

Fat, tattooed Britons are not shipshape

By Daily Telegraph Reporter

A FERRY chief has claimed he has to employ foreign workers because the British are "quite fat and covered in tattoos".

Pim de Lange, Stena Line's director for the North Sea, said potential seamen were "not fit for the job".

Union leaders have been in dispute over conditions of pay and service and Stena Line's use of Filipinos working at Harwich, Essex. But Mr de Lange said the company was struggling to find young, fit people willing to work at sea.

Recently, he was quoted in a Dutch newspaper saying British workers were "quite fat and covered in tattoos" although he claims his words

were taken out of context. He said: "You do not get young, fit people wanting these jobs - people need to be fit for these jobs - that is the bad thing about it.

"Young people do not want to go to sea any more - they don't want to be away from home."

Mr de Lange said he had emailed his British workforce to assure them that he had not been criticising them.

He spoke as the RMT balloted for strike action over the use of Filipino crew on a new ferry, the Stena Britannica, which is due to launch in the coming weeks.

Les Double, a former Harwich mayor, said: "I think he needs to apologise."

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