

Mines Act und

'RSZ deserves State support'

By Times Reporter

THE Zambia Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ZACCI) has said Government should come up with more support to the Railway Systems of Zambia (RSZ) to ease operations.

ZACCI Northern region vice-president Eddie Kapungulya said in an interview yesterday that globally the burden of maintaining the track was carried out by respective governments while operators were responsible for the running of traffic unlike the case with the RSZ.

Mr Kapungulya said Government should do everything possible to assist.

He said it was difficult for companies such as the RSZ to run profitably and be expected to maintain railway lines, which were quite old and required a lot of work.

Mr Kapungulya said the process of maintaining railway lines was far too expensive and it could only be done if Government was more involved in supporting those that it had



•MR EVEN

concessioned the business to.

Mr Kapungulya said the RSZ was operating with the aim of making profits and it would not have the capacity to also maintain the railway lines because the exercise was too expensive.

He said it was unfair for RSZ to pay road levy when the damage to the road network was being done by road users.

Mr Kapungulya said the road network in Zambia was being damaged as a result of road transporters yet nothing was being done to maintain the railway line.

He said the alternative would be to channel the proceeds from the road levy to maintain the railway infrastructure than the current scenario where the competitors were being supported, thereby disadvantaging RSZ.

RSZ deputy general manager for corporate affairs Charles Phiri said in a separate interview his company had to be refunded the monies paid through road levy, the entire railway stretch would improve as the funds would be used to improve the track.

He said the current situation put RSZ in an awkward situation as they were subsidising the competitors.

He also bemoaned vandalism and thefts that negatively impacted on the operations of the RSZ.

He said it would be cheaper for importers and exporters of goods to use the train because the capacity of one wagon would cover 50 trucks.

Recently, RSZ chief

executive officer Benjamin Even said his company had started joint operations with Tanzania-Zambia Railways to enhance operations for the two companies to increase the market share and save Government from huge road maintenance costs.

He said the haulage of heavy goods by road was detrimental to the road network and that was why RSZ had embarked on an ambitious programme of rehabilitating the railway network and also partnering with other companies in the sector.

This week, Communications and Transport Deputy Minister Mubika Mubika said the railway line being run by RSZ was still viable and wondered why companies transporting big consignments were not using it.

He said the RSZ-run line was efficient for passenger and goods between Chililabombwe and Livingstone.

Fundanga preaches innovation to haul