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Subject: [Cane Trains] Fiji

Was in Fiji for a few days a couple of weeks ago. Milling had just started. All railway activity was south of Lautoka. Lautoka and Penang had long lines of trucks waiting to unload. Ba was starting the next day. Most trucks seemed new. A bad sign in itself but also means that the drivers are now a political force with a vested interest in road transport.

Modern Clydes 10, 12, 14 and 11 were observed at Sabeto just before Lautoka waiting for the new shift. These are very standardised. The cabs now include a cup holder! Some bearings on the outside cranks had E M Baldwin stamped instead of Clyde.

I managed a cab ride towards Lautoka hauling 56 full wagons. Max speed was a brisk jog. Drivers are now personally held responsible for any derailments and will be suspended for weeks without pay if they occur. My driver was very skillful in take off and stopping: buffers did not touch at all. He knew the spots to slow down and was very careful.

Line car distribution is as follows:

Tavarau: 125: Lister diesel engined rebuilt Wickham 17A
Sabeto: 123: Lister diesel engined rebuilt Wickham 17A
 124: Toyota K70 re-engined Clyde
Nadi: 122: Lister diesel engined rebuilt Wickham 17A
 120: Lister diesel engined rebuilt Wickham 17A [ex Cuvu]
 121: Lister diesel engined rebuilt Wickham 17A [ex Cuvu]

Lautoka shed is now serviced by trucks

Cheers
John Peterson

There's nothing like a train load of
sweet stick!
