stark, Ivan Goile, Rob Stone, Glenn Hughes, Mike Baker; Front - Lance Nelson, Maurie Bridge, Brian Baldwin and Karen MacDonald.

OTAGO RAIL BRANCH

Obituary

Gary Dalwood

It is with great sadness that the Branch records the passing of Gary Dalwood on October 26 this year after a brief but courageous battle.

Gary joined the NZR in October 1978 as a freight handler and soon progressed to become one of the most respected and skilled forklift operators Dunedin has ever seen.

He was highly regarded by his work-mates both in rail and within the wider trucking fraternity as a being an honest and reliable colleague.

Early in Gary's career he had the misfortune to be involved in a shunting accident in E yard when his forklift was clipped

by a wagon being moved by the yard shunt. Gary spent some ten months in and out of hospital recovering from a serious leg injury.

Gary's second home in the freight terminal was the forklift depot. His mechanical ability was of great benefit to the fitters in the depot at the time. He was extremely skilled in helping the fitters with the use of his forklift in the likes of lifting in and out gearboxes from

D55 and D45 Lees forklifts.

Gary also operated another business out of the forklift depot known as "Dalwood Enterprises".

If you needed something Gary would find it, if it was rubbish Gary would find a use for it, he was not a person who believed in waste. It was said at the time that Gary was the leading firewood merchant in Dunedin. Every piece of scrap dunnage fell victim to his saw.

Gary was also a keen motorcyclist, attending many rallies in the South Island aboard his Kawasaki.

The Branch extends its

heartfelt sympathy and condolence to Gary's wife Jeanette and two teenage children Thomas and Kim.



May 20, 1956 - October 26, 2008

Rail & Maritime Transport Union Inc Statement of Financial Position As At 30 June 2008



CURRENT ASSETS	Note	2008	2007
BNZ Accounts	5	\$ 300,697	\$ 246,210
Accounts Receivable	3	71,989	59,876
Interest Accrued	4	57,432	15,662
Total Current Assets		430,118	321,747
NON CURRENT ASSETS			
Fixed Assets	8	190,700	162,269
Investments	7	2,003,792	2,045,800
Total Non Current Assets		2,194,492	2,208,069
Total Assets		\$2,624,610	\$2,529,816
CURRENT LIABILITIES			
Accounts Payable	8	90,709	128,537
Current Portion of Finance Lease	11	14,776	13,968
GST Payable		16,877	14,260
Konumu Provision		12,903	12,903
Income Tax Payable	2	10,711	308
Provision for Leave		67,261	65,791
LE Reunion Trust Fund		10,124	25,124
Total Current Liabilities		223,361	260,891
NON CURRENT LIABILITIES			
Non Current Portion of Finance Lease	11	56,643	38,413
Total Non Current Liabilities		56,643	38,413
NET ASSETS		\$2,344,606	\$2,230,512
Represented by:			
MEMBERS' FUNDS	10	\$2,344,606	\$2,230,512

Sign on behalf of the Committee,

[Signature]
General Secretary

~ 6 OCT 2008
Date

[Signature]
National President

~ 6 OCT 2008
Date

The accompanying notes form part of, and are to be read in conjunction with these financial statements.

LYTTELTON BRANCH

A spankingly clean RMTU flag flies proudly above the Lyttelton office of the RMTU in celebration of fending off a 600% rent increase attempt from the rental management company that ought to be renamed 'wannabeonWallStreet'.

The working party convened after settlement of the Lyttelton CEA negotiations, after lengthy and robust discussions with LPC management, and have reached agreement on a trial straddle roster.

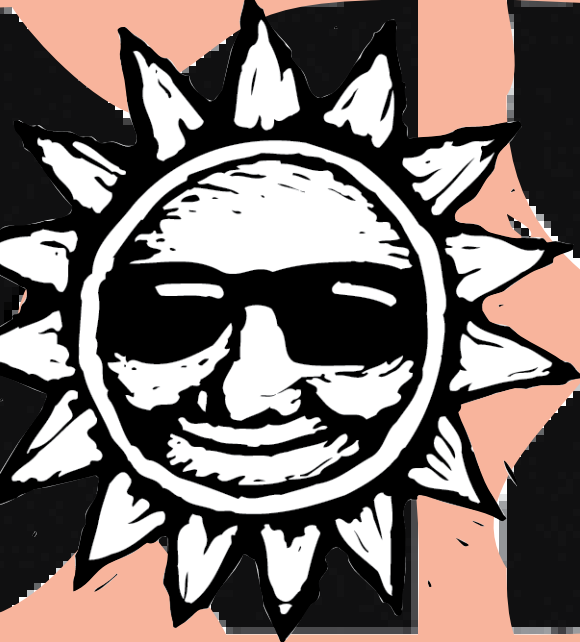
Members voted at an all-up meeting on the 17 November to trial the roster for three months when the Working Party will reconvene for a roster review.

With 18 changes per shift, hot seating and a half hour meal break, this roster is bound to be interesting.

Methyl Bromide continues to be a hot topic for discussion and is being raised consistently by our members at H&S meetings with LPC whose Safety Officer maintains that it is safe. Our report from (the now in opposition ministers) Trevor Mallard and Ruth Dyson indicate there are significant concerns around negative health impacts of Methyl Bromide use.

The Lyttelton Branch of the RMTU will be holding its annual Christmas BBQ to which all local RMTU members are invited. Sausages and beer on the wharf in the sun.

A safe and Merry Christmas to all, may Santa and his elves be blissfully unaware of shonky moneytraders' dealings and fill your Christmas stocking with lots of goodies.



Wishing all our Union
members a very
Merry Christmas and a safe
and happy New Year

From the president, general
secretary, NMC and staff



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