



FREIGHT

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3 Europe: New directive threatens rail freight

4 Philippa Edmunds: The challenges facing rail freight

More than just a **union**

America's rail freight fear Obama's railway investment

IN THE United Kingdom, Rail Freight is often considered the poor relative of passenger services. In the United State, the polar opposite is the case. In fact, many passenger services, including the nearest they have to European High Speed, the Acela service from Boston via New York to Washington, DC, runs on track owned by the freight companies.

American Rail Freight has been a huge success story over the past three decades. Rail's share of the freight market, measured in ton-miles, has risen steadily to 43%, about the highest in any wealthy country. Productivity has increased by 172% since 1982 and adjusted for inflation, rates are down 55%.

Similarly to the UK, it is intermodal traffic that represents the big area of growth in the USA. From 1980 to 2006, traffic increased from 3 million shipments to 12.3 million.

ASLEF policy supports a dedicated freight line for the UK, something the Americans have recently completed. A special rail expressway for freight, the Alameda Corridor, was opened in 2002 to link the ports to the big national rail routes, bypassing the 200 level crossings on the original branch lines that used to cause

huge traffic jams on the roads as mile-long freight trains rumbled across. The corridor was one of the biggest infrastructure projects in modern America and was completed on time and on budget for \$2.4 billion. It was delivered by a public-private partnership considered by many to be a model for other rail schemes, such as California's proposed high-speed passenger line.

Where the UK fears that the growing power of the Train Operating Companies may lead to less access for the Freight Operating Companies, in the USA a similar

process is happening but from a completely different starting point. The Freight Companies own and run many of the lines offering access to passenger services. They are concerned that new passenger service initiative will mean they give up more access and will have to introduce expensive train-control technology. The biggest concern is that the spending of federal money on upgrading their tracks will lead the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA), the industry watchdog, to impose tough conditions on them and, in effect, reintroduce regulation of their operations which had previously been scrapped.

The example of the United States and Europe shows the delicate balance needed between freight and passenger capacity. Too much power in one direction can leave the other side of the industry in a difficult position.



Government offer some heart to rail freight industry, but play coy on small HGV length increase



SPEAKING in early December in the House of Lords debate about longer and heavier lorries (LHVs), government transport spokesman Earl Attlee gave the industry some comfort by announcing, 'We will do nothing that reduces the amount of freight carried by rail.' He also categorically ruled out permitting any trials of goods vehicles longer than 18.75 metres or heavier than 44 tonnes.

Earl Attlee did however leave some concern when he added that the government was awaiting the conclusions of research into 'a small increment in the length of articulated lorries.' Any increase no matter how small will of course be of great concern as it may set precedence allowing for greater increases in the future at the cost of rail freight.

He did however go on to concede that Lord Snape, the former Labour MP for West Bromwich East, was 'mostly right' when he said that the heaviest goods vehicles directly abstract traffic from rail freight. He also agreed

that the road haulage industry has for years been claiming - spuriously - that longer and heavier goods vehicles would mean fewer of them and that the heaviest goods vehicles have, for over 30 years, failed to pay their true track costs. He accepted that longer and heavier vehicles will cause even more damage to Britain's roads, which will be paid for by other taxpayers.

Lord Davies of Oldham, who as Bryan Davies was Labour MP for Enfield North and later for Oldham Central and Royton, wanted to know the reasons for a delay in introducing charging for heavy goods vehicles, especially as the government 'is aware of the unfairness of foreign lorries coming into this country and using our roads without cost' - and was told the government were 'working on it'.

The Government spokesman added that it is the policy of this government to carry as many goods by rail as possible and to transfer goods from road to rail wherever possible.

Rail Freight and the Olympics can teach us all a lesson

THE use of rail freight in building the Olympic park in Stratford has been an enormous success with most of the materials in terms of heavy haul and intermodal traffic arriving by rail.

The 28 acre rail freight facility site at Bow East was the first transport facility at the London 2012 site to be operational and has continued to deliver following DB Schenker's £4 million investment to allow longer trains, unloading equipment and upgrade the logistics centre. There is now an average of eight

trains a day with both containers and pallets serving the site.

The logistical challenge has become harder with the change in content, but the industry is coping. Currently tiles are being brought in for the Aquatics centre from Italy. Due to the fact that these are Olympic tiles, they have to be down to the finest millimetre and so it is extremely exacting and a million miles away from the job of taking soil away from the site.

Security on the site is extensive and once again here, rail has an advantage. These checks can take



place on the train to save time further down the line. The Bow East Logistics centre has saved hours or even days in the logistical chain according to DB Schenker, especially when considering the congestion around inner London.

The evidence of the successful construction of the Olympic stadium proves the benefits and diversity offered by rail freight to

major infrastructure works. A greener and less disruptive form of freight transport is available, viable and works. "We are proud of the services that have been offered by the industry and I hope it goes to show what ASLEF has known for a long time. Rail Freight is the best option for logistics be it intermodal or heavy goods," General Secretary Keith Norman explained.

European directive threatens rail freight

RAIL FREIGHT is being threatened by a new European directive designed to lower carbon emissions. The directive dictates that all new and re-engined diesel units must meet new guidelines. These will lead to significantly bigger than standard engines.

The Freight Transport Association believes that the "Non-Road Mobile Machinery Directive" will have a disastrous effect on rail freight with existing locomotives not being permitted to be re-engined with anything other than Directive compliant units which are yet to come on the market. Even when the new engines do come on to the market, due to Britain's smaller gauge, there are doubts as to whether they can be fitted on to existing locomotives.

General Secretary Keith Norman commented, "This is crazy. The environmental benefits of rail freight are clear for everyone to see. This will push freight on to the roads and lead to more CO2 emissions, the very opposite of the directives ambition."

Rail has taken an increase in the share of surface freight transport. However should there be a reduction of capacity, the fear is that this hard work will be undone with more goods returning to the road. Experience shows that once this happens it is very difficult to get the goods back on to rail. "This would be a huge backward step for sustainable freight transport. I hope that common sense prevails," said the General Secretary.



MPs call on the Government to spend on Rail Freight

MPs from all parties have joined together to support an Early Day Motion backing Rail Freight. EDM 719 has been signed by 46 MPs since being tabled on 13th September.

The motions states "That this House recognises the importance of rail freight in the economy of the country, in reducing road congestion and in providing safe, low carbon transport choices for British businesses; and therefore calls on the Government to spend limited resources in the greenest way possible and support the development of rail freight through network upgrades on major routes, including to ports, through targeted grants to help reduce road congestion, pollution and exposure to road accidents and through a supportive planning regime for rail freight terminals that recognises their strategic importance."

ASLEF's parliamentary group have signed the motion and we call on all members to ask their MP to support it as well.



New challenges facing rail



says **Philippa Edmunds**,
campaigner for
Freight on Rail

OUR joint lobbying has meant that the initial Strategic Rail Freight Network schemes, are to go ahead and rail freight revenue grant funding is retained which is very good news. Given the extent of the cuts across the board we can be pleased with these results. However, there are massive new challenges facing rail freight in the form of proposed restructuring of Network Rail and the localism agenda so that planning permission can be obtained for terminals. Additionally, the campaigns against 25 metre mega trucks and the so-called modest increase (ie 2 metres) in lorry lengths continue.

In order to make our case, we have written to ministers in Department for Communities and Local Government, Norman Baker, Mike Penning and Stephen Hammond in DfT and met Vince Cable Secretary of State for BIS in August. I met Eric Pickles the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government in early November and am due to meet Theresa Villiers, the Minister of State for Transport in January. I also met the Shadow Rail Minister, Andrew Gwynne on 1st November and found a real rally.

1. Ask your MP to support RAIL FREIGHT Early Day Motion 719

The wording of this EDM encapsulates the main themes on which we are campaigning so do ask your local MP to sign it, if you have not done so already. As at 9th December, 46 MPs had supported it.

Julian Huppert MP for Cambridge tabled the EDM

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2. Network Rail restructuring

The coalition Government is currently considering options to restructure the railways

including regional sectorisation and vertical integration which is a massive threat to rail freight. Rail freight needs a national network to prosper as it needs to compete with road freight which has a national network which it can, by and large, access when it needs to. Therefore national operating conditions need to be retained. For example, nation-wide pathing and co-ordination of timetabling and engineering works and strategic reservations needs to be maintained. (See separate article on this from Lord Berkeley)

3. Retention of the Strategic Rail Freight Network (SFN)

After all our lobbying, despite draconian cuts, the Coalition Government has recognised the value of the SFN to society so we are pleased to announce that the commitments made to funding the vast majority of the key projects in the SFN have been retained. This means that a reliable robust rail network with diversionary routes to cater for the growth in intermodal rail freight which will connect national major freight routes, including links to the ports, will be started.

In particular the gauge and initial capacity work on the route from Felixstowe to Nuneaton, which includes the Ipswich Chord and longer Ely Loop should be carried out by 2014. For the links from Southampton to the WCML W10 work via Laverstock and Andover will create a diversionary route as well as some train lengthening work.

Government to undertake cross modal analysis of A14 corridor in new year

The large scale road scheme which had an estimated project cost of around £1.2 billion for the A14 has been dropped, after lobbying from the environmental movements and instead multi modal alternatives are now being considered. This gives us an opportunity, which we are already working on, to try to get the rail capacity work needed on this route in the next NR control period.

There is also a Regional Growth Fund with a budget of £1.4 bn over the next 3 years, for which we are trying to get freight schemes considered.

4. Revenue Grants have been saved in England and Wales Mode Shift Revenue Support (MSRS)

This is a real victory for the industry as the Coalition has cut many revenue streams. There is a budget of £20 million for the year 2011-2012 and £19 million for the year 2012-13 and the same figure as a guideline for the following two years until March 2015. This will give certainty for customers to have confidence to sign contracts and make investments. Grants are crucial as they

underpin existing and emerging containerised and swap-body business which is highly competitive (partly because of the cost of the road legs involved). Without which this traffic would be forced back onto the congested road network. It is worth remembering that grants are only awarded and paid for actual lorry miles taken off the roads as the grants are designed to recognise the advantages to the economy of reducing long-distance road congestion as well as the social and environmental advantages of rail freight.

In Scotland, the revenue budget is only confirmed until end March 2011 so it is important to lobby Scottish Authorities.

Capital grants have been suspended since July 2010- (Freight Facilities Grant (FFGs))

Although capital grants remain important in offsetting the initial start up costs of the transfer to rail, we are not hopeful of seeing these grants re-instated as the way grants are currently calculated needs to be modified for it to be useful.

Scottish grants severely reduced in draft budget

The freight budget for mode shift grants is proposed to be cut from £10.3m to £2.9m with FFGs grants being scrapped, from next year. We are lobbying hard to get the decision to scrap FFG grants reversed and have written to ministers and are hoping for a meeting. A mailshot to MSPs has already resulted in support and a question in Parliament so where appropriate please write to your MSPs. Please make sure that you ask for additional funding for FFGs as we do not want to end up with the small remaining budget being diverted away from revenue support to FFGs

5. Rail freight needs terminals/interchanges

The Coalition Government's commitment to localism is damaging to rail freight as it is making it difficult to get planning permission for medium sized and small terminals at local level. Without more terminals rail freight cannot increase market share. Therefore the Government needs to recognise that transport decisions are strategic and define spatial planning policies which recognise the importance of rail freight and the need to obtain so that rail freight can play its part in reducing freight's carbon footprint.

When I met the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, Eric Pickles I stressed that councillors need to be able to make decisions locally which take into account the environmental and economic benefits of schemes like rail freight terminals beyond their local boundaries. Eric Pickles listened and said

Freight

that we could work with his officials which is an important development for us.

6. Campaigning to safeguard viable rail access from High Speed One

Beamreach in the borough of Havering is the only viable rail connection and access from High Speed One in the London Riverside area. Tesco's detailed planning application which excludes the only viable rail access for intermodal high gauge rail freight from High Speed One to other



land sites at Beam Reach, known as the Ford lands, was granted planning permission, despite our extensive lobbying of politicians in London, as this journal goes to press. However, all is not lost yet as the application now has to go to the Mayor for him to decide whether to reject it. This planning decision is a serious example of short sighted decision-making which does not take into account the national need, based on the localism agenda. At last minute notice, Glenn Underwood, a DB driver, stepped into the breach and represented our interests at the planning committee in Stratford for which we are very grateful.

7. Department for Transport evaluating up to 2 metre increase in HGV lengths (2.05 metres = over 6 and half feet)

This is very worrying on two counts

- Increasing semi trailer lorry dimensions even by a metres would open up the EU directive and could usher in 25 metre trucks.
- It would damage domestic intermodal rail freight's market which is already highly competitive partly because of the road legs involved.

A consultation is expected to start in December so please be prepared that we may have to campaign on this over the festive season. This will be a hard fight given the fact that the Minister in charge of freight, who holds an HGV license, has made such a positive gesture of support stating that he is minded to support the increase, subject to consultation. I am meeting officials at the DfT in November to voice our concerns and explain the wider dangers of this so called modest increase. We are vigorously opposing this increase which in practice is likely to be just under a metre, on the grounds that previous increases in lorry dimensions have not led to improvements in HGV efficiency.

8. Lobby your MEPs to oppose mega trucks

Despite the fact that the UK Government rejected trials of mega trucks in June 2008, there is a danger that mega trucks (83 ft long) will come to the UK by default if the EC allows mega trucks in cross border traffic. Therefore please lobby your MEPs so that they know it remains a live issue.

The proponents claim that mega trucks will

mean fewer lorries but the reality is that these bigger trucks will end up carrying the same amount of freight further because any cuts in road freight costs will result in more road freight and will take traffic from rail with the resulting increase in road congestion, emissions and exposure to accidents. Supporters of mega trucks, which would be fifty per cent longer and could be a third heavier than existing HGVs, are using the same flawed arguments again.

The European Commission's own research admitted that mega trucks would have a detrimental effect on rail freight; in the UK, mega trucks would destroy the entire intermodal rail market (ie containers) and 50% of bulk traffic forcing the traffic back onto congested roads.

Because we identified errors in the previous research undertaken by the Commission it has been forced to do further research which we are monitoring closely.

If Europe were to give the go-ahead for cross border traffic these mega trucks would go to member states by default over time. Such a move would also fly in the face of public opinion that is consistently and strongly opposed to the measure. Go to www.freightonrail.org.uk for more details

In order to make UK MEPs realise that this is a live issue, find out who they are. Contact details at <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/members/public/geoSearch/zoneList.do?country=GB&language=EN>



DBS REPORT

AS YOU are all aware the TCCC started talks in August, this year, with DBS management over the 2010 pay claim. DBS management made clear from the start that the company was in no financial state to award any pay increase.

The Council and the Officer in conjunction with our EC decided that our best approach for this year was to seek a reduction in the Annual Contract and to achieve a clean 4 day week. This we believed would help deal with the possible surpluses and reduced hour contracts in some

locations and maybe create vacancies in other areas.

Managements approach was to retain as many Traincrew as possible by achieving as much productivity from the NDFTC which they believed could help in reducing the unused and rest day hours.

Their approach was clear from the start that they did not want a two tier agreement, that being pre and post 1988 to be removed, all Traincrew being available for all duties they were trained for.

Unfortunately during our talks

documents were leaked out which were in no way agreed by either side. This led to a back lash from the membership which was quite understandable with what was in the discussion document.

Eventually the Full Council and the Lead Officer Nick Whitehead finalised a document with DBS that achieved our aspirations of a clean 4 day week and a reduction to a notional 34 hour week; they were prepared to send to our Executive Committee with a recommendation that it be put to

the membership.

The Executive Committee were fully briefed on the proposed deal by the Officer and the Secretary of Council. As you now know the Executive Committee felt they could not put the proposal to the membership to vote on.

Since this decision there has been, as far as the TCCC are aware, no contact from DBS to ASLEF on how the Company will now go forward.

For and on behalf of DBS/I Traincrew Council,

Mick Finn

FREIGHTLINER HEAVY HAUL

ALTHOUGH we have now reached the second of a two-year pay deal we have still had to face difficult challenges. At the start of the year we had just resolved the issues surrounding the heavy handed draconian discipline issue then a little later we found ourselves voting on another ballot. This time we were asked the question over issues affecting locally agreed rostering principles and maltreatment of our representatives.

The result of this ballot meant that a majority were in favour of industrial action. FLHH management then contacted ASLEF in an attempt to resolve the dispute.

Following initial discussions, the Business Council managed to achieve an agreed procedure agreement plus two outstanding issues from Business Council agenda. We then discussed the FLHH driver terms and conditions to see if we could find a way forward on the rostering principle. The original document which formed the terms and conditions was proving to be unworkable so we finally agreed to slightly alter the T&Cs so that they could reflect the current situation.

The main changes will be explained as soon as possible to local representatives so that the full information is available for the membership and will be subject to review over the next 12 months.

We hope that as we go forward, the way we do business as a trade union will hopefully be seen as more professional for the driving grades within FLHH.

Our thanks go to the membership for their support and to both our Lead Officer (DO No 5) Andy Morrison and EC Member Hugh Bradley whose experience assisted us in our efforts.

Tony Venson

GBRF REPORT

I WOULD like to take this opportunity to say thank you to the former Company Council rep for GBRF Jim Clarke for all his hard work during his time in position.

I also would like to thank Peterborough and Doncaster branches for their support during my appointment as the new Company Council rep for GB Railfreight.

These are very challenging times for Freight Drivers and it's the first time in my short 25 years on the foot plate we are seeing real redundancies for drivers from the Freight sector. We are starting to see Drivers TUPed from one Freight Company to another which puts our ASLEF members under a lot of stress and needing the full support of their trade union.

I will support all our ASLEF members to the best of my ability and continue with the close working relationship Jim Bloomfield (LLR) and I have with the GBRF management striving towards better T's & C's for the benefit of all.

Earlier this year GB Railfreight was sold from First group to the French company Euro Tunnel. These are exciting times for GBRF and may lead to a lot of new investment within the company. This could promote new to rail business, something the Freight sector has been lacking for a very long time.

GBRF continues to grow from strength to strength leading the way forward within the Freight sector creating opportunities for ATM's through the line of promotion to become Drivers and creating a new grade Train manager operator. (Passed fire man)

Barry Hare

DRS REPORT**PAY AND ASSOCIATED ISSUES:**

THE past 12 to 18 months have probably been the worst that anyone can remember in the freight sector. The loss of contracts throughout has had a devastating effect on our membership with ASLEF representatives dealing with live redundancies of drivers. As I am writing this report, the new coalition are about to bring in more cuts to the public sector, which will then impact on private business also. We would be foolish to think that this won't impact again on the rail network.

After that gloomy opening, strangely enough here on DRS we are seeing the so called green shoots of recovery in such a manner that we have begun recruitment again. The numbers may be small but any recruitment at present has to be welcomed. Alongside this negotiations have been completed to forward a pay offer to our train crew. We firmly believe that this offer brings us

back to where we were before last years troubled times. We have to try to look forward and hope the present economic climate does not bring further problems for us. The council are also looking to fully revise the traincrew terms and conditions along with the company representatives. Our hope is to have a pertinent, sensible and applicable set of conditions to enable us to move forward.

TRAVEL FACILITIES

As a council we applaud ASLEF's stance in challenging the ludicrous situation of staff travel on our rail network. As you maybe aware DRS jointly with ourselves approached ATOC with a view to obtaining staff travel facilities for our people. This approach was rebuffed by ATOC as DRS were not originally part of ATOC and to allow us in would open the doors for others. Our members deserve better and the whole situation of travel for staff needs to be fully reviewed.

**CAB ERGONOMICS**

One of our fleet of Class 66s has been refurbished to trial with better seating and cab air conditioning. Having driven this loco the improvement is excellent. It would be good to see these modifications brought in fleet-wide and any feedback, either positive or negative should be given to our H&S reps.

Tam McKendrick

FREIGHTLINER INTERMODAL REPORT

AS most of you will know both myself and Dave Gloyne are new to the role of Business Council Representatives, but this does not mean we are going to look for an easy introduction. We are in this position to represent the views of all ASLEF drivers and whilst I can not promise that things will always go our way, we will do our best to put our drivers first.

If any driver has a problem please do not hesitate to contact myself. If I can not give you an answer, I will go away and find an answer for you. Since taking over from Jamie Fallon I have had to seek advice from many people but would like to thank Jamie, Kevin Rooney, Dave Young at Crewe and Dave Hogg at Birmingham for their help and hope this will carry on in the future.

Now to the business side, I will start with what I think is of the most importance and that is the issue of pay. In the five years that I have been here our pay has fallen behind year on year. I believe that we should be looking for a substantial pay rise this year. I do not like 2 year deals and would look forward to the views of others. We know that when we point out the

difference in pay at TOC's it is always put to us that we do not work weekends. This is not true, we are getting more Saturday and Sunday work. Add in the late Fridays and early Mondays which mean our rest days are spent asleep and I think that argument is not valid. I would also point out the number of nights that we work are far in excess of what TOC's work. With the EC we will be pushing for a decent pay increase.

I admit that I am disappointed with the planned improvements for the 66 locos. We still have only one loco with the cooling/heating unit fitted and the fitment of blinds. This is not acceptable and will be brought up at the next Business Council meeting. These locos as a whole are just not up to the job. Seating is poor and I think the noise when pulling a heavy load is above the permitted levels. To this point I would like the company to run tests on a loaded train on a full journey with ASLEF Reps present.

Rostering seems to be a general point of disorder at most depots. They run for 8/10 weeks before they are changed again. I would like for there to be as little change as possible. Annual leave within the roster

has been put forward but as of yet no decision has been made on this as I am waiting for management to forward proposed links for us to see how it would work at each depot.

Health and Safety does not get the time I feel is needed within the Company. The Joint Health and Safety meetings came to halt in May 2008 and very little (if any) contact is had with the H&S Reps. This was put to management in May 2010

and the Professional Head of Safety will be at the next business Council Meeting. In the mean time I feel it would be to our advantage to set up our own H&S Committee and if any Rep is interested in this please contact myself so we can get the ball rolling.

It is time for us all to stick together and push for the pay/conditions that we deserve.
Peter Mason Business Council Secretary



Rail freight and the McNulty Review



Tony Berkeley,
Chairman, Rail
Freight Group

THE McNulty Review of the costs of the railways is causing all parts of the industry to look at their own efficiencies, and suggest ways of improving them and therefore bringing costs down. In spite of a lot of work going into this, the evidence of significant cost savings is not yet apparent so, as so often happens, people start suggesting that restructuring the railways is the only way to achieve massive savings.

Those making such suggestions usually fail to provide evidence to back up their claims although, as with passenger operators suggesting vertical integration, they clearly have a commercial interest in their idea that they would be much better at operating the timetable than Network Rail.

There are many things wrong with Network Rail, although they have made significant improvements to the network since they took over from Railtrack, and their costs have come down – by around 30%, with another 20% expected by the end of the five year regulatory control period.

However, Network Rail's network responsibilities for timetabling, possession planning, day to day performance management, telecoms, IT, TOPS and approvals for new rolling stock must be done nationally and the great thing about our UK system is that NR is required by the Regulator to treat all operators equally.

Rail freight needs all the above services since we operate on a national network. We also operate on different route and timetables each day, depending on what customers needs demand, since this is the way that the logistics industry works.

The idea of passenger franchised operators controlling the timetable or any other of the above functions may be good for them, but it is very bad for freight, and also for other franchised and open access passenger services. Clearly, there would be benefit in incentivising Network Rail to want to operate more trains, and all parts of the industry to work together to improve efficiencies. This is surely a better way than having to cut parts of the network, or its capability, to satisfy the Government's desire for cost cutting.

Rail freight's challenge is to be able to continue to compete with road freight, whilst



operating on a network and competing with passenger operators both of which are largely funded by the state, and therefore not subject to the same risks as freight.

Rail freight volumes have grown 60% since privatisation, and there are now five operators competing in this market. The sector is highly competitive which has driven efficiency through seeking economies of scale and scope such as longer and heavier trains, higher staff productivity and increasing throughput at existing terminals. Rail freight operators are consistently pushing the boundaries in terms of utilisation of assets and the rail network. Assets such as locomotives and wagons are used 24 hours a day and the movement of

freight overnight when the rail network is quieter for early morning delivery is vital to achieving such high utilisation that enables rail to compete with road.

The McNulty Report provides the opportunity to examine the industry's activities and see how they can be done better, at lower costs, but without losing network benefits, safety, and with the intention of growing our traffic volumes. We forecast that rail freight traffic will double in 20 years; it will be mainly in the intermodal sector but, to achieve this, we need continuing fair treatment on access, timetabling, investment and charging so we can compete with road freight.