

GMB

CONGRESS 2013

.....

SIS MARY TURNER MBE

(President)

(In the Chair)

.....

Held in:

**Plymouth Pavilions,
Plymouth**

on:

Sunday, 2nd June 2013

Monday, 3rd June 2013

Tuesday, 4th June 2013

Wednesday, 5th June 2013

and

Thursday, 6th June 2013

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PROCEEDINGS

DAY THREE

(Tuesday, 4th June 2013)

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THIRD DAY'S PROCEEDINGS
TUESDAY, 4TH JUNE 2013
MORNING SESSION
(Congress assembled at 9.30 a.m.)

THE PRESIDENT: Will Congress come to order, please. Good morning. I hope you all had a good evening last night. Now is the time for work.

STANDING ORDERS COMMITTEE REPORT NO. 5

THE PRESIDENT: Congress, I will call on Helen Johnson to move Standing Orders Committee Report No. 5.

SIS. H. JOHNSON (Chair, Standing Orders Committee): President and Congress, I move SOC Report No. 5. Withdrawn motions. Will Congress please note that Motion 312 – Independent Living – standing in the name of London Region was withdrawn during debate yesterday. On the subject of bucket collections, the SOC has been informed that the amount collected yesterday for the bucket collection by Midland & East Coast Region for the Ambulance Heritage Appeal was £581. (*Applause*) I move SOC Report No. 5.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you very much, Helen. Are there any questions? (*No response*) That was a great collection, and thanks to everybody. I have just conferred with the General Secretary and we will double that sum. (*Applause*) There is a good start to the morning. I'm giving away your money.

ADDRESS BY BRO. PETER SMITH, DEPUTY LEADER OF PLYMOUTH CITY COUNCIL

THE PRESIDENT: Congress, it gives me great pleasure to introduce Peter Smith, the Labour Party Deputy Leader of Plymouth City Council, who will give a short welcome address. Peter is also a GMB Wales and South West Regional Committee Member and Plymouth Technical Craft Branch Secretary. Peter, it gives me great pleasure to ask you to address Congress.

BRO. P. SMITH (Labour Deputy Leader of Plymouth City Council): President and Congress, let me extend a warm and sunny welcome to all delegates, visitors and staff to Labour controlled Plymouth City Council. (*Applause*) I hope you all have an enjoyable stay.

At the last Regional Committee meeting I was asked by the Regional President and Regional Secretary to arrange to have good weather for your stay here in Plymouth. Well, so far so good, and the weather forecast is looking good for the rest of the week. During your stay here in Plymouth I hope you find time to visit the local attractions – Sutton Harbour with its fine restaurants and sunny views, the historic Barbican with its shops, bars, restaurants and galleries, and famous for the Mayflower Steps; Plymouth Hoe, with its stunning views over our natural harbour; the city centre, with a good range of retail outlets; the Royal William Yard, which is a fine example of how to make good use of redundant listed buildings by turning them into first-class accommodation, art galleries and top-quality bars and restaurants. For those of you who feel energetic, you can always make a trip to our new Life Centre in Central Park, with its 50 metre pool, Olympic diving pool, fitness centre and multi-court sports facilities, all of which are ready for you to use. If you are lucky, you may even bump into Tom Daley, our Olympic diver.

Plymouth is Britain ocean city. It is the place where Sir Francis Drake played bowls before defeating the Spanish Armada, the point of emigration for the Mayflower, its pilgrims and, subsequently, countless others setting sail for modern America. It is the place where Darwin set sail on the Beagle,

the birthplace of Scott, the polar explorer and home to Nancy Astor. We are proud of our history and heritage.

Plymouth is the largest city on the south coast of England, with the largest natural harbour in Europe, hosting western Europe's largest naval base at Devonport, managed by the MOD, which the General Secretary visited on his last visit to the city, an experience, I believe, he remembers well. We are the home of Wrigley's, Plessys, Princess Yachts, and the only place in the world where Plymouth Gin can be made.

President, we face difficult times in local government. Public sector resources are challenging, but we are responding positively. We have achieved £20 million of saving from efficiencies over the past few years, and have plans to deliver £17 million in the current year. Our efficiencies including senior management de-layering, procurement savings and rationalising our assets. During the next five years we will have to meet further significant savings as our resources will be significantly lower from central Government. We await the Chancellor's announcement later this month with interest and trepidation. We are seeking to maximise savings that we can achieve from transforming the way the council works, focusing on customer service, investment in ICT and more efficient ways of procuring and streamlining still further our use of accommodation. We are also working more co-operatively with our business partners; ie, with business rates coming in, shared accommodation at Windsor House and we are going into ICT shared services. We will still have difficult decisions to make and our commitment is to be open with the trade unions in the spirit of co-operation.

However, it is not all doom and gloom. We remain committed to our staff who are doing a great job. We employ nearly four thousand people in our Corporate Department, plus almost the same number in schools. We are a major employer in the City. We introduced a centralised suggestion scheme, offering up to £200 for the best suggestion to help the PCC save money. We have introduced an annual 'Our Stars Award' to say thank you to our staff who go that extra mile. We have introduced support for the tough times, a workplace options employee assistance programme available 24 hours a day, and making money go further by the i-CHOOSE Staff Benefits Scheme. I am delighted to say that in March of this year we signed up to the Learning Agreement, which is a joint agreement with the three main staff-side trade unions. The initial focus is on core skills – numeracy, literacy and ITC – and 60 staff members have expressed an increase in taking part with pre-course assessments starting this month.

We are setting up a new zone at the Prince Rock Depot. We are putting in classrooms and a learning centre. We are also promoting youth employment. We have a very successful apprenticeship scheme in Plymouth. We have currently got 52 youth apprentices and 20 adult apprentices, with our team of apprentices being short-listed for the Brathay Apprentice Challenge, which is for the Apprentice Team of the Year Award. I am delighted to say that we will be a living wage employer this Autumn. *(Applause)*

Before I wind up, one of the pledges that we made to the people of Plymouth when we stood at the last election was to start a memorial fund for Michael Foot to raise a monument in Freedom Park. Any donations would be greatly received, because we said that it will not be from public donations, so we need all your money.

Finally, I hope you enjoy your stay in Plymouth and please come back and visit us soon with your friends and families. Thank you very much. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Peter, thank you ever so much for coming to address us this morning. I know that everybody is having a great time in Plymouth. We had a warm welcome last time we were here and that is why we are back. It is great to see Labour back in power. On behalf of GMB and its members,

let me make this presentation to you of a bottle of GMB Whisky and a book on the History of the GMB. *(Applause)*

ADDRESS BY DAVE SMITH, BLACKLIST SUPPORT GROUP

THE PRESIDENT: Congress, it gives me great pleasure to ask our next speaker to address you. Dave Smith is from the Blacklist Support Group. I would like to welcome Dave to address Congress and open the Blacklisting debate. Dave was blacklisted by Carillion when some others failed to set up to the mark. It was Dave and the Blacklist Support Group who refused to go away quietly and kept campaigning for justice for the 3,213 people blacklisted. Dave, you and the Blacklist Support Group are a credit to the trade union Movement. I am proud to ask you to address Congress. *(Applause)*

BRO. D. SMITH (Blacklist Support Group): Congress, let me thank the GMB, Mary and Paul for inviting me to speak. It is an absolute honour to speak at your GMB Congress. I bring solidarity greetings from the Blacklist Support Group and the blacklisted workers who are a part of our campaign. *(Applause)* Let me also say that I am a trade unionist, I am proud to be a trade unionist and union conferences have a special place for trade unions. During the year, as trade-union reps, we are fighting to defend our members' terms and conditions. We are representing people at disciplinaries and grievances, but conferences are the one time of the year when we all come together collectively to reaffirm our values, our values of equality, our values of fairness and democracy and trying to make the world a better place for working people. That is what we are about. That is what trade unions have always been about. In order to achieve it, trade unions don't just think, "Wouldn't it be a good idea if the world was a better place?", but we believe that you can actually do something about it. We believe that by working people coming together collectively we can change the world and we can make improvements. That is why trade unions have always been about collective action, whether they are the refuse workers in Brighton and Hove *(Cheers)* or whether they are the cleaners in Swindon Hospital. This is about standing together and solidarity. This is what trade unions are all about. *(Applause)*

Of course, collective action still needs organising. It is all very well to say "collective action", but, of course, collective action still needs someone at the local workplace to go and take a stand. It needs activists, like the delegates in this hall, who are prepared to convince their fellow workers to win the arguments amongst the workforce and to take a stand which other people are prepared to follow and support us. That is how we change things.

The difficulty that we have often found – I am sure I am not the only person in the room who has found this – is that if you are a union activist then, sometimes, it has an impact on our job prospects. Sometimes management don't want to promote us. Sometimes, if they really don't like us, they start victimising us and, on certain occasions, we get sacked and dismissed. For some union activists it goes further than just dismissal. It goes to blacklisting where not only do we lose our jobs at one workplace but we have trouble in getting a job in future workplaces again, again and again. Anyone who was part of the heroic miners' dispute back in '84—'85 will remember what happened to thousands and thousands of miners who were blacklisted and couldn't get a job afterwards. The difficulty, of course, when trade unionists talk about blacklisting, is proving it. Whenever we talk about blacklisting, everyone looks at us as if we are paranoid, as if it is some kind of big conspiracy theory, and, actually, "There's no such thing as a blacklist. It's just that you lot can't get a job and you're just moaning for no reason." Of course, getting proof and evidence has always been the difficult issue with blacklisting except, of course, now, for one group of workers in the construction industry we do have the proof. We have got the evidence and the documents to prove that employers were blacklisting us.

In 2009 the Information Commissioner's Office, which is part of the Government, did a raid on an organisation in the Midlands called The Consulting Association. When they raided it they found secret

files on 3,200 workers, secret files that had people's names, addresses, National Insurance numbers, photographs and date of birth. *This* is my file. It is 36 pages long. It has got photographs in it. It's got my work history of about 10 years. It's got my date of birth and what car I drive. Is anybody in the room a safety rep? Can I have a show of hands? Okay. It's got my safety rep's credentials photocopied and sent to the blacklist file. Just for being a safety rep was enough to get you blacklisted. It's got information about my wife and brother. When I complained about asbestos and overflowing toilets, the managers on the building site would write it up, send it up and they were keeping a secret file on us. It wasn't just me, but 3,200 other workers in the construction industry.

The first item on my file is from 1992. It is from Balfour Beatty, the building company. It talks about when I was involved in action to do with unpaid wages. There was a job on Hangar Lane on the North Circular Road where workers had not been paid for four weeks, so there was a dispute. It wasn't even my dispute. It wasn't me. I just turned up on the picket line to help them. That is what solidarity is about. That is what we do as trade unionists. We go and help. (*Applause*)

There is one bit in my file which I am particularly offended by, and a manager who has met me has written the following up – this is the bit I am intending to sue about most, actually: “Main contact. Dave Smith: Small and talking like a young Alf Garnett.” (*Laughter and applause*) Now, that I am offended by. That offends me. It wouldn't be too bad if all they were doing was keeping a scrapbook on you. If all they were doing was keeping a scrapbook on you – fine. I have no problem about that. I am sure lots of people do that. How it works is this is that every time we apply to get a job, the biggest multinational construction firms in this country, the 44 biggest firms in this country – Kiers, Sir Robert McAlpine, Skanska, Carillion – used to share the information that was on the list. So every time you applied for a job, they used to check to see whether your name was on the list, and we know this because we've got the invoices. They were actually invoiced every time they checked to see whether your name was on the list.

In the last year before The Consulting Association was closed down, which was when they were building the Olympic Park, Sir Robert McAlpine was building the Olympic Stadium. Skanska, the Swedish multinational, was building the Olympics Media Centre. Their invoices for that year are valued at £28,000. It was £2 every time they checked a name. They were checking nearly 14,000 names. That shows you how industrial this checking was, how organised and how systemic. It is no wonder that a lot of us couldn't get jobs. It was not just me but countless other workers couldn't get jobs. We weren't just sacked once but we were sacked time and time and time again. My kids ended up on free school meals. Other people had lost their houses over this. People have seen their marriages fall apart because of this. There are examples where workers on the Jubilee Line committed suicide afterwards. It is absolutely outrageous. It's a human rights abuse that has been going on by some of the biggest multinational companies in this country.

With all of this evidence, you would think that there would be masses of legal challenges, because we've got the evidence and the documents. We know what has been going on. I took out an employment tribunal against Carillion. On the first day when we were in court Carillion gave the judge a written document. Their solicitors and barrister gave the judge a written document. In it Carillion admitted blacklisting me, they admitted that it was their managers who had put the information on my file, they admitted that the reason why they did it was because I was a member of a trade union and they admitted that the reason they did it was because I had raised concerns about health and safety. We had a five-day employment tribunal and I still lost. Why did I lose? Because I was an agency worker. Under British employment law, agency workers haven't got the same rights as direct employees. They said: “It is a terrible injustice but British employment law does not protect you.” That is why we have got to fight against this behaviour because it is an injustice. If British employment law doesn't protect us, then we have to go by other ways and other means in order to get there.

Some material has been produced. People may know that there is a Parliamentary Select Committee – the Scottish Affairs Select Committee – which has carried out an investigation on blacklisting. *This* is their recent report which they have produced about blacklisting in the construction industry. In it Ian Kerr, who was the man who actually organised the blacklist, admitted that he was doing it for many years. He showed not an ounce of contrition. There was not an ounce of contrition in the man. Callum McAlpine, who is one of the directors of Sir Robert McAlpine, gave three hours of evidence and he didn't apologise once. He didn't think he had anything to apologise for. Even after that, articles have appeared in *The Times*, which admissions have been made that the police were involved in supplying some of the information to the blacklist files. This is a human rights' abuse. It's been going on. It's not something that happened in the past. It is still going on today. It was going on during the building of the Olympics. The biggest publicly-funded project in western Europe is Crossrail at the moment. It is a new railway line that is being built across London. Yet blacklisting is still going on at Crossrail. There should be a full public inquiry on blacklisting. If they could have the Leveson Inquiry because celebrities are having tittle-tattle on their phone done, because of phone hacking for celebrities, why can't we have it for working-class people? (*Applause*) If we can't get this through employment tribunals, we will carry on fighting for justice, and that is nothing new to us because we have always had to fight. Working people have always had to fight. We've always had to fight and carry on as part of the struggle. The powers that be never gave us anything. We are part of a movement. All of us are part of a movement. They never gave us the vote because the people in authority thought it was a good idea. They gave us the vote because people like us a hundred or two hundred years ago organised the Suffragettes and the Chartists. That is how we got the vote because we went and did something about it.

They didn't just give us the National Health Service, which is our greatest achievement. We had to go out and fight for that, and we need to fight to protect it today. (*Applause*)

One of the things on my blacklist files say that I am blacklisted because I complained about asbestos. Seriously, I complained about asbestos. Asbestos wasn't banned in this country because they suddenly found out that asbestos was bad for people. They knew it was bad for people in the Victorian times. They knew it was killing people. Asbestos was banned in this country because cleaners and teachers in schools and people in hospitals refused to work where there was flaking asbestos. That is how we did it, because builders on the Barbican refused to put asbestos in. It is working people coming together collectively that throws us forward. When we got rid of Apartheid, it wasn't because of morality. It was because of the African National Congress and the trade unions in COSATU that came together and organised. We are now part of that struggle today. It is an on-going struggle. I am very proud to be speaking at this GMB Congress, because in the struggle against blacklisting the GMB is a central part of the fight for justice. The GMB was the first union to produce a report about Carillion was up to in blacklisting. Andy, Carol, Steve and Andrew deserve applause for that. (*Applause*) The GMB was the first union to send material to Labour councillors asking them to pass motions saying no to publicly-funded contracts for blacklisting companies. There are Labour councillors in the room today – Gary Doolan from Islington – who passed a motion to prevent it happening, and that is happening across the country. (*Applause*)

The GMB was the first union to give evidence at the Select Committee Inquiry. Harry Donaldson from GMB Scotland gave evidence. Paul Kenny was the first General Secretary to speak on the platform at the AGM of the Blacklist Support Group. It was a privilege to us that he came to speak to the BSG, because other general secretaries were not prepared to do it. I am glad I can repay the honour. Thank you very much. (*Applause*) GMB was the first union to send blacklisted workers not just in this country but abroad. They flew us to Stockholm, in Scandinavia, to protest outside the AGM of Skanska. Justin Bowden was there, and Steve Pryle made us the front page of every newspaper in Sweden on that day. (*Applause*) The GMB is also the first union to raise the question of blacklisting to try and get it in the Labour Party election manifesto. They have sent a resolution about blacklisting

to the Labour Party Conference, and Penny Robinson, who is the branch secretary for Barking & Dagenham, organised a meeting with John Cruddas to make sure that this is part of the election manifesto. That deserves a round of applause as well. *(Applause)* Today, the GMB has put its money where its mouth is and it is the first union to take a High Court claim on blacklisting. The point is that if we can't win at employment tribunals, we will go to the High Court and the GMB is the first union to do that. *(Applause)*

I talked about solidarity, and doing that is solidarity. Anyone can talk it, but putting your money where your mouth is shows that actions speak louder than words. That is genuine solidarity for blacklisted workers. I think that the GMB should be justly proud for its record in this campaign. But the campaign is not about one person. The *Campaign for Justice* isn't about one union. It's a collective struggle. We come together. There is a symbol that trade unions for collective action, and it is a clenched fist. I once heard Nelson Mandela explain why we use the clenched fist. He said that it is to do with workers, because if there are five workers individually, you can snap them one at a time, but when we come together you can't snap us. That is what I think we are doing here. Blacklisted workers on their own can be snapped, but when we come together we are blacklisted workers, with investigative journalists, with MPs, with councillors, with lawyers and especially with trade unions and trade union activists, we can change the world, we can have solidarity and we can move it forward. Thank you very much for inviting me. Please give me a sign of solidarity. *(A standing ovation amidst a sea of clenched fists)*

THE PRESIDENT: Dave, I am proud and honoured to know you as a comrade and a trade unionist. An injustice to one is an injustice to all. I give you this promise as a member of the NEC that that will be on the Labour Party manifesto. I promise you that. *(Applause)* On behalf of the GMB, please accept *this* little drink for you with our great thanks, and the *History of the GMB*, and all the fights that we have down the centuries. Well done. We are proud to know you and proud to have met you today. *(Presentation made amidst applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Paul has just said to me: "That's why we get up in the morning, to protect our members and our workers. That's why we are great trade union and we will continue to fight where we see any injustice taking place. *(Applause)*

I now move back to the agenda: Employment Policy: Rights at Work.

EMPLOYMENT POLICY: RIGHTS AT WORK BLACKLISTING

C3. Covering motions:

95. BLACKLISTING *(London Region)*
96. BLACKLISTING *(Yorkshire & North Derbyshire Region)*
97. BLACKLISTING *(North West & Irish Region)*
98. BLACKLISTING *(Northern Region)*

BLACKLISTING

This Congress notes:

1. The ongoing campaign as a result of the exposure of the blacklist and its use by major construction and engineering companies.
2. That at least 200 GMB members were on the blacklist and in the region of 500 GMB members may have been blacklisted over decades.
3. The important and continuing campaign against blacklisting and for redress being pursued by those who were blacklisted.

4. Some of the richest people in Society are engaged in, or are backing the blacklisting of workers with no justification and because Union Activists stand up and defend workers' rights

This Congress believes:

5. The GMB continues to have an important role in the broader campaign against blacklisting.

This Congress resolves:

6. That the GMB should ask its sponsored local Councillors to take steps to ensure that those companies who utilised the blacklist are excluded from local government contracts.
7. That the GMB should ask its sponsored MPs to take steps to ensure that those companies who utilised the blacklist are excluded from central government contracts.

Congress recognises the work done by the GMB in its investigations on blacklisting of our members. However, Congress notes the incompetence of the Information Commissioner's Office ICO, regarding their investigations and their lack of enforcement, which resembles a chocolate fireguard on organisations like Carillion.

Congress calls

- on a law to be placed before Parliament to outlaw blacklisting, and for public service contracts to be ended where employers living off the taxpayer operate such reprehensible employment practices
- for the Labour Party to signal that it will table legislation to make the practice of blacklisting illegal on its return to Government
- upon the next Labour Government to commit to holding a full investigation regarding the practice of blacklisting. The panel should have full judiciary powers and be able to call on all authorities, industries and individuals who hold records to be forced to attend with full disclosure. Finally, it should be able to recommend any actions which are deemed suitable against individuals and companies who took part in blacklisting over many years.

Congress asks the CEC to contact the Home Office asking them who the ICO are set up to protect, and why they fail to advise members of the public that they have been subject to blacklisting.

(Carried)

BRO. I. LOWES (North West & Irish): President and Congress, I move Composite 3: Blacklisting. The Oxford Dictionary defines a blacklist as "A list of people or groups regarded as unacceptable or untrustworthy and often marked down for punishment or exclusion." The Professor of Public Law at King's College, London, Keith Ewing, describes blacklisting as a "nasty, secretive and unacceptable practice that causes untold misery to those entrapped unwittingly by its covert nature, incapable of challenging what is being said and used against them, unable to understand why their lives are being blighted by the failure to secure work." Blacklisting is nothing new. It's been going on for many, many years. Between 1919 and 1993 a right-wing organisation called the Economic League carried out a wide-ranging list of workers it considered subversive and provided information to employers in order to exclude many thousands of trade unionists and political activists from employment. The Economic League was funded by major companies and big business. Many of the same companies also funded the Tory Party. The Economic League was closed down in 1993 after a Parliamentary inquiry and pressure from the media. The modern-day version of the Economic League was the Consulting Association, run by Ian Kerr, who previously worked for the Economic League. In 2009 the Consulting Association's offices were raided by investigators from the Information Commissioner's Office, who found a secret blacklist containing more than three thousand names and a detailed account of companies that were using the Consulting Association.

This motion calls for the GMB to use its influence on local councillors to ensure that companies which were using the Consulting Association are excluded from local government contracts. Sadly, Liverpool

City Council, which is overwhelmingly controlled by Labour, and we also have a Labour Mayor, Joe Anderson – he told Congress in 2010 that he was a socialist – has just awarded two major contracts to a company called AMEC, who were members of the Consulting Association, who carried out blacklisting.

I have always judged people by what they do, not by what we say. There is nothing socialist about giving council contracts to blacklisters. The motion also calls for sponsored MPs to take steps to exclude blacklisters from central Government contracts. Finally, the motion calls for the future Labour Government to make blacklisting illegal, to carry out a full investigation, to establish a panel with full judiciary powers to compel those who have carried out blacklisting to attend with full disclosure, and for compensation for people whose lives have been ruined by the discrimination practice of blacklisting. Thank you. *(Applause)*

BRO. B. GOLDING (Yorkshire & North Derbyshire): President and Comrades, I am seconding Composite 3 on blacklisting. I am going to talk personally about how it has affected my family. In 1972 my dad, who was a bricklayer, was involved in a national building strike. In 1973 he was working on a building site and the wind was so bad that the scaffolding boards were being blown out. He went to the foreman and said, “Look, this is dangerous. We need to stop.” The foreman said, “Carry on working or you go home and we are not going to pay you.” He had four kids to feed. He went back to work. An hour later a wall collapsed and crushed his hands. He was off work for nine months, he lost his finger and he had to learn how to use his hands as a bricklayer. We lived on free school meals. My mum and dad didn’t eat food. That was how it affected us. He got back to work and in 1975 he was working at York. He was working on an old Victorian building and doing it up. It was Henry J. Boots. They had a number of health and safety issues. Once again, he went to the foreman and again told, “Get on and do your job”. A scaffold collapsed, so he organised the workers, got them altogether, and he said, “Look, somebody is going to get killed here.” So he got them altogether, because they needed to understand why they were going to go on strike. They occupied the building site for eight weeks. They were taken to court four times. The judge told Boots to reinstate the workers and they went back to work. They finished the job. Needless to say, he didn’t get taken on on any more jobs for Henry J. Boots.

At the time when the Harrogate Conference Centre was being built, they were advertising in the local press that they needed building workers and bricklayers. My dad went to Harrogate and said he wanted a job bricklaying. “Okay, mate. Tell us your National Insurance number.” He gave them his National Insurance number and got a phone call saying, “No, we don’t need you.” The lad who he went with, who wasn’t a trade unionist, and just because he went with my dad, didn’t get a job either. The following week there was an advertisement in the press saying that they wanted bricklayers. These pigs – McAlpine, Boots, Shepherds – shouldn’t get any more contracts. It should be made illegal and the bastards should go to prison. Thank you. *(Applause)*

CARILLION MOTION 99

99. CARILLION

This congress notes the scandalous failure of care at the Surgicare centre in Hertfordshire, run by the services group Carillion.

- The deaths of three patients who had been admitted for routine treatment prompted an independent report before Christmas.
- The unit had already been investigated over potential failings in the cases of six patients who suffered irreversible sight loss after treatment.

- There have been 21 serious clinical and patient information incidents since the clinic opened in September 2011.
- The clinic also lost the records of 8,500 ophthalmology outpatients in 2012.
- The local MP Stephen McPartland has called for Carillion to lose its license to manage medical services.

Congress further notes that:

- Carillion has been involved in unlawful blacklisting.
- Carillion has been involved in systematic cover ups about a system of extortion run by supervisors at Swindon's Great Western Hospital, including the victimization of GMB members who acted as whistle-blowers.

Congress believes:

- Carillion's standards of corporate governance fall below those expected of a company involved with the NHS, or providing public services to local or national governments.
- Congress resolves to continue to publicise Carillion's failings and asks public authorities to review their procurement policies to insist that companies working in the public sector hold to higher ethical standards than Carillion has so far exhibited.

W15 WILTSHIRE AND SWINDON BRANCH
Southern Region

(Carried)

BRO. A. NEWMAN (Southern): Congress, I move Motion 99 on Carillion. I bring greetings to Congress from the 145 members who we've still got in an industrial dispute with Carillion at Swindon's Great Western Hospital. I also want to pay tribute to Dave who has travelled up and down the country offering practical support, speaking on platforms with us and offering the support of the Blacklist Support Group every time they could for our members. We've only had to ask them and they've been there. It's been fantastic solidarity.

I want to tell you what sort of company Carillion is. They were the ones which denied Dave a livelihood. I want to tell you that this is a private company that cares absolutely nothing about people. It only cares about profit and it gets £2.5 billion a year from the public purse. Andy Burnham sat *here* yesterday and said that companies that are involved in blacklisting should not get public contracts. But, comrades, blacklisting is only one of the areas where Carillion behave absolutely shamefully. Last year at the High Court there was a finding against Carillion for scandalous lack of health and safety on a building site in Swansea, where 40-year old Russell Samuel fell 19ft to his death, where Carillion knew, because it had been reported to them, that the site was unsafe. It had also been reported to them that the contractor had done nothing and had a poor health and safety record. That man was killed because they took no action. It was their responsibility. The Health & Safety Executive prosecuted and they lost in court but, despite that, they tried to deny justice to that person and fought it which is why they had to pay a further £55,000 in costs, even though they were liable.

A Conservative MP, Stephen McPartland, the MP for Stevenage, has called for Carillion to lose its licence to operate in the National Health Service because back in September 2012 Carillion started running the Surgicare centre Hertfordshire, and in just one year they lost 8,500 medical records, there were 21 serious clinical incidents due to negligence, six people lost their sight after going in for routine surgery and three people died. That was in a privately-run clinic by Carillion. This reflects a complete lack of management. Carillion has a scandalous lack of corporate governance. What I mean by that is that the management is supposed to be structured to prevent their company breaking the law and acting unethically. However, on the issue of blacklisting, Richard Howson, the CEO of Carillion, has made statements that the company is not involved in blacklisting, which are contradicted by evidence which has since been given by Carillion managers in employment tribunals and it is contradicted by evidence

heard by the Scottish Select Affairs Committee in Westminster. So either Richard Howson, the CEO of Carillion, doesn't know what is going on in his own company, or Richard Howson is lying. So either he is too stupid or too wicked to be the CEO of a major public company. (*Applause*)

Comrades, what was the response of Carillion to the evidence we presented? One hundred and thirty-two of our members gave evidence of systematic shakedowns at the Swindon Hospital where racist language was used, our members were victimised and abused and gold and money was demanded of them for employment rights, for overtime, holiday approvals or shift changes. We have not seen the full final report – we have seen the summary – but they say that they did admit that racist language was used by supervisors but, in their exact words, “It wasn't a serious problem.” We also saw the language of colonialism in their report, where they said that the staff had to recognise that they were a difficult workforce to manage because they were overly emotional, given to crying and touching the supervisors. This is the language of “Take up the white man's burden.” These are stereotypes of the Asian workforce that are absolutely scandalous.

We brought a coach load of strikers to Congress last year, and while we were at Congress we learnt that 10 of the whistleblowers, who had gone to Carillion for protection, in telling them about the corruption, were being disciplined for allegedly giving bribes. This was clearly designed to intimidate us. We were not intimidated. We called a further day of strike action. We stood in a live industrial dispute. The strike action was solidly supported. Our members are still dispute. Carillion will not win. They are tough employer but, as I said last year, we're a tough union. We will go on fighting until we bring them to their knees. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Andy. Secunder?

SIS. B. LUCAS (Southern): This is my first Congress as a delegate. (*Applause*) Carillion was chosen by the last Government to build and provide services to our local PFI-built general hospital in Swindon. It became clear very quickly that things were changing but not in a good way. Ancillary and support services were all taken over by Carillion, including catering, portering and cleaning services. Cleaners, or domestics, were once part of the ward team. They attended shift handovers along with the nurses and other healthcare staff. They became a familiar face to the patients on the wards, and often had friendly banter with patients and relatives. When Carillion took charge of all domestic staff, they removed them from the wards and centralised them in the basement. They had to clock in, report to a cleaning manager who then sent them to various parts of the hospital. They no longer talked with the patients. They were no longer allowed to. Senior nurses had to spend time ordering cleaning services, filling out forms, indicating what was required. All of a sudden requisites had to be completed and time and motion studies were taking place. If the forms were not filled in, the cleaning never happened. Porters, the friendly face with friendly banter that could put patients at ease while transporting them to theatres, to x-rays or to a different ward, were no longer permitted to use their own initiative or be helpful. Every job, however small, had to be ordered by telephone to a Carillion help desk. If you can, imagine being in the resuscitation room and with everything that is happening within the resuscitation room – I know there are other clinical health staff here – and then have to stop what you are doing to go to the telephone, to ring a help desk and ask for portering help.

The nursing and medical staff no longer worked fluidly in partnership with support services. Spontaneity was no longer allowed. The emergency department used to have a designated porter who was an integral part of the emergency team. This was cut. Instead, during emergency medical scenarios, as I said, we have to apply through the usual help desk. The original porters started leaving. Admin managers, co-ordinators and help-desk staff were hired. Carillion was quick to discipline any breach of their strict criteria. Support staff lived and worked in a climate of fear of disciplinaries and bullying. Private companies like Carillion only have a vague interest but no commitment to healthcare, only to profit. They pay lip service to what their patient really needs, but this is brushed aside by the

needs of their shareholders. I am proud to stand *here*. I am proud that I was one of the first GMB members at Swindon Hospital. I am proud that I have had a small part in the recruitment of other GMB members from the NHS at Swindon. I am also proud that a group of down-trodden, bullied and previously timid low-paid workers were helped to find their voice of protest against this rotten organisation. Please support this motion. Thank you. (*Applause*)

BRO. G. SHARKEY (London): Congress, I am from the Islington and Haringey branch and supporting Composite Motion 3 on Blacklisting. The building industry blacklist was discovered following a raid by the ICO in 2009. The whole of the trade union Movement has been outraged by the revelation that 3,200 workers on this secret list had previously been elected as union safety reps. Details include their unpaid wages and even attending an anti-BNP protest. The scandal was exposed to MPs in Parliament by legal cases and by on-going campaigns by our Union and the rank and file Blacklist Support Group. If you believe the big building contractors, this human-rights' abuse stopped four years ago, but why should we believe them. These same companies lied about blacklisting for decades, and it was only when giving evidence, under oath, to the Select Committee investigation, that HR directors admitted widespread blacklisting on high-profile, publicly-funded projects, such as the Olympics.

The largest publicly-funded project in western Europe today is Crossrail. An electrician called Frank Morris was sacked immediately he became elected as a union rep. Frank is currently taking an employment tribunal for blacklisting against the firm building the tunnels. Congress, we must send our solidarity to him.

The delegates in this Congress hall should not believe that blacklisting only exists predominantly in the construction industry. It revealed that academics, journalists and even elected politicians were on a blacklist. The ICO admitted that they only seized between 5% - 10% of all the paperwork in the offices of the Consulting Association. This is a total disgrace. How many blacklists affecting whole industries were left in the office? How many other secret blacklists have not yet been discovered? The blacklisting companies are no longer just operating in the building industry. Privatisation means that they are now operating in the NHS and in local authorities. Kier, one of the blacklisting companies was exposed in Parliament as one of those involved in the sacking of Frank Morris from Crossrail. Kier also blacklisted Chris Murphy. I knew Chris Murphy for many years and I can tell Congress that there were entries in the blacklist files when he was a convenor for Kier. Kier has brought their vile threats to my local authority. Carillion has brought their vile threats into the NHS in Swindon. Congress, should send out a clear message that not a penny of public money should go to blacklisters.

I am proud that the GMB is leading the campaign against the blacklisters. I am also proud that it passed at our full council meeting calling that no contracts should be given to any blacklisting firm. I am proud that Gary Doolan, the GMB member at my branch, moved the motion at the council meeting. Sisters and brothers, support the campaign to get blacklisters out of the public sector. Support the blacklisting fight for justice. Support the motion. (*Applause*)

BRO. G. AVERY (Northern): Congress, I am a first-time delegate and first-time speaker. (*Applause*) I am speaking on Composite 3 – Blacklisting. Congress, the scandal that emerged at Carillion and which the GMB exposed is a lesson to all who have a vested interest in decent rights at work. The failure of the Information Commissioner's Office to carry out the most basic of investigations is ensuring that the disgraceful practice of blacklisting continues. It is a most shameful practice done in the dark corners of business.

Let's be clear. The wholesale privatisation of services – the outsourcing of services to use the jargon – has shown that what has happened since the early 1980s has led to the taxpayer getting ripped off at least twice and probably more. Gamblers and the greed of self-serving business people has meant that

they have won contracts off the public purse without any real get up and go. They've just had the nerve to borrow from you and me as a result of winning public service contracts to provide services to you and me. To make matters worse, most of their profits will be placed out of reach of the tax authorities, so less is put back into the pot to invest in public services, and the cycle starts again.

At the same time, Congress, these employers are engaged in blacklisting individuals who are deemed troublemakers. It is a scandal that this has not been jumped on by lawmakers at Westminster. The Tories and the Lib-Dems won't do anything as they are trying to cut employment rights. But the Labour Party can at least signal that any blacklisting company will have their contracts ended. Blacklisters should be named and shamed and lose their contracts to provide public services. Please support. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Colleagues, does anyone else wish to come in on this debate? (*No response*) In that case, I call Justin Bowden.

BRO. J. BOWDEN (National Officer): Congress, I am replying on behalf of the CEC. The CEC is supporting Composite 3 covering Motions 95, 96, 97 and 98, with two qualifications. These are that the CEC may wish to explore all options to make the Information Commissioner's Office – the ICO – more accountable. As blacklisting legislation already exists, the CEC would welcome calling for that legislation to be strengthened.

Mary, I also have a very important announcement to make in the *Campaign for Justice* for the 3,213 people on the blacklist. This morning, in the High Court, GMB lawyers launched the first legal cases for the 109 blacklisted GMB members so far identified. (*Applause*) This is the first High Court action taken by any trade union against all the players in the blacklisting conspiracy and a major step forward in the battle for justice. By taking a brand new legal direction, our High Court action seeks damages for defamation and compensation for GMB members kept out of work as a direct result of the criminal conspiracy that the construction companies entered into to deny them work. But we have much still to do.

The continuing incompetence of the ICO means that at least 2,500 people still don't know that they are blacklisted, never mind that they have a legal case for compensation. Colleagues, everyone in this hall needs, if you have not already, to visit stall 10 and speak to Phil Read to see if you, personally, are on the blacklist or if there is anybody else whose name you recognise that might be included on it. We need more than 109 cases if we are going to get justice for all of the people on the list. The secret conspiracy that denies workers employment without explanation is a national scandal that ranks alongside the phone hacking by *News International*, a black market in destroying workers' reputations and job prospects and a civil rights' outrage that caused financial hardship and disrupted and ruin lives, all for the financial benefit of the companies themselves which stopped only because they got caught.

What of the cowboy kings of construction, the likes of Carillion, McAlpine, Balfour Beatty and Skanska, perpetrators of a culture where standing up for health and safety was rewarded and punished by unemployment, whose actions removed a generation of shop stewards and safety reps from the workplace. They thought they had got away with it with just a five grand fine for the man they had running their secret show, and a letter or two saying "Naughty boys" from that apology of a state regulator, the ICO. Their arrogance is trumped only by their cynicism and their contempt for ordinary people's rights. Our message to them is simple. The GMB never, ever walks away. (*Applause*) Today's High Court action is just the latest step along the road to justice, to the apology they will have to make and to the compensation they will have to pay. Shoulder to shoulder with the Blacklist Support Group, GMB will never stop until every trade unionist, every health and safety rep, every peace campaigner and environmentalist has received an apology and compensation for what was done to them and to their families in the name of company profits. Please support Composite 3. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Justin, can I thank you and the team that has been so heavily involved in this work. Let me tell you that Brent Council accepted a resolution put forward by George Fraser and myself to carry out the GMB's wishes to look at these companies and not to award them contracts. (*Applause*)

I now move to the vote. Does Yorkshire & North Derbyshire Region accept the qualification? (*Agreed*) I now move to the vote. All those in favour of Composite 3, please show? Anyone against?

Composite Motion 3 was CARRIED.

THE PRESIDENT: All those in favour of Motion 99, please show? Anyone against?

Motion 99 was CARRIED.

THE PRESIDENT: Let me say a thank you to Dave. We do wish you a safe journey home. If you talk like Alf Garnett, good luck to you. (*Applause*)

At this stage, could I ask Congress's authority to move Motions 217, 218 and 256 to later on in the agenda? The movers might be quite happy about that. Is that agreed by Congress? (*Agreed*)

INDUSTRIAL & ECONOMIC POLICY: TAXATION & GENERAL UK INDUSTRIAL POLICY MOTION 216

216. UK INDUSTRIAL POLICY

This Congress supports the work of the TUC in developing thinking towards an Industrial policy for the UK in its "German Lessons" publication¹.

Congress supports a UK industrial policy based on core principles including:

- The need to rebalance the economy away from cushioning the financial chicanery of the City of London and towards a productive, job creating productive economy;
- The need for 'patient' finance to the productive economy;
- The development of a high skilled productive workforce through a training and development levy of companies, organised through licenced sectoral bodies made up of employers and employees representatives;
- The development of robust, quality, apprenticeship programs run by sectoral bodies made up of employers and employees representatives;
- The radical reform of the finance and banking industry, to create a utilitarian banking system focused on productive job creation;
- The use of Government contract tendering to drive and reward companies on socially useful grounds (job creation, skill promotion, promotion of industrial relations, tax compliancy etc)
- Raising finance for industrial research and development through a financial transactions tax to suppress socially useless financial speculation;
- The need for tax fairness and an end to tax havenry to allow great companies to develop on a level taxation 'playing field';
- The reform of company law to stress the societal obligations of those petitioning for limited company status over short-term shareholder return;
- The development of industrial planning through national and regional economic partnership bodies;
- The need to create a "Green New Deal"

In furtherance of this motion Congress instructs the GMB to:

- publish a fully researched case for a UK Industrial policy
- consult widely amongst GMB branches as part of the process of researching for a UK Industrial policy;

- actively press the case for the GMB conception of a UK Industrial policy at the TUC, with GMB sponsored MPs and within the Labour Party as a whole, with other political parties and with civic society;
- Host a one day national, public conference to launch the GMB case for a UK Industrial policy, followed by a series of regional events;
- Plan a public campaign to propagate the need for a UK Industrial policy, including a full-hearted press and media campaign

¹.German Lessons, Developing Industrial Policy in the UK, see <http://www.tuc.org.uk/industrial/tuc-20509-f0.cfm>

B84 BRANCH
North West & Irish Region

(Carried)

BRO. B. McCLINTON (North West & Irish): Good morning, President, General Secretary and Congress, I move Motion 216 on UK Industrial Policy. I am *here* to talk to you about this motion, which came from my own branch, but is supported by branches across the Union back home. So thanks to everyone.

Congress, Maggie Thatcher told Peter Mandelson not to trust the Irish, “They’re all liars”. I say that those advocating neo-liberal policies on the basis that they will meet the needs of the people of this country are the real liars, liars who have got us to where we are today, facing the worst economic disaster of modern times. Furthermore, the view that public austerity will lead to private-sector growth held by the current Con-Dem Government is evidentially wrong and damaging to the people of this country.

This motion indicates an alternative direction, a direction where there is a better future for the people of this country. It is about moving the UK economy away from the socially useless, finance-driven economic model, to one based on producing goods and services, thereby having a productive society. It is both bold and moderate. It is bold because it will be a break from the failed economic policies of the last 30 years, and it is moderate because this is all doable. Now is not the time for flights of fancy, nor is it the time to stick with the failed policies of the last 30 years. Now is the time for the best that the trade union Movement can produce – boldness and moderation.

Why on earth is there a need for an industrial policy? For the last three decades the British policy establishment has rejected an industrial policy as a matter of principle. They said, “We don’t need a productive economy. That’s finished.” They said, “You can’t buck the market.” They said, “It is against our culture. No industrial policy. We are British.” Is this not unbelievably stupid. Industrial policy was invented and pioneered in this country. There can be no mincing of words here. The abandonment by Thatcher and the governments which have followed of any coherent industrial policy have purposely and wilfully destroyed our productive economy, bringing misery to millions and destroying the social fabric of many communities. This situation cannot be permitted to continue, so what can we do to change this state of affairs? There is much talk today about making capitalism more morale and far less irresponsible, but restraining the power of financial chicanery, which is really what capitalism is all about, requires a theory of value. I believe that Marx had something to say about that.

What is important here is not to get hung up on theory but to understand the implications of going from one system that emphasises valuation creation to one that emphasises value extraction. The finance model is only about taking. There is no giving involved.

Value creation is about re-investing profits and human capital, skills and infrastructure, research and development. That is what creates value. This is what the idea of an industrial policy is all about. If we don’t get this right, we will go from one bubble to the next, talking about morality and responsibility, while chanting that it over-generates value extraction and the inequality that it generates.

Congress, this motion presents massive challenges for us as trade unions. Following the failure of the General Strike of 1926, our Movement re-evaluated the challenges and went on to create the social consensus which led to the election of the Attlee Government in '45. We need to be like them and learn from the mistakes of the past, and we could make a start by re-visiting the proposals of the Labour Government which preceded Thatcher and re-evaluate our decisions towards industrial democracy. Frances O'Grady has said similar things. The one thing that we cannot continue to support are failed models of doing business, thus reinforcing failure. The field is open to new ideas and the future is there to be won. Be bold, be moderate and support the motion. Thank you. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you. Seconder? *(Formally seconded)* Does anyone wish to come in on the debate? *(No response)* I ask Peter Kane from the CEC to speak on Motion 216.

BRO. P. KANE (CEC, Commercial Services): The CEC is support Motion 216 but with a qualification. The mover covers a broad list, and some of which are current GMB policy, such as the "Green New Deal", a financial transaction tax, tax fairness and the reform of the finance and banking sector. While the intentions of the motion are sound, to commit the GMB to conferences, campaigns and researches requested by the motion have massive resource implications. The GMB already works closely with the TUC and other affiliates on other industrial policy matters. Lessons learned from Germany cannot easily be transposed into the UK due to the economic policy and social differences between the countries. The German economy is recovering more quickly from the recession because the workers in Germany enjoy better employment protections. Their Government took special measures to encourage employers to hold on to their workforce when the recession hit. Trade unions operate differently, including the establishment of sectoral bodies. In addition, in 2011 Congress passed the CEC's Special Report: *A Fresh Way Forward for the UK Economy*. This report called for the Labour Party to develop a national and coherent industrial policy for the future. Therefore, Congress, please support Motion 216 with the qualification set out. Thank you. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Does the North West & Irish Region accept the qualification? *(Agreed)* Thank you very much. I now put it to the vote. All those in favour, please show? Anyone against?

Motion 216 was CARRIED.

ANNOUNCEMENT

THE PRESIDENT: Colleagues, I have one small announcement to make. I would like you to put your hands together in a moment to wish happy birthday to one of our youngest members who is here today. Well, he was 60 years ago. He is 80 today, still here and active. Morgan Pugh, happy birthday to you. *(Applause)*

INDUSTRIAL & ECONOMIC POLICY: PUBLIC SERVICES PUBLIC SECTOR CUTS MOTION 160

160. PUBLIC SECTOR CUTS

This Congress is cognisant of the fact that front line Public Sector Workers know all about low morale, misery, low self-esteem and the struggle to make ends meet.

We have suffered a pay freeze over the last three years which, in reality, is a pay cut, with further cuts and threats to jobs to well into the future beyond 2018 with inflation, taxes, cost of living, food, fuel heating costs, petrol. Some Public Sector Workers have to work 37 hours a week or more and have to claim family credits or other benefits to be able to live. Whilst Politicians, Councillors, Chief Executives, Heads of Services and Bankers, who have

massive inflatable pay rises, then, cannot do the jobs they get paid for and take on consultants at a cost to ourselves, the Tax Payer.

The failed collaborations and the Job Evaluation/Single Status exercises both wasted money at our expense. We are paying for all their mistakes not our mistakes, and then they say we are all in it together. I don't think so then they give themselves massive bonuses. We cannot see any light at the end of the tunnel or any hope or future just further misery, despair and hardship for the working people. How much longer can we take cut, cut, cut the bubble will soon burst and then what have we got, nothing.

We call upon Congress to continue to argue for a strong public services base in this Country and to campaign for fair pay for those workers who deliver those services.

DENBIGHSHIRE BRANCH
Wales & South West Region

(Carried)

BRO. R. DANIELS (Wales and South West): Congress, I am a first-time speaker. *(Applause)* I move Motion 160. Public sector workers and their families continue to bear the brunt of the Tory-led Coalition's austerity programme, which has resulted in massive under funding within our public services today. It is clear from the rhetoric that we are hearing from the Chancellor and other Government ministers that these attacks will continue unabated. GMB members and their families, and the wider communities they serve as public sector workers, have seen a decimation of local services which our communities rely upon. They have scant regard for either the young or the elderly, and it is not surprising that old Etonian-led administration would have little understanding or feel the impact of their own policies.

Public sector workers have also been subjected to a pay freeze during the last three years, yet we see the cost of living rising daily with increasing energy and utility bills, mortgage and fuel costs. The 1% derisory offer that has been tabled this year is hardly going to make any real difference to our members' standard of living. It is vitally important that public sector workers get the recognition they rightly deserve and that the notion that everyone will be in receipt of a gold-plated pension is exposed as the myth that it really is. It is also clear that the Coalition is determined to attack the GMB and trade unions' ability to organise within the public sector by their policy of attacking facility time, which will inevitably have a detrimental impact on the GMB's ability to serve and represent our members in the workplace.

Eric Pickles' guidance notes to local authorities clearly sets out to restrict time off for trade union duties, even though it is clearly apparent that the structured industrial relations within the public sector serves to facilitate improved relationships between employers and the trade unions. His guidance is nothing more than a circle attempt to achieve savings by cutting back on facility-time arrangements. Our argument must be that there is a significant value in effective trade union representation within the public sector, and any attempt to undermine facility arrangements will be counter productive.

We also to see on a daily basis vital services being contracted out to the highest bidder, with the inevitable attack by contractors on workers' terms and conditions. Further proposals to water down the protection of the TUPE legislation by way of service provision changes will also make it easier to create a two-tier workforce again within the public sector.

Congress, the path ahead is going to be difficult for public sector workers and their families, and it is important that we stand together and defend the vital services that our families and communities depend upon.

Finally, Congress, we need to ensure that an incoming Labour Government reverses the attacks on public sector workers and provides the appropriate funding to local government. Thank you. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Well done, Robert. Secunder?

BRO. J. SUTTON (Wales and South West): I second Motion 160 concerning public sector cuts. Mary and Congress, being a public sector worker since 2010 has hardly been a fun experience. The dogma that the Coalition tells us is that the only solution to the difficult crisis is reduced public spending. Public servants, the vast majority of whom are low paid, deliver vital services to local communities. Despite this, they are the victims of vitriolic campaigns, motivated by political desire to cap and privatise principal services. As we all know, the deficit is due to the recession, which will reduce revenue generation and fewer people are in work and spending less than before. Getting tough on welfare will not work when the jobs are simply not available. For those lucky enough to be in work the recipe has been one of working harder for the same or even less money. The incomes of many members, particularly those employed in local government, have suffered as a result of three years of pay freezes nationally. The outcome of local pay and grading reviews has lowered their earnings after short periods of transition.

Congress, not only are these flawed policies failing but they are divisive, too. In regions where public sector workers make up a high percentage of the local workforce, major cuts in budgets can decimate local economies. Attacks upon the public sector also disproportionately affect women, given that the major of public sector workers are female. Cutting labour costs is fundamental to the economic collapse we are witnessing in this country at the same time as these swathing cuts in pay and services have occurred. Trade union facility time has become a clear political target with those who seek to marginalise or eliminate us completely.

Colleagues, public services and local authority workers deserve much better. Investment in this area is the way to beat the deficit crisis, not to cut services, tear up terms, reduce pay and privatise anything that moves. Cutting public expenditure and hitting the pockets of workers to deal with a short-term problem runs the risk of destroying much of the value of the public services. These types of policies are like re-designing a Jumbo jet when you are flying at 30,000 ft. No longer should we accept a decrease in pay – mine was 13% in 2009 alone – in local government. No longer should GMB members have to be the scapegoat for the failures of the rich and powerful. Let's fight together for public services, for jobs, for pay and a pension of those who deliver them. Thank you. *(Applause)*

LABOUR PARTY MOTION 161

161. LABOUR PARTY

I call to congress to request the Labour Leadership that they show more empathy and solidarity with all Local Authority bodies facing unprecedented cuts brought on by this CONDEM government.

Local Labour parties have been leading fight back after fight back without what appears to be direct support from the Labour Leadership in the media.

Sitting back and letting the CONDEM destroy the fabric of our society whilst waiting in the wings to arrive as knights in shining armor come the next general election is opportunist in nature and shows no visible leadership to the Trade Unions and to its voters.

Once the CONDEMS have dismantled the machinery that provides the best Home care, Nursery Care compared to the profiteers lapping up their champagne cocktails on overcharging because their monopoly cannot be challenged and employing staff on below Living Standard wages and worst Terms and Conditions know since Victorian Times, will the Labour Party Leadership give an undertaking to write the wrongs made by the CONDEM?

(Carried)

BRO. M. CLARK (North West & Irish): Congress, I move Motion 161 – Labour Party. Congress, you know how the Labour Party was formed. All of us do. It was us, the trade unions, at the time, looking for a different way, a right way, for its members. That the Labour Party sent a video message to lay delegates and to over 600,000 voters shows, in my view, the division that still appears between the higher echelons of the Labour Party and us. You should have been here, Ed. It was nice to see this week that the leadership is starting to spell out their visions if, God willing, they do get back into power at the next election. What they need to spell out, if successful, are their undertakings to right the wrongs of this Con-Dem Government, and also to right the wrongs of new Labour. Once the Con-Dems have sold off the most profitable parts of the public services to their Eton cronies, will the leadership of the Labour Party undertake to take back what rightfully belongs to the people. Please support this motion.

THE PRESIDENT: Just to let you know, Michael, we did not invite Ed Miliband. He asked to send us the message that he gave yesterday. He didn't turn us down, no. Secunder?

BRO. B. CLEARY (North West & Irish): Congress, I am supporting Motion 161. President, we need from the Labour Party and the leadership and a vision about going forward, not looking back. Yesterday Andy Burnham said that when the Tory vermin, or as they like to call themselves now, "swivel-eyed loons", privatised our public services and there is no turning back, that's rubbish. What we need the Labour Party to say is, "We are going to nationalise everything that was stolen off us" when they get back into power. Remember the famous quote of Margaret Thatcher, "There is no such thing as society". In 2013 society said, "There's no such thing as Margaret Thatcher." Support this motion. *(Applause)*

LOCAL GOVERNMENT FUNDING COMPOSITE MOTION 8

C8. Covering Motions:

162. LOCAL GOVERNMENT FUNDING *(Northern Region)*

163. FUNDING ANOMALIES *(London Region)*

LOCAL GOVERNMENT FUNDING

This Congress is deeply concerned at the reports and concerns of the differing and partial funding by this Coalition Government that appears to favour the most well heeled Tory Boroughs at the expense of the poorer, most needy sectors of the community as set out in the letters from the three Cities. It is a scandal that a few mandarins in Whitehall have the historic knowledge of how funding formulae are made up. In the twenty first century this is nonsensical.

This Congress calls for a complete overhaul of local government funding to be needs based and calls for a Royal Commission on the Future of Local Government so that all areas of the UK get a fair deal.

Congress therefore agrees, we should together with the TUC and Labour Party, carry out a National Audit. Should the outcome support the concerns and reports it should be published in order to highlight the Coalition's prejudicial financial policies.

(Carried)

BRO. C. HENWOOD (Northern): I move Composite Motion 8, Local Government Funding. Congress, local government funding over the last 30 years has meant that today, in effect, local government is really an agency of central government. This has become local administration. This has become even more so under this Coalition Government. The Tories and Lib-Dems talk about local democracy. However, their actions tell local councils how to operate. They also deny councils the resources they need. What is much worse is that Eric Pickles and his cronies say that it is up to local councils what they decide to do with their services.

Congress, in the Northern Region we have had massive cuts in Government funding to local councils, cuts that affect some of the poorest in our communities. It is no good Eric Pickles saying that it is up to local councils how they spend their money if he is cutting their money to some of most deprived communities.

This Government want to bring in transport commissioners and commissioners for other services. The Government have a dream, which is that councils turn up once a year, open the tenders, give out the contracts and then go home again until the next annual council meeting. This Tory dream, now supported by the Lib-Dems, is becoming a reality by stealth. It would mean less councils if the Tories had their way. It would mean less democracy locally. Some Labour council leaders are taking the fight to this Coalition and arguing that there needs to be an open system of local government funding. They are right. The present system of funding must change as only half of those in local government understand it. This situation must change. We need a Royal Commission on the Future of Local Government Funding so that local communities can see what services they are entitled to receive. Please support. *(Applause)*

BRO. S. MANN (London): Congress, I am a first-time delegate. *(Applause)* I second Composite Motion 8. It must come as no surprise to trade union members that a Government which gives millionaires a £40,000 tax rebate and cuts the benefits of the poorest in society would demonstrates good morals when allocating local government funding. The funding given to stockbroker belts and well-heeled retirement resorts is far greater than deprived areas which actually need the funding, areas, Congress, which have seen 230,000 jobs lost, libraries closed, sports centres closed, Sure Start centres closed and women's refuges closed. These deprived areas, Congress, need these facilities more than any leafy suburb. By reducing funding to poorer boroughs, the Government are issuing a double whammy. These areas, historically, find it harder to collect Council Tax and see a double-dip recession in their income. Is it not significant that the leaders of Liverpool, Birmingham, Nottingham, Sheffield, Newcastle, Manchester and Leeds saw fit to write open letters to this shameful Government to complain about inequalities in local government funding and to complain about what is happening in solid-Tory boroughs.

Congress, enough is enough. There has to be a national audit. The GMB, other unions and the Labour Party have to be involved and it has to be now. Please support. *(Applause)*

SUBSTITUTING COUNCIL RESERVES FOR TREASURY FUNDING MOTION 164

164. SUBSTITUTING COUNCIL RESERVES FOR TREASURY FUNDING

Congress views with concern the call by Eric Pickles, Secretary of State for Communities, for Councils to spend their financial reserves and resources on providing Council services rather than them being financed, as they should be, by Central Government.

Congress agrees the reality of such a policy, as described by Brian Strutton, National Secretary, is that Local Government employees who have suffered a three year pay freeze, are subsidising the services they provide. Frozen wages are financing essential services. There cannot be a starker example of the contempt on which Pickles and his Coalition colleagues hold Local Authority workers.

As well as signalling the need for a more vigorous Fair Pay Campaign, this motion calls for high profile publicity campaigns highlighting the subterfuge this Coalition adopts in stooping to exploit working people and their communities.

HOME COUNTIES GENERAL BRANCH
London Region

(Carried)

BRO. P. ROBINSON (London): Congress, this motion is to support a fair pay campaign on behalf of council workers in the face of huge cuts in government central funding, as they call for a high-profile media campaign to expose yet another cynical Coalition attempt to exploit and erode working-people's pay and their hopes for a decent future.

I would like to take a few minutes to paint an overall picture, if I may, of the local councils' situation in the light of the proposed cuts and statement issued recently by Eric Pickles. I quote: "Councils can spend their reserves to make up for funding shortfalls from central Government." As a result, desperate councils who are short on reserves have implied that they will have alternative to raising Council Tax to cover their shortfall. Mr. Pickles' response was: "The councils have a moral duty not to raise Council taxes next year." A moral duty! Do council workers need a lesson in morality when they already spend their working lives in the service of others for a fraction of the pay that Mr. Pickles takes home?

House of Commons' research suggests cuts in central Government funding, excluding ring-fenced schools, will be approximately 3.9% and 8.5% respectively over the next two years. Richard Kemp, the Vice-Chairman of the Local Government Association said that the cuts to the authorities over a four-year period will be closer to 28% overall, the deepest in living memory. That is almost a third of all Government funding removed by the end of year four. The terms "Dickensian policy" and "the creation of a deeply divided nation" are very emotive terms, but none the less they are true. The poorest and most deprived councils are made up of northern cities, some London boroughs and many rural councils, and they will be hit hardest because they currently receive the most and are, therefore, more reliant on Government funding. The communities served by these councils will pay the biggest price. Cuts will affect libraries, Sure Start centres, sports centres and women's refuges. On top of this, the Government also sanctioned a 25% cut to community safety partnership funding, which pays for crime prevention and anti-drugs programmes for young people.

Along with these service cuts will come more job cuts. Surrey Council is already considering a further 650 redundancies. The GMB estimates that this will take the overall number of threatened job cuts to 150,000. The leaders of seven of England's biggest cities said that cuts will mean no money for anything other than essential social care and refuse collection. More town halls will go. Reductions in settlements will increase the risk of more councils becoming financial unviable, and no thought has been forthcoming into how these failures will be managed both in terms of jobs lost and services no longer available for those in society who need them the most.

The position of local council workers is dire. The fear of job cuts hangs over their heads like the Sword of Damocles, making them feel vulnerable and insecure. Coupled with the pay freeze of the last three years, they have suffered a real pay cut, considering inflation, of around 9%. If there are any funds within a council's rainy-day coffers, they will be used to prop up front-line services, rather than fund any future fair pay increase for those able to avoid redundancy. The future is, indeed, bleak.

The irony is that through dedicating their working lives to the service of others, these council workers are also suffering by seeing their pay go into subsidising those frontline services through year-on-year pay erosion. That should be paid for by the Government in adequate funding. This is an unfair and ill-thought out Coalition strategy and, therefore, delegates, I ask you to support this motion. Thank you.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Paul. Is there a seconder?

SIS. F. FRANKLIN (London): Congress, I second Motion 164 – Substituting Council Reserves for Treasury Funding. President, the provision of public services is a matter for local authorities and national government. Councils raise money by means of Council Tax and business rates, supplemented by a grant from the national government. Council Tax revenue is dictated by the ability of residents to pay. The grant from national government is dictated by the political dogma. Because of this dogma, it threatens the existence of vital public services in councils up and down the country. Councils, by dint of financial prudence, have built up reserves, reserves which they are reluctant to spend, given the never ending cut, cut, cut of our millionaire Government.

It has been GMB policy to ask questions to use reserves rather than curtail services and make redundancies, and that may well have worked were it not for recent welfare cuts reducing Housing Benefit, Council Tax Benefit and bedroom tax. Colleagues, our councils are having to spend their reserves keeping people in their homes because of the Government's vitriolic attacks on the under privileged. The bedroom tax may well have been fair had there been enough suitable and affordable smaller homes in which to relocate the tenants. Colleagues, such homes are not available because of the last Labour Government's policies and the Coalition policies regarding house building.

Colleagues, public services are vital and must be funded accordingly. Local councils must be allowed, without the Fat Controller's interference, to decide on their own reserves and how to spend them. Please support.

PUBLIC SECTOR

MOTION 166

166. PUBLIC SECTOR

This Congress believes that society would be a much poorer place without the work of the public sector and instructs the CEC to work together with the TUC and with other public sector unions to promote the benefit to the country at large.

GMB MID Lincs BRANCH
Midland and East Coast Region

(Carried)

BRO. M. RALSTON (Midland & East Coast): Congress, I move Motion 166 – the Public Sector. President, I believe that society would become a poorer place without the work of the public sector and instructs the CEC to work together with the TUC and with other public sector unions to promote the benefit of the country at large.

I know what public services mean to people. It is your roads, schools, childcare, social care, elderly care, policing, mental health, leisure services, refuse collection and it is NHS, to name but a few. When will the public realise that you can't trust the private sector with our services? Will it be when the last care home has gone bankrupt, or will it be when your local A&E or library is 30 miles away and you have to pay for the service when you get there?

I speak for public sector workers. We know our service users. We are highly trained, motivated, caring and organised. We are the best placed to deliver our local services and we have the trust of the public. However, it is not all doom and gloom because we are fighting back. Where private companies fail to meet set standards, they are being taken back inhouse. Support our public services. Support this motion. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Matt. Secunder.

BRO. M. SHORT (Midland & East Coast): I second Motion 166. President and Congress, I am seconding this motion because of all who work in the public services. Whether it is in the National Health Service, parks, street cleaners, dustbin men or road workers, they all contribute to society, and our cities and towns would be an awfully poorer place without them. Thank you. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you very much. Motion 167?

**NATIONAL LAY REPS TASKFORCE
MOTION 167**

167. NATIONAL LAY REPS TASK FORCE

Congress agrees to consider the possibility of setting up a National Lay Representative's Task Force. The Task Force to be made up of a number of Key Activists and Officers from Public Services in each region. The purpose of which should be to develop, identify and progress a National Strategy for all Public Services around:

Membership retention
Campaigning and recruitment

It's a fact that some Branches up and down the Country are already delivering some fantastic results in Public Services using the GMB@Work strategy. However faced with some unprecedented and continuing attacks on our Public Services it seems only sensible to set up a National Strategy for Public Services alone. The intention would not be in any way to change the current GMB@Work strategy only to address the difficulties we are now facing in Public Services which were not there when GMB@Work was adopted.

BEDS COUNTY BRANCH
London Region

(Referred)

BRO. M. FOSTER (London): Congress, I am not going to spend a lot of time on this motion as we have already agreed to refer it. However, before I do I would like to make these points to the CEC. Colleagues, over 50% of this union's membership are employed in public services and we are all only too aware of the unprecedented attacks they face now and in the future. While this goes on, every branch and every region is fighting to retain and recruit membership in their own ways with various degrees of success. Colleagues, just imagine what we could achieve if we were to pool the wealth of experience from all those branches and regions together.

This is what this motion is about, setting up a national lay representatives taskforce made up of key activists and officers in public service from across all regions, the purpose of which would be examine best practice around membership retention, campaigning and recruitment within public services the findings of which can then form the basis of developing a national strategy going forward and recommending to the Public Services Committee for rollout across the whole of the union. I move. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you.

BRO. K. BARKER (London): I am happy to second this motion because it is over three key things this union needs, retention, campaigning, and recruitment. The main thing I would like to say is something that was drummed into me when I was learning to be a steward: *Failing to prepare is preparing to fail*, so let's prepare and let's move forward. I second this motion. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you. Motion 168.

**LOCAL GOVERNMENT STRATEGY
MOTION 168**

168. LOCAL GOVERNMENT STRATEGY

Congress calls upon each region to develop a Local Government Strategy to incorporate the challenges facing Local Authority branches due to Government cuts in funding.

The strategy should include Academy Schools and the buy-back of Facility Time via DSG (Delegated School Grant) Funding thus retaining the link to the GMB and Local Authority.

An Organising/Campaign Strategy for all areas of non-school based staff including arm's length companies and any organisation with recognition and a link to the Local Authority.

GMB requires a specific strategy to incorporate Shared Services across several Authorities into a structure that benefits GMB members and potential members regardless of location.

CAMBRIDGE 2 BRANCH
London Region

(Carried)

BRO. L. HILLAM (London): More and more we are seeing schools converted to academies, often taking many of our valued members with them. Members remain with us but we must urge our regions to promote and encourage local authorities to convince schools to adopt a buy-back of facilities time via DSG to maintain the link to the GMB, and indeed local authorities. This buy-back should be incorporated into the package of services that local authorities offer academies, and of course offered at the same monetary rate as community schools. This buy-back facilities time will provide a continued high-quality service from GMB locally ensuring members get representation and services from their usual local office. Without this we face branch offices being cut back on facilities time by local authorities claiming lower membership rates. Congress calls for a public service strategy to reflect the current negative approach to local government. The Coalition Government have cut funding to local authorities year on year. They are undermining national bargaining and destroying education by increasing the number of academy schools.

Congress calls for a generic local government strategy which can be adapted at local level to deal with the attacks on these vital public services. The strategy should include a joint political campaign with the Labour Party to reposition the Party and the GMB at the centre of the defence of public services. Academies should not only be allowed to buy back trade union facilities through DSG funding, they should be allowed to revert back to a community school when the academy conversion has failed and a school is under threat of closure. New schools should be allowed to open as community schools not just sponsored academies as per the current legislation. In the same way outsource contracts should be bought back in-house when the contract is costing more to run than is reasonably expected from the tendering process. If a contract fails on the grounds of cost, quality, or efficiency, the local authority should have the power to act in the best interests of the service user. The current GMB policy of supporting and protecting national bargaining and terms and conditions must be at the core of any future strategy. Congress, I urge you to support this motion. I move. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Lee. Secunder?

BRO. P. CULBERT (London): Congress, the rollout of schools becoming academies is not consistent across the country and while the move towards academies is a real threat, it is also an opportunity but only if we prepare for this properly. The motion is very clear, a national strategy with the ability to adapt to local regional circumstances because any success in this arena will have to rely on local reps, activists, officers and, very importantly, local knowledge. We recognise the need for a clear consistent approach across the country. This is not an attempt to undermine members at local level, but developing a strategy for both local and national success. Please support. I second. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Well done. Thank you, Paul. Motion 169?

PUBLIC FUNDED INITIATIVE MOTION 169

169. PUBLIC FUNDED INITIATIVE

Congress, more and more these days PFIs are being used as the source of finance to fund large projects and sometimes much needed improvements for our needs.

Congress we believe however that there needs to be safeguards in this system. In any situation where huge sums of money are being raised there is the risk that things are not always as they appear.

We must ensure that all the money being used in these projects are safely being used by companies who have an untarnished reputation with no illegal past history in any of its businesses.

For example in King's Lynn a proposed incinerator which will be PFI funded has been handed to a company who has been fined in America for pollution of sensitive wetlands and according to a statement in Parliament fraudulent actions of associated companies.

This cannot be right to hand over such large sums of money to any organisation for any project whose record is tarnished.

KING'S LYNN NO 1 BRANCH
London Region

(Carried)

SIS. D. ANDERSON (London): Congress, as we are all aware, more and more these days PFI is being used as a source of finance to fund large projects which can sometimes improve our infrastructure. Congress, whilst we are totally against PFIs, we believe there needs to be safeguards put in place especially as there are huge sums of taxpayers' money involved. These safeguards would allow the background of any company involved with PFIs to be checked making sure they are of good standing and not with a tarnished reputation. For example, had these safeguards been in place the huge sums of money being made available to the proposed company involved with the King's Lynn incinerator would not have been considered. Had an investigation been carried out they would have discovered that this company was fined in America \$4m for pollution of a designated area of sensitive wetlands. But even more seriously, it would have found that this company had been involved in a corruption court case thus proving it has a tarnished criminal reputation. Therefore, we ask that these safeguards are put in place to make sure we are dealing with companies who are looking for PFI funding have no tarnished history and no criminal records. Congress, I ask you to support this motion. Thank you.
(Applause)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you very much. Secunder?

SIS. K. DUDLEY (London): First-time delegate, first-time speaker. *(Applause)* We believe that thorough background checks of all companies with PFIs should be a standard requirement to ensure they are of good standing and have an untarnished record, including their subsidiary and associated companies. Remember, at the end of the day, it is your money being entrusted to these companies. Please support this motion. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Well done, Karen. Motion 172.

RESOURCING NOT OUTSOURCING MOTION 172

172. RESOURCING NOT OUTSOURCING

This Congress calls on the CEC to campaign for local authorities to retain winter services as opposed to contracting them out to private enterprises.

(Carried)

BRO. A. BURGIN (Midland & East Coast): Congress, I am going to highlight what is happening in my local authority and I know similar things are being done in yours. In April 2012, the then Tory-led Notts County Council ended a longstanding partnership with three district councils which brought the highways maintenance under their control. This led to redundancies in all three councils. After a short period of time, Notts County Council realised they had not enough skilled workers to maintain the roads, street lighting, and other highway services. Instead of recruiting the skilled staff they required, they chose to give a contract to Tarmac which started the privatisation process. Over the winter period of 12/13 Notts County Council had the poorest quality winter maintenance service the general public had ever experienced, for example, only gritting one side of busy A-roads and accident black-spots not being treated at all because the local knowledge the district council held was no longer available. This raises the question, was this the plan of the then Tory-led county council to privatise highway maintenance by asset stripping the three district councils and selling them off to the highest bidder with no regard for the safety of the county's road users? Hopefully, the new Labour county council will stop the privatisation process and instead of outsourcing the services to the private sector to make profits use the resources available to rebuild these services and keep them in-house. Congress, please support this motion. I move. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Andy. Secunder?

BRO. M. RALSTON (Midland & East Coast): Madam President, Congress, my message to local authorities is, if you are thinking restructuring, come and talk to us. If there is a problem with the service, come and talk to us. If you are thinking of outsourcing, you will have to come and fight us. We are the best equipped to provide an in-house service. For years we have provided a well-planned and economical gritting service. The Tories gave us an inadequate one at a high cost to all workers and road users alike. The new leader of the administration is being urged to bring the service back in-house, all private contracts and offers in quality and terms and conditions. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Well done, Matt. Motion 173? *(Applause/Cheers)* Don't encourage him, please! *(Laughter)*

PUBLIC SERVICES MOTION 173

173. PUBLIC SERVICES

This Congress urges the Labour Party to stipulate that it will introduce legislation that allows for central and local government to write into public procurement contracts that a share in a company will be taken for the award of a contract as a preferred bidder. This will enable the taxpayer to have a stake in a contract that is awarded out with the in house provider so that providers are encouraged to realise their social responsibilities to the communities where they obtain work and that such providers are not allowed to rip off the taxpayer either centrally or locally.

CUMBRIA PUBLIC SERVICES BRANCH
Northern Region

(Carried)

BRO. B. HUGHES (Northern): Thank you very much. Your cheque is in the post in the morning.

THE GENERAL SECRETARY: There you are, Billy, I will put it on there. *(Cover put over the light indicator for length of speeches)* *(Laughter/Applause)*

BRO. B. HUGHES: Everyone wants to get in on the act. (*Laughter*) Madam President, could I for a couple of moments impose on your wonderful generosity?

THE PRESIDENT: You crawler! (*Laughter*)

BRO. B. HUGHES: No, it is just that I would like to thank the Pavilion management for making the Northern Region so much feeling at home. It's cold. (*Applause/Laughter*) It's windy. (*Applause/Laughter*)

THE PRESIDENT: The roof's leaking!

BRO. B. HUGHES: It's full of draughts. But, as we say in the Northern Region, as long as it doesn't rain we're alright. (*Laughter*)

THE PRESIDENT: That's your time up!

BRO. B. HUGHES: Madam President, Congress, moving motion 173 on Public services. Public services, to be or not to be, that is not the question; that could be the answer. First, we had CCT. Then we had Best Value. Under CCT, it was always about the price, the price of this, the price of that, but the value of nothing. No one, no one, has ever come up with a simple explanation of explaining best value. Testing the market shows the government just don't trust the public services. Worse still, the private sector gets an advantage and we are paying for that now. Many of the companies and executives show no leadership. They are not creating wealth, they are bidding for contracts in a competitive market. The public take all the risks and the others take all the profits. Some of these companies are blacklisters, some are tax evaders and some are tax avoiders. Anybody bidding for public services should abide by the same rules. Simple questions could be asked: Do they recognise the trade unions? Do they pay the living wage? Are they blacklisters? Where do they operate? Who owns the company? These straightforward questions could help to assess the value for money.

I shake my head when our members just don't say, "Enough is enough." In my day we bent our knee, we doffed our caps at nobody. Our members across the board are getting cuts in living standards, the worst in living memory. At the moment, we are discussing PFI in part of the public sector. Let me say, Worthy President, this union should not be Uriah Heep in our dealings with any employer. If it is good enough for Dave Gideon and the other millionaires, then it's good enough for our members. (*Applause*)

Our members are not asking for the earth, they are just asking for a small part of what is legally theirs, and there is plenty of it to go round. We should move heaven and earth to support them in their struggle. Contracting out the public services needs to be overhauled. Labour needs to show leadership and guts in this area and not to be wedded to those business people who want to take all and give nothing back, people who want to keep us quiet, people who are happy with keeping their profits offshore and putting nothing back. That is not the Labour our members want and I do not care what anybody says it is not the Labour Party they will support if Labour do not get up off their knees and show real fire in their bellies for 2015.

I say if it is too hot in the kitchen, you cannot stand the heat, move over. No, we won't forget you. (*Applause*) If you mention the word "strike", straightaway they say, "Oh, oh, you canna' do that, the country will be in a mess." Has nobody told them the country is already in a mess? (*Applause*) Remember, colleagues, we had 15 years of, "Don't rock the boat. Keep quiet, don't rock the boat. Give them time to get their feet under the table." The trouble is they are still hiding under the table. (*Laughter*)

THE PRESIDENT: Romeo, Juliet calling! Your time is up. *(Laughter)*

BRO. B. HUGHES: I canna' see it *(indicating covered-up light)*. *(Cheers)*

THE PRESIDENT: I've got my own! *(Applause)*

BRO. B. HUGHES: I'll tell you what, that's what I love about this lass, she's canny, you know. She is. *(Laughter/Applause)* She's the best thing since sliced bread! She is. *(Laughter)* Well —

THE PRESIDENT: Well, get on with it! *(Laughter)*

BRO. B. HUGHES: I'm trying but you're interrupting us! *(Laughter/Applause)* The trouble is they are still hiding under the table. No wonder they are called the Shadow Cabinet! *(Laughter/Applause)* True, they did some good things but missed out on one or two things, which is nationalisation of the utilities for starters. Remember Northern Gas, we were told no more worries, the gas will be piped straight into your homes; bills, they are a thing of the past, you will get it for nowt. Now we find we have to take out a bank loan to pay for it. They sit back while the NHS is falling apart. Our members are asked to take a pay cut; never heard the likes of that. If they are going to pay peanuts for wages, then let them hire monkeys to do the job.

Colleagues, this is a battle we can win. Why, because we have nothing to lose. *(Applause)* But, colleagues, one word of warning, we must stand firm, let the employers know we are proud to be trade unionists, let them see unity is strength, we will not be treated as second class citizens, we will fight for what is legally ours, a fair day's pay for a fair day's work. I move. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Oh, thank God! *(Standing ovation)* Oh, dear, he'll have me jumping off the balcony yet! *(Laughter)* Follow that, Fran.

SIS. F. WHITAKER (Northern): As a first-time speaker and delegate as well! *(Applause)* Congress, the system of handing out public service contracts to private companies is bust. We all have paid for the excesses of capitalism coming into our public services. Be assured the public are not getting a good deal with the contracts going outside. Workers are not getting a good deal either. It appears the only people getting a good deal are corporate executives who are either rewarded for failure or who seem to have little accountability for their actions. Whether it be education, social services, public transport, or refuse collection, the fact is the model of privatisation has not provided the value for money that the people were assured it would. Let's be clear, the only reason why contracts are moved out of the public sector is for the short-term saving, often achieved by slashing wages for many of the lowest paid. That is the reality. Congress, what should happen is if a contract is awarded to an external bidder or a grant to a company to start up, and it comes out of the public purse, then the public sector should take a percentage stake in that business, or get a return on top of the service being delivered. They talk about co-ops, well, I say to reverse the tide of privatisation we need to do everything we can to change that culture. If companies want to bid for contracts, then they should not have any advantage over the in-house provider. It is as simple as that. I second. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Well done, Fran. The mover of 174, Yorkshire?

BOGUS SELF-EMPLOYMENT AND PAYROLL COMPANIES MOTION 174

174. BOGUS SELF-EMPLOYMENT AND PAYROLL COMPANIES

This Congress notes that many employers on major government funded contracts are using the recession to further increase the use of bogus self-employment, agency labour and payroll companies.

Bogus self-employment not only denies workers of their entitlement to basic rights such as holiday pay, sick pay, lay off pay and redundancy, but also costs the economy approaching £2 billion.

Direct employment should be the norm for all workers, but especially on government funded contracts.

We therefore call on the GMB to lobby this government and the Labour Party to ensure that the best standards of employment are written into future procurement contracts.

LEEDS WORKS DEPARTMENT BRANCH
Yorkshire & North Derbyshire Region

(Carried)

BRO. C. GILL (Yorkshire & North Derbyshire): President, Congress, bogus self-employment is used by many employers to evade taxes and to ensure that the people that work for them build up no employment rights. Surely in 2013 this must be illegal as the age of hire and fire and doffing your cap went out in Edwardian times. Well, yes, it is immoral but, no, Congress, it is not illegal. In the construction industry alone it is estimated that over 50% who are working are falsely self-employed; over half of the workforce denied basic employment rights that most of us, quite rightly, take for granted, like holiday pay, sick pay, overtime, pensions, and, yes, the right to challenge our employer if we have been unfairly sacked. Bogus self-employment allows companies to deduct tax at source and avoid employees working directly; also, they can make more profit and keep their fat cat shareholders in the City happy. This is an abuse of members' basic human rights.

Our union has continually pressured government to end the practice and has been met at every turn with hostility from employers' federations. What a surprise. In 2009, we actually forced the Labour government to act on the problem and their proposals would have resulted in thousands of workers getting employment status. This motion calls on the GMB not just to wait for the next Labour government but also to lobby this Government to stop this abuse. One practical easily achieved step to do this is to require that proper employment status is included in all future procurement contracts. We need to get this country out of the recession and the best place to start is by building social houses, and lots of them, so let's make sure those working on such projects are properly rewarded for doing so. I move. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you very much, Colin. Secunder?

SIS. C. GAVIN (Yorkshire & North Derbyshire): President, Congress, as my colleagues has so rightly said, over 50% of those working in the building industry are falsely employed; to me that is 50% too many. It is another tax avoidance scheme thought up by the multimillion pound corporations working to make their pockets heavier and ours lighter. False employment is used by many employers to evade those taxes, lose the rights that we working people and our unions have fought and strived for to keep. Through the years we have fought for making better conditions and work entitlements a standard part of a working contract and these have all been ignored. All ignored by these self-employed not worth the paper they are written on contracts. We call upon the Government, and especially the Labour Party when hopefully they return in the next election, to ensure that all workers have the best possible standard of employment and are entitled to all the benefits that go with them. Stop letting the payroll companies, the agencies, and the bogus self-employment companies getting away with this. I ask Congress to support this motion. Thank you. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Does anyone else wish to come in on this debate, all except Worthy President over there! No? Thank you. Can I call June Minnery to speak on behalf of the CEC? June.

SIS. J. MINNERY (CEC, Public Services): Mary, just before I start, Sheila kindly congratulated me yesterday on my position of Vice President but what she omitted to say was that she herself has been

elected as Vice President of the Welsh TUC, so that is two women in position from the GMB. (*Applause*) On to the business in hand, President, Congress, June Minnery speaking on behalf of the CEC and we are asking you to support motions 160, 164, and composite 8, with qualifications, and refer motion 167.

Motion 160 asks Congress to continue to argue for strong and properly remunerated public services. Congress, I can assure you that we will always make that argument loudly with a strong collective voice. The qualification is that single-status exercises have in many cases benefited our members and made workplaces fairer.

Motion 164 rightly highlights the disgraceful call by Eric Pickles, the biggest enemy of local government, for councils irresponsibly to run down their reserves to make up for his department's brutal and unfair cuts. This motion also calls for local government to be funded entirely from central taxation, a statement we would like to qualify. Local taxes can in many cases be a better way to empower councils and keep democracy local, benefiting services and our members who deliver those.

Composite 8, covering motions 162 and 163, points out that outdated and opaque funding formula allow for incredibly unjust distribution among our councils which this Government have exploited with glee to punish parts of the country with the greatest need of local services. However, the motion suggested a royal commission and a national audit involving the GMB, the Labour Party, and TUC. They are unnecessary and time-consuming as this unfairness has been exposed many times. Therefore, composite 8 should be qualified to reflect this.

Finally, motion 167 calls for a taskforce of national lay representatives to drive up membership retention, campaigning, and recruitment across public services. Congress, we ask you to refer this motion to the Public Services National Committee to consider how feasible it would be for a taskforce to deliver them within the national and regional structures we already have in place.

Therefore, Congress, please support motions 160, 164, and composite 8, with the qualifications I have described, and refer motion 167. Thank you. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, June, very much, congratulations, and to Sheila. Can I now ask Wales and South West, do you accept the qualification on motion 160? (*Agreed*) Thank you. Northern Region accepts the qualification on composite 8? (*Agreed*) Yes; with London? (*Agreed*) Will London accept reference? (*Agreed*) Right. Thank you. Colleagues, with that in mind, and I was going to say we will oppose 173 after listening to Worthy President, I do not think I could chance the right to reply! Can I now put 160, 161, composite 8, 164, 166, and 168, 169, 172, 173, and 174 to the vote? All those in favour please show? Thank you. Anyone against? They are carried. Does Congress accept the reference back agreed by the region? (*Agreed*) Thank you very much. That's bingo over for today! Malcolm.

Motion 160 was CARRIED.

Motion 161 was CARRIED.

Composite 8 was CARRIED.

Motion 164 was CARRIED.

Motion 166 was CARRIED.

Motion 167 was REFERRED.

Motion 168 was CARRIED.

Motion 169 was CARRIED.

Motion 172 was CARRIED.

Motion 173 was CARRIED.

Motion 174 was CARRIED.

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Congress, we now go on to item 8, which is Emergency Motion 2, Southern Region to move and second.

**GMB REFUTES THE COALITION GOVERNMENT ATTACK ON TEACHING ASSISTANTS AND VOWS TO DEFEND THEM
EMERGENCY MOTION 2**

GMB REFUTES THE COALITION GOVERNMENT ATTACK ON TEACHING ASSISTANTS AND VOWS TO DEFEND THEM

The Sunday Times of 2nd June 2013 has published details of secret Government talks, led by Michael Gove, aimed at axing 230,000 Classroom assistants to save money. GMB have over 100,000 school support staff members, mostly teaching assistants, and it is imperative that we urgently respond to this threat.

GMB congress rejects any undermining of the fantastic work done by teaching assistants and will challenge any attempts to reduce their members. Our childrens' education depends on it.

M27 LB MERTON
Southern Region

(Carried)

SIS. K. ABU-BAKIR (Southern): Congress, many of you may have read the article in this weekend's *Sunday Times* reporting on the very real threat to our members who work as teaching assistants in classrooms up and down the country. This article reports that the Treasury has been holding talks with the Department for Education about phasing out teaching assistants all together as part of their cuts to education budgets. Where does this latest attack on our members come from, reform. Yet another of Michael Gove's pet right-wing think tanks has come up with an idea that increasing class sizes and getting rid of teaching assistants would help schools achieve better value for money; absolute madness. The fact is the only way to get value for money for teaching assistants is to deploy them effectively, giving them the right role in the classroom, supporting teachers, supporting our kids.

Congress, our union is proud to represent thousands of school support staff, proud of the work they do keeping our kids well educated in schools that are inspiring places of learning, proud to represent the teaching assistants who are an integral part of the modern education system, carrying out specialist tasks like intervention programmes, supporting SEN children, helping kids with behavioural problems, and a whole raft of other things, and working with teachers to make sure our children get the attention and support they need to get the most out of their education.

Michael Gove and friends would like to think of teaching assistants as a Mum's army, an easy target for the next round of cuts. The reality is they are an army, an army of professionals delivering education and welfare, and over 100,000 of them are GMB members. They are underpaid and often, sadly, undervalued and while the Secretary of State for Education may not value them, GMB will celebrate and defend the work that they do. We want the Labour Party to restore the principles of the schools support staff negotiation body, which was abolished by the Coalition Government, that provided the basis for proper pay, terms and conditions for our members. We richly deserve that, we work so hard.

Congress, we must fight to support teaching assistants and nursery nurses, stop their work being undermined, and resist this attempt to decimate their numbers. All of you branches out there that have school support staff in them, get ready to defend them against Michael Gove and his advisers. Please support Emergency Motion 2. *(Applause)*

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Kathy. Colleagues, could the movers and seconders of motions 176, 179, 181, and 183 come to the front, please. Can I now take the seconder of Emergency Motion 2?

SIS. C. COTTERELL (Southern): Gone are the days when we used to go in and wash up paint pots and just sit there and be a second person in the classroom. Teaching assistants, and nursery nurses come into this category as well, we run breakfast clubs, we run lunch clubs, we run after-school clubs, and in some schools we even do the Duke of Edinburgh Award which gives the children a social inclusion, it gives them strength to be able to do things in school and outside. I myself am a nursery nurse. I work within special needs. With those children we have one teacher, five support staff, to six pupils. I still have the scars where I have been bitten. We are trained to deal with it. We still get hurt but, hey ho, we do it but apparently Gove does not think we are good at that. I would like to see him come into a classroom, not in an affluent area but in one of the inner city schools where we are dealing with pupils that have ADHD, that have learning difficulties, come and see what we do. (*Applause*) It just absolutely amazes me, inclusion, I am all for that. They are talking about putting more children in, more nursery places. Well, guess what, Mr. Gove, your nursery nurses have to deal with that. We get paid peanuts. I have staff out there on £15,000 a year. Would any of you go out there, get injured, get hurt, and then told your job is not worth it. Congress, I ask you to support. Thank you. (*Applause*)

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Carolyn. Does anyone want to come in?

BRO. R. SMITH (Southern) spoke in support of Emergency Motion 2. He said: First-time delegate, first-time speaker. (*Applause*) Vice President, Congress, I do not have a lot to say on this other than as the father of a child with special needs he would not have got through school without TAs. He is actually taking his English GCSE this morning and if it were not for the TA sitting next to him acting as a scribe he would not be able to do that. (*Applause*) If this was successful and they removed TAs and support staff in school, you would be setting the education system in this country back 40 years. If you do not remember what that was like or not old enough to know what that was like, if you come to the fringe meeting on Union Learning Fund projects at lunchtime then I will tell you. Thank you. Please support this motion. (*Applause*)

BRO. D. McLEAN (Yorkshire & North Derbyshire) spoke in support of Emergency Motion 2. He said: Words cannot describe how I feel about the stupidity of Gove and his colleagues. Do they seriously believe that the axing of 230,000 classroom assistants will not have a dramatic effect on the education of our children? Gove does not have a clue about the role of support staff in our schools or the important work they do. The Department for Education acknowledges that support staff have taken on a wider and deeper role and they play a huge role in contributing to raising the standards in our schools. For the sake of our education system and the education of our children, it is Gove and Co. who should be axed, not our classroom assistants. Please support this motion. (*Applause*)

SIS. S. CAULTON (Birmingham & West Midlands) spoke in support of Emergency Motion 2. She said: First-time delegate, first-time speaker. (*Applause*) I am a Higher Level teaching assistant and the role that my colleagues and I do within school is essential to our children's education. Our teaching assistants, as has just been said, are taking the pressure off teachers. Whilst this is sometimes true with growing bureaucracy, increased planning, and marking needed, teaching assistants do far more. They give capacity to provide differentiation with the classroom, whether it be general support or specialised support to children with identified special needs. This is more important than ever when you consider growing class sizes, how can one teacher possibly know every child's individual needs. It is outrageous the Government want to slash our jobs. The debate should be about smaller class sizes instead one idea from the Reform think tank suggests increasing class sizes to save money. What planet are they on? Teaching assistants, learning support practitioners, HLTAs, we all have one thing in common, our dedication to the education and care of young people. None of us enter into this

career to become millionaires. Chance would be a fine thing. We do it because we believe in giving every child the support and guidance they need to meet their potential no matter what background and what problems they have in life. We have a proven track record of doing this. Congress, I urge you to support this motion. (*Applause*)

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Sue.

SIS. D. MULLANE (London) spoke in support of Emergency Motion 2. She said: Vice President, Congress, I have come up to the stand today to let you know the Coalition Government attack is not just whispers. It has already started in a school in Luton. The teaching assistants have been called in individually, without representation, and told their jobs are going to be gone. This is before even starting consultation with the staff and the unions. We need to support this motion and let this Government know by giving a strong message that we will not put up with them treating our members like something that has fallen off their shoes. Let's fight to keep our teaching assistants. (*Applause*)

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Diane.

SIS. C. HOLLAND (London) spoke in support of Emergency Motion 2. She said: I work around Essex where they have already cut beyond the other cut that they are proposing. At the moment, they mostly have all mornings, so what they do in the afternoons is absolutely hopeless. I really need for everybody to support this motion because it will be dangerous. Some of the behaviour of the children in the class will just spiral out of control if we do not keep our support staff. (*Applause*)

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Cathy.

A DELEGATE: Vice President, Congress, can I just apologise first. I am a TA. Put me in a school hall with 500 kids and I do not have a problem. Give me more than about 20 adults and I am absolutely bricking it. (*Applause*) TAs are a necessity or a waste of money? With class sizes growing, and I have worked with a class of 39 children in the past, how can we expect one teacher to be a second pair of eyes, tend the poorly, deal with children's issues, behavioural demand, worries, concerns, and at the same time they are supposed to be educating our children? Back in 1996 when I first became a TA, it was commonly known as wees, knees, pencils, and teas. Not now. Over the years this description has been shed. We are responsible for helping children reach their full potential, working with groups of children, supporting their learning, nurturing. We can be expected to extend higher ability children, reinforce basic learning to lower ability children, plan, run, and report back on intervention programmes. We are expected to support NQTs because we have the experience that they do not. We are expected to find our own resources in our own time. How can the Government expect our teachers to cater to all of our children's needs, all of the time, while they are supposed to be teaching the rest of the children in a class? I am one of these TAs that the Government is doing its best to dispense with. Why, because I obviously could not be bothered to go to university, get a degree, or did not have the money; that does not mean I do not care for my children and I do not put their education first. Thank you. (*Applause*)

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Thank you.

SIS. L. GUBB (Midland & East Coast): Vice President and Congress, I feel very strongly about this. I work in a special school. How many of you go to work each day, and I know some people are on less money than I am but I am on £7.50 an hour, to be verbally abused, physically abused, deal with the fallout of children's home life, and various other things. I have been stabbed, I have been kicked, I have been punched, I have been spat at, I have had my hair pulled, I have been pushed and shoved, punched, and goodness knows what over the last 15 years. The children need our support. It is all right for the Government to sit up there in their ivory tower in Westminster and say, "Oh, well, we can

cut money this way, we can cut money that way.” The job I do is not a specialist job in some respects, we do not get paid as specialists, there is no progression for a teaching assistant, but the children need our help. Having taken a child from my school to a mainstream school and sat in a classroom situation with 30-plus children with no teaching assistant in that class, just one teacher telling the students what to do and then the students sit there totally confused, no idea how they are supposed to respond to what the teacher has asked them to do, and I am there one-to-one with a student who is really on the same level as they are but has behaviour problems, I was teaching those children in a mainstream situation. It cannot go on. The children are the future of this country. There are not the jobs out there for the kids with special needs because degree graduates are getting those jobs now because that is all there is for them. If you see the way children in mainstream are catered for and how they are going to cut the TA time I do not know, because a child is usually statemented for that form of help. I support this motion. (*Applause*)

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Thank you.

BRO. M. RALSTON (Midland & East Coast) spoke in support of Emergency Motion 2. He said: In Notts County Council over the last three months there has actually been 200 redundancies in TAs, in both primary and secondary schools. TAs struggled to get to where they are today. They have done the training and they have pulled themselves up into that position. Gove is using a 10-year old report on TAs to downgrade and dismiss them. Can I just say good luck to the TAs at Sunnyside Primary School, the ones who have been made redundant and the ones who are left to pick up the pieces. (*Applause*)

SIS. C. HARWOOD (Midland & East Coast) spoke in support of Emergency Motion 2. She said: I would just like to point out the fact that my daughter was in year 3 last year and every term she had a new teacher because they left for various reasons. The only continuous support throughout that entire year was the TA. It was the TA that told each new teacher that came in about each individual child and where they were at. Without that TA those children would have been lost for the entire year. I support this motion. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Well done. Anyone else? No? Can I call Avril Chambers on Emergency Motion 2? Avril.

SIS. A. CHAMBERS (National Officer): The CEC is supporting Emergency Motion 2 with a statement. This motion came about following the press article in *The Sunday Times* based on reports by the right-wing think tank Reform, and Michael Gove, to the effect that government is planning to do away with teaching assistants. The majority of our 100,000 school support staff members are teaching assistants and the motion asks the GMB to campaign and defend these jobs and our members.

Congress, the Tories and their fan clubs have sought to undermine the work of teaching assistants for the last decade. The evidence, though, is clear where school support staff are deployed correctly they play a major positive role in improving the educational outcomes of our children. (*Applause*) Classroom support staff are vital to the modern school environment and they are vital in meeting the educational and wider needs of today’s schoolchildren. Congress, they are not a Mum’s army. Okay? They are not a Mum’s army, as Gove so insultingly calls them. They are education’s hidden professionals and they are a vital integral part of our education system and should be recognised as such. (*Applause*) Congress, school support staff are one of the largest occupational groups in our union and we are growing every week. This attack should give teaching assistants and their colleagues even more reason to join the GMB and we need to be clear, the best way we can challenge and respond to these scurrilous attacks is to organise. So get out there and organise, organise, organise. Thank you, and please support. (*Applause*)

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Okay, colleagues, can I put it to the vote? All those in favour please show? All those against? I am assuming Southern Region is accepting the statement? (*Agreed*) Thank you.

Emergency Motion 2 was CARRIED.

THE PRESIDENT: Can we now move on to motions 176, 179, 181, and 183. Yorkshire to move 176, School Support Staff National Agreement.

**INDUSTRIAL AND ECONOMIC POLICY: PUBLIC SERVICES
SCHOOL SUPPORT STAFF NATIONAL AGREEMENT
MOTION 176**

176. SCHOOL SUPPORT STAFF NATIONAL AGREEMENT

This Congress agrees that the GMB should press the Labour Party to include in its education policy for the next election the reintroduction of a School Support Staff national agreement. After the delays by the last Labour Government which prevented a national agreement being placed on the statute book, this should be a priority for the Labour Party when next in power. The GMB now has many school based members and the creation of a national agreement is the best way of ensuring minimum national terms and conditions.

By the time of the next election, the majority of schools will have converted to Academies, therefore it is essential that the national agreement covers all schools funded by central government.

LEEDS LOCAL GOVERNMENT STAFF BRANCH
Yorkshire & North Derbyshire Region

(Carried)

BRO. D. McLEAN (Yorkshire & North Derbyshire): First of all, I would like to thank everybody for supporting that motion. It is very important and vital that we do support it.

This Congress agrees that the GMB should press the Labour Party to include in its education policy in the next election the reintroduction of a School Support Staff National Agreement. After the delays of the last Labour government which prevented a national agreement being placed on the statute books, this should now be a priority for the Labour Party when it is next in power. The GMB now has many school-based members and the creation of a national agreement is the best way of ensuring minimum national terms and conditions. By the time of the next election the majority of schools will have converted to academies, therefore it is essential that the national agreement covers all schools funded by central government. The ConDems Academy Bill has made it imperative that we have national terms and conditions for our members as academies are able to change support staff roles in schools as they see fit. Teachers have the Burgundy Book which quite clearly sets out their terms and conditions which schools and local authorities have to abide by, which is why when a teacher moves from a school in Cornwall to a school in Newcastle they know exactly what their terms and conditions are going to be, but a teaching assistant can move to a school less than a mile away and find their role and responsibility is totally different and there are no consistencies in pay from one authority to another. Support staff jobs titles and descriptions are tweaked and changed from school to school and year by year. Teachers' conditions are not changed as local authorities and schools, and even academies, have to adhere to the teachers' Burgundy Book. This, colleagues, is what we want for our support staff. As I speak we have schools going through restructures with reduced support staff hours and in an increasing number of schools reducing them down from level 2 to level 1 teaching assistants, but the schools still want them to do the same amount of work and at level 2, and despite TAs losing hundreds and in some cases thousands of pounds dropped in salaries and hours, they still do the job at the same level as before as they believe the children will suffer if they do not support them. Our heads are willing to exploit their commitment to the children they work with.

Congress, this motion, in effect, calls for us to press the Labour party to reinstate the school support staff negotiation body when they get back in power but let us not forget that it was under a Labour government that it was delayed and further delayed through the procrastinations of three different Labour Secretaries for Education. They stopped this agreement being placed on the statute books allowing Gove and his ConDem colleagues the opportunity to shelve the agreement and in doing so condemned our members to be treated as worthless lackeys instead of the professionals they are. To those Labour MPs who allowed this I say shame on you, shame on you for not supporting our hardworking low-paid mainly female support staff whose dedication in supporting and educating our children is abused with extra workload and little respect for the work they do. These dedicated staff should be recognised and respected as they, alongside teachers, are the educators of our future generations. That is why we demand that the next Labour government fulfil the promise they made to us when they were last in power to put a national agreement on the statute books. Congress, we have raised standards and extended our role but we are not recognised as professionals or remunerated for this, that is why it is imperative you support this motion. Congress, I move. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Dave. Secunder?

SIS. C. GAVIN (Yorkshire & North Derbyshire): Support staff, as we have just seen with Emergency Motion 2, are a mighty force. I know. I was among many of those who gave support with enthusiasm and commitment to helping each child reach their potential. We took on extra responsibilities and duties because if we won't do it, will teachers do it? Their terms and conditions allow them to do what is stated, no more and no less. It gives them weight to be able to say, "Sorry, that isn't my job, it's not in my job description. I can't do it." One of the principles stated in the national agreement back in 2003 says: "Support staff are recognised for their contribution to raising standards and have more opportunities to take on extended roles with remuneration that reflects their level of training, skills, and responsibilities." Remuneration, I don't think the Government knows how to spell it let alone what it means. Sadly, the Labour Government dragged their heels and thus prevented the agreement from coming to fruition. Support staff terms and conditions have not improved and they are still working with ever more responsibilities and duties, and no increase in pay in sight. School support staff everywhere ask the GMB to throw their weight behind this motion and ensure that the next Labour government get a wiggle on and make this an integral part of their educational policy and get the national agreement back on track. I second. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you very much, Cindy.

ABOLISH OR REMOVE ACADEMY STATUS FROM DISCRIMINATING SCHOOLS MOTION 179

179. ABOLISH OR REMOVE ACADEMY STATUS FROM DISCRIMINATING SCHOOLS

This Congress seeks to remove academy status from schools that weed out and remove children that would affect their status; children with learning difficulties appear to be targeted with the intention of transferring them to special schools.

A lot of these children come with a statement which gives important information on how to deal with children with behaviour problems and teachers are ignoring these statements. Therefore the child is constantly in trouble. When parents try to raise a grievance, doors slam shut and teachers close ranks.

Surely this is disability discrimination.

LINCOLN TEC GENERAL & APEX BRANCH
Midland and East Coast Region

(Carried)

SIS. D. LOVATT (Midland & East Coast): This motion seeks to remove academy status from schools that weed out and remove children who would or could affect their stats and performance. Children with learning difficulties are being targeted with the intention of transferring them from mainstream to special schools. A large percentage of these children come with a statement which gives important information on how to deal with children with learning and behaviour problems, for example, ADH and autism, many of whom are perfectly capable of managing mainstream education but they are likely to be low achievers. It has been noticed that teachers are ignoring or failing to read these statements hence the child is in trouble. When the parents try to raise a grievance, teachers close ranks and deliberately obstruct parents from complaining. Just recently a school in Lincolnshire without the parents' knowledge or consent contacted a special school with a view to transferring a child despite his recent good behaviour. Incidentally, this motion came from our branch secretary. This is about his grandson. Incidentally, during my last year did we not have an Olympics and a Paralympics, and were we not asked to inspire a nation? Without teaching assistants, without the backbone of our core workers, we would not be able to do this. All our schools seem to be bothered about are statistics and all our Government seem to be bothered about is profits. Therefore, I ask you, please, support this motion. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you very much, Dawn. Seconder?

BRO. D. JOBSON (Midland & East Coast): Colleagues, where it is found that an academy is cherry-picking the children it wants to teach or is ignoring the special educational needs statement for a disabled child who has learning difficulties and behavioural problems, the academy should be held to account. Where a child's local school has been converted to an academy we feel that not only should these children be properly supported at their local academy but any discrimination against them should be challenged in regard to the perpetrator and, further to that, we put out a strong message to other academies by the removal of academy status and return it to being a local authority controlled state school. Congress, please support this motion. I second. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you very much. Well done. Motion 181?

INDEPENDENT HEARINGS FOR SCHOOL SUPPORT STAFF MOTION 181

181. INDEPENDENT HEARINGS FOR SCHOOL SUPPORT STAFF

This Congress agrees that the GMB should campaign for the introduction of independent boards to hear formal cases for School Support Staff instead of governing bodies, particularly at final hearings which could result in dismissal.

In most cases chairs of governing bodies and head teachers have such a close affinity it is difficult for members to achieve natural justice, and in most cases head teacher recommendations are upheld.

SHEFFIELD LOCAL GOVERNMENT STAFF BRANCH
Yorkshire & North Derbyshire Region

(Carried)

SIS. J. WHITAKER (Yorkshire & North Derbyshire): Once upon a time a lion lay sleeping in his den when a naughty little mouse ran up his tail and on to his back and continued up into his mane. He then jumped on his head. This woke the lion up. The lion grabbed the little mouse and holding him by his large paws roared in anger, "How dare you wake me up. Don't you know I am the king of the beasts? Anyone who disturbs my rest deserves to die. I shall kill you and eat you up." The terrified mouse, shaken and trembling, begged the lion to let him go, "Please don't eat me, your majesty, I didn't mean to wake you up. It was a mistake. I was only playing. Please let me go and I promise I will be your friend for ever. Who knows, but one day I may save your life." The lion looked at the tiny little

mouse and laughed, "You save my life? What an absurd idea. But you have made me laugh and put me in a good mood again so I shall let you go." The lion opened his paws and let the little mouse go. "Thank you, your majesty," squeaked the mouse as he ran away as fast as he could.

It was a few days later and the lion was walking through the forest when he got caught in a hunter's net. Struggle as he did he could not break free and he became even more entangled in the net of ropes. He let out a roar of anger that shook the forest. Every animal heard it, including the tiny little mouse. "Oh, my friend the lion, he's in trouble," cried the little mouse and he ran as quickly as he could in the direction of the roar. He soon found the trapped lion and he began to nibble through the ropes. His sharp teeth made little work of the tangled net and he gnawed until the lion was free. "I didn't believe that you could be of use to me, little mouse, but today you have saved my life," said the lion humbly.

Schools nationally are a very difficult workplace and are faced with challenges from the Government, parents, local authorities, staff and pupils alike. As a member of the support staff you are asked to fill a variety of roles and responsibilities. In the main these duties are carried out with help and guidance from the head teacher but we are facing more and more that school support staff are being taken down the formal hearing route when members have done very little wrong and only need extra help and guidance.

With the support of this Congress I would like to campaign for the introduction of independent boards to hear formal cases for school support staff instead of their own schools' governing bodies, particularly at final hearings which could result in a dismissal. In most cases chairs of governing bodies and head teachers have such a close affinity it is difficult for members to achieve natural justice and in most cases head teachers' recommendations are upheld.

Going back to the lion and the mouse story, support staff do feel small and sometimes insignificant in schools workplaces and this is represented by the mouse. The lion, the big powerful beast, the king of the jungle, is the head and the governing body, but when a school needs extra help where does it look to, the school support staff. It is our duty to support these vulnerable people when they need us most and to give them a fair hearing if they are in the difficult position of a dismissal hearing, so I ask this Congress to support this motion 181. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Julie. Secunder?

SIS. C. GAVIN (Yorkshire & North Derbyshire) : President, Congress, I am going to get straight to the point here because I think Julie told a lovely story about our little mouse. Our little mouse was me one day, if your face doesn't fit, no matter what you try to do, you ain't gonna get in there. If the head teacher says to you, "Jump" and you ask how high, that is one strike against you. Head teachers, unfortunately, are the all powerful, their word is law, and no matter what you do it ain't gonna change it. It is even worse if you happen to be active in the union and get the support staff up and say, "No, we're not taking assemblies," that is another strike against you. Not biased at all, are they?

I believe using an independent board to hear cases for school support staff ensures that they are fair and objective in any disciplinary hearings. This will maintain a high standard of professionalism and keep the door open for negotiation and communication with members and their line managers and heads. It will also ensure that all policies, codes of practice, and procedures are known and maintained. In far too many cases our reps have gone out to represent somebody and HR, they do not know procedures, do they? As has been pointed out so many times at hearings, "You are not doing this right." The line, "innocent until proven guilty" should be the key and not have conjecture and opinions overrule any outcome. I second. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Cindy. Motion 183, Breakfasts in Schools.

BREAKFASTS IN SCHOOLS MOTION 183

183. BREAKFASTS IN SCHOOLS

This Congress calls upon GMB to campaign for schools to provide a free nutritious meal at the start of each school day.

Evidence suggests that when a child has eaten a breakfast they are more alert, work harder, interact better and learn more.

Government cuts are forcing some children to go to school hungry and it need to stop.

For this to work, it needs to be a free meal for **all** children.

LEEDS CIVIC BRANCH
Yorkshire & North Derbyshire Region

(Carried)

SIS. A. BURLEY (Yorkshire & North Derbyshire): Good morning, delegates and visitors. I am passionate about making sure that every child in the United Kingdom does not arrive at school feeling hungry. Fact, 83% of teachers nationally have reported children coming to school hungry. Question, who cares? It is 8 a.m. at Kingsmead Primary School in Hackney, Inner City London. Teachers are preparing not to start teaching lessons but to serve breakfast to each and every pupil. Facts and quote, head teacher, Louise Nichols says dozens of children would be preparing to learn without any breakfast if it was not for their free breakfast club. A third of the children have no breakfast because of their parents' working hours and for many more it is a simple fact there is no food for breakfast to be had in the cupboard at home. Large families in chaotic households can mean many children do not even see an adult first thing in the morning with the routine of getting up, personal hygiene, and dressing, and then breakfast, providing food is readily available; also simply parents do not have the money to feed their children. Another London school, Keyworth Primary School, is also attributed with the same factors as Kingsmead, an outstanding performing school in a highly deprived area.

Both the schools I have mentioned get support with their free breakfast clubs from a charity called Magic Breakfasts, which are involved with about 200 breakfast clubs around the UK. Quote, Louise Nichols, Hackney born and bred, only knows the daily difficulties that parents face. She says if you start judging the parents, then you start labelling the child and the child is what matters. The child is the one suffering for whatever the reason. Carmel McConnell, the founder and Chief Executive of Magic Breakfasts, first got involved back in the turn of the millennium. Carmel McConnell, a veteran of social class movements in the 80s, Greenham Common and the miners' strike, decided something more serious had to be done, remortgaging her home to provide and set up this organisation to help the deprived children of the UK.

Question, what are we going to do about it? We want everyone to take responsibility for the children of today as they are the workforce and the future of tomorrow. This includes large corporations, who, with their support, give the foundations to the youth of the country, they benefit twofold, both initially in advertising and, secondly, with potential future employees. I move this motion to Congress and I would like to see a progress report by June 2014, at Congress. Thank you. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you. Secunder?

BRO. P. BRAYSHAW (Yorkshire & North Derbyshire): First-time delegate, first-time speaker. *(Applause)* Delegates, visitors, 55% of pupils are turning up to school having not eaten enough. 50% of teachers admit giving children money to buy food out of their own pocket. 20,000 such breakfast

clubs were in existence, some funded by local authorities but in decline because of local council budget funding cuts instigated by national government. Already the UK funds 1.3m free school meals, lunches and breakfasts, in Wales. Figures provided by Magic Breakfasts saw “attendance and attainment rise by 88% in schools where free breakfast is provided”. The Joseph Rowntree Foundation quote that due to rising childcare and transport costs combined with cuts to tax credits and other benefits, have seen the earnings families need increase by 16% annually above inflation since the start of the recession. The Child Poverty Action Group forecasts that by 2020 another 800,000 will be pushed into poverty and poverty simply put means hunger.

In short, what can the GMB and its branches do? It is not rocket science. Under the current financial climate of UK Plc things will only get worse. We want the GMB nationally to put pressure on the current government of the day, the ConDems, to provide a free breakfast for all regardless of ability to pay, or social class, the same ConDems who have condemned many children in the UK to a life with no prospects and a life of poverty. We also want GMB nationally to put pressure on the Labour Party to make free breakfasts for all part of their education manifesto. We have to act. We are all responsible. Thank you. I second this motion to Congress. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Paul. Congress, can I move straight to the vote on this, please? They have all been supported. Yes? *(Agreed)* Thank you. Can I now put 176, 179, 181, and 183 to the vote? All those in favour please show? Anyone against? They are carried. Thank you.

Motion 176 was CARRIED.

Motion 179 was CARRIED.

Motion 181 was CARRIED.

Motion 183 was CARRIED.

THE PRESIDENT: Colleagues, it gives me great pleasure to announce the next agenda item. As you see, we have a welcome guest on the stage, her name is Emma Lewell-Buck, MP for South Shields. Welcome, Emma. *(Applause)* Emma Lewell-Buck is now the MP for South Shields after winning the seat in a by-election last month following David Miliband’s resignation. Before being elected she was a social worker who specialised in child protection as well as being a local councillor. Emma is the first ever female MP for South Shields and she is a proud GMB member. *(Applause)* She was given the full support of the national and regional political teams in preparing for selection. Emma is proof that last year’s political strategy is working. Emma, would you please address Congress? Thank you.

EMMA LEWELL-BUCK, MP for SOUTH SHIELDS, ADDRESSED CONGRESS

EMMA LEWELL-BUCK: Thank you very much, 2013 so far has been a year of firsts for me, the first time I have ever been an MP, the first time I ever went to the House of Commons, the first time in Plymouth, and the best ever, the first time addressing Congress of my trade union. *(Applause)* Those of you in the room who know me know that I have struggled in horrible jobs, I have had poor pay and conditions, I have spent long periods of time on the dole. I never ever thought I would achieve my dream of being an MP. I always thought that I lacked the skills that were needed to be a member of parliament. It turns out I was wrong. My union, and in particular Tommy Brennan, Chris Dukes, and Lisa Johnson, helped me realise that like everyone else in this room I had spent years advocating and fighting for better rights for others and myself. It is these skills and these experiences that make you a passionate advocate for others and are the skills that are needed to be an MP.

Colleagues, to be honest, what I have realised in my short time in Parliament is that people like me and you in this room today are in the minority in the House. We need more people with real life experience because it is the real life stuff that makes us stronger and makes the stronger argument to put an end to the harsh policies this Government are imposing on us. Secondly, every time a regional

accent stands up in the House of Commons Cameron and Clegg are terrified, they do not know what is coming at them.

My brief message to you today is that anybody here or anyone you know who is a member of this union who is hesitant about putting themselves forward for public office, be it councillor, be it an MP, do not hesitate, go for it. Your union will support you. They have supported me. I have never looked back and never will. The relationship that I have with my trade union is one I want to continue throughout my parliamentary career. It is only by working together that we can fight these savage austerity measures of this Coalition Government, get our economy moving again, get our young people back to work, and ensure a Labour victory in 2015. Thank you very much. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Emma, congratulations. We hope you are in the House of Commons for many a long year fighting for rights of workers and for society. Thank you.

(Presentation of gift amid applause)

EMMA LEWELL-BUCK: Thank you, everyone. *(Applause)*

GENERAL SECRETARY REPORT AND ADDRESS

THE PRESIDENT: Congress, we will go over a little bit because I am sure you want to hear the next speaker! Can I call on Paul Kenny, our General Secretary and Treasurer, to move the General Secretary's Report to Congress. Paul Kenny. *(Applause)*

THE GENERAL SECRETARY: Congress, President, I commend the General Secretary's Report to Congress and I wish delegates particularly to note the introduction on page 3 of the General Secretary's Report, which, although it was written during the snowy weeks of early spring, confidently, confidently, predicted that this week in Plymouth would be sunny. And who said we are not optimists?

Emma, can I just say thank you. You got to Westminster and the first thing you wanted to do was get on a train down here and come and meet and be with your fellow activists, your fellow trade union members, and we are very proud of your election. We are incredibly proud of you and we look forward to the day when you will be amongst dozens and dozens and dozens of other working class MPs who have had experience of life and who will change the face of this country. Thank you very much, Emma. It is a brilliant start. *(Applause)*

I was going to go through a bit but I just can't help it, I just can't help this bit, I have got to actually start, really, by talking about David Cameron. I hate to do this, you know. David Cameron, what can I say? Now you know what an Eton Mess really looks like! *(Laughter)* At a time when you have Accident & Emergency Units closing, waiting times going through the roof, another Tory MP caught with his hands in the till, youth unemployment going through the roof still, what does David Cameron put at the top of the agenda, attacking trade unions and attacking working people's representation. That gives you all a clue about what the Tories have an interest in. *(Applause)*

Most of you who have been here before know I like to put a little bit of humour into my speech, which is why I wore this particular suit today. I want to tell you a little story to start off with. David Cameron was out riding with Rebekah Brooks, the News of the World, some remember that? They were out riding. They were jogging along on their horses in Rotten Row. Where else would they go? A good friend of mine, Jim Hiom, from the London Region, bless him, there he is, he was riding his nice new shiny bike right alongside Cameron. Cameron looked down at him with a bit of a snarly old lip, and said to Jim, "Did Father Christmas give you that bike for Christmas?" "Yes," said Jim.

“Well, he should have given you the sense to ride it properly as well,” said Cameron. So Jim looked up at Cameron and he rubbed his chin and he said, “Did Father Christmas give you that horse for Christmas?” “Yes,” said Cameron. “Well,” said Jim, “Father Christmas should have known that the arsehole went at the back, not on the saddle.” (*Laughter*) At least I am told that is what happened.

Can I just spend another moment on Cameron? I am not going to spend too much time on him but he juggles with our future, he plays games with our future, because he has a bunch of rabid, swivel-eyed — I mean, that is the most sane of them — backbenchers and they are in a sense real little Englanders most of them. They hanker for or just dream about a world that does not exist any more but where they would like to take us back to.

He reacts to Ukip. Do not underestimate Ukip, they are dangerous. Don't think they are not. Do not underestimate their message of division or their appeal to millions who are, frankly, hacked off with mainstream parties and the lack of hope so many politicians offer.

On Europe itself, membership of the EU has brought benefits at a time when employment rights were under attack and pretty much under attack from previous Tory governments. TUPE working time as well as Health and Safety laws were coming from Brussels, they were not coming from Westminster. Make no mistake about it either, if the Tories could scrap all of them they would.

That brings me to the Referendum. I think there will be one because all parties, effectively, will be drawn in to that argument. What Cameron seeks is a Euro life membership of the EU, all the benefits for the bosses without any of the responsibilities for the social agenda, free movement and exploitation of labour, free markets for businesses and multinationals, and opt-out from the social agenda, and opt-out from all social employment protection, making Britain a sort of free port trading area, sweatshop Britain, low wages, lack of rights, a land of exploitation.

Well, let us be clear, many trade unionists were wary, or even hostile, to becoming part of the EU but we went with it. Our union, the GMB, embraced the European process. We were the first union to open an office in Brussels and Kathleen Walker Shaw has engaged, and we have benefited from that engagement. But let's be clear, and let the trades union Movement be clear, with no social agenda, no social advancement, if Cameron thinks that this union will campaign for a Yes vote without a Social Chapter, then he is wrong. No social rights mean a No vote from me and I guess it is going to mean a No vote from you. (*Applause*)

Let Cameron and let the CBI, and the employers associations, understand that if they want to benefit from free trade but they do not want to accept any of their responsibilities, they want exploitation, and if they think that we are going to line up with them on an agenda that just gives a Yes vote to stay in the EU on that sort of sweatshop Britain, then I am telling you they have a fight on their hands. We are not going to stand by and just allow Cameron, and any government, to sign away the obligations of a social agenda as part of the whole EU agreement. We are not going to stand for it.

Mary, I just want to say a few words about the National Office. I want to mention the Pensions Department lost Naomi Cooke, who left to become Acting General Secretary of the FDA, which is known as the First Division Association Trade Union. Whilst I want to thank Naomi for all the work she did, the public sectors workers know she did a huge amount of work in the pensions dispute, I have to say to her, I think that going from a premier league union to a first division association is a downward step. (*Laughter*)

Anyway, I want also to thank publicly Phil McEvoy for picking up the reins and doing a great job. I wish to bring Congress's attention to the outstanding work done by Bob Crosby and organising colleagues, who last summer during the Olympics recruited over 8,000 members, the most successful

trade union organisation of any Olympic Games in history. It was a fantastic achievement. Well done, Bob and Holly. (*Applause*)

In fact, I will let you into not a well kept secret — we recruited more people in G4S than turned up for work. (*Laughter*)

There is also the outstanding work of our Health and Safety and Environment Department, Communications and Media, our Political Department, and our Legal Department.

President, I also want to thank all the officers, staff, and branch officers who helped bring about another year of membership and financial growth for the GMB, eight straight years of membership growth after decades of decline. The secret, eight or nine years ago now we stopped moaning and we started fighting again. I am going to remind delegates tomorrow of what has been achieved when I present the Finance Report to Congress. But today let us reflect a little on where we are and who we are.

We are the GMB. We fear nothing but complacency. We fight for our members for social justice, but, colleagues, never again against each other. We are real people. We are not actors playing parts. Our motivation comes from helping others, not ego trips or self-glorification. A sense of purpose and passion for fairness and decent lives for all leave most employers, politicians, and the media scratching their head, completely at a loss to understand this because their morals are based on personal greed. They just do not understand what makes us tick. It is a wonderful thing, trade unionism. It is a wonderful thing, which is why our badges and our T-shirts say, Union and Proud, because we are.

Another little secret, the GMB does not walk away. We may not always be able to guarantee that we can win but we can always guarantee that we can surely have a fight. GMB has built a reputation for organising and campaigning. We have been robust, some might even suggest aggressive at times, with those employers who have sought to harm or attack the rights or living standards of our members. We have secured agreements by making it clear that we do not run away. On behalf of the members, our business will be done in public or it will be done in private, but it will be done.

We have secured agreements this past year in retail and the care sectors which offer organising opportunities and real trade union organising opportunities for over a third of a million new members. We are bringing collective bargaining rights to the care sector where they did not exist before.

Our construction membership is on the up backed by a new organising approach and a growing reputation in a section that has seen its fair share of false idols.

The scandal of blacklisting workers because they were trade unionists or tried to raise safety concerns is made even more unpalatable by accusations and defence from the various employers that certain trade unions or officials were complicit in assisting with those blacklists.

Colleagues, I am proud to say that GMB is not one of those unions but for the sake of clarity any official of this union who acted in such a way would face the most severe sanctions available to us as their employers. There is no room at the GMB for people who collude with employers against the interests of our members. (*Applause*) Not now. Not ever.

Let me say this. Being paid by the members to do this — and I was having a chat with Danny in the lift this morning — is incredible. People pay you to get up in the morning to have a row. Jesus, most of you get up and do it for a living without getting paid for it. It is fantastic. It is a great honour; indeed, any job in the union is a great honour and a privilege but it brings with it the responsibility to serve, to help, to fight for, and always, always, to be available to the members we serve.

I have never asked any steward or officer to do a job I would not tackle myself and people who know me know that is true. I am proud of working for the membership, they are my friends, even when they are giving me a bit of stick — Dick! Every person who takes on a paid role on behalf of the members must have that same approach, an attitude, or, frankly, this is not the job for them.

By way of illustrating what is great in our union I want to pay public tribute to the work done by the Swindon Branch. Their determination to fight for Carillion members' rights at Swindon Hospital not only changed things at Swindon but started a chain of events which today led us to file High Court claims for victimisation and blacklisting against Carillion and others in the biggest legal case of this type ever. *(Applause)* Well done, Swindon.

If you have not checked it out, and it is about the third time of telling you, go to the stall with Phil Read, go and have a look. You may not be on it but there may be someone from your town who is on it. If there is, then we can contact them, or you can. We are determined that those thousands of people who do not know they are on those lists have a right to understand, and to an apology, and for compensation for being denied the right to work by those scurrilous blacklisting companies that has gone on for far too long.

A word of thanks to the Scottish Affairs Committee: you do not find me very often saying thanks to any Commons Committee, but thanks. They actually took up the blacklisting claims and they called to account these firms, and the Information Commission called them to public account, the Information Commission that had failed so miserably, frankly, over a period of years to do the job they are supposed to do, inform people. I have to say those MPs earned our respect and I would like you today to thank them for having the courage to look into something that, frankly, successive ministers had failed to do. Well done Ian, and well done those MPs. *(Applause)*

The next big battle for us, well, there is plenty on the horizon: the living wage. Ed Balls, and I will not repeat the joke that he would give an aspirin a headache, that has been well worn, Ed Balls wants to know how to find billions to rebuild the economy after 2015. Well, try this, Ed.

Make prosperous companies earning massive profits pay their workers a living wage and stop subsidising corporate wealth through propping up low wages through benefits. Make the wealthy companies pay living wages. *(Applause)*

I can hear it now, "Oh, oh," the Chief Executives howling and screaming, "Oh, we can't afford it. We can't afford to pay." Well, let's see if they can. I had a look at a few of these companies.

BP — they have been known to make a few quid in their time. Profitable, or what? Their Chief Finance Officer, Dr. Brian Gilvary, I have no idea what his doctorate is in, I could not tell you, but he is obviously earning more there than he is in the Health Service. How many times the minimum wage do you think good old Brian earns? Have a guess. Double? It is 291 times the living wage. Impressive, eh? He must be doing some graft.

What about Vodafone? I mean, those well known mobile phone and tax experts. Their Chief Executive is a bloke called Andy Halford. How many times the minimum wage do you think he gets? If he gets 291 — I'm not going to go down, am I? 400? Good call. It is 527 — 527 times the minimum wage. Oh, it gets better.

HSBC, now they were a really well run outfit, weren't they? The Group Chief Executive, Stuart Gulliver. If the other bloke was 500 Kenny would not be going down, would he? No. It is 691 times the minimum wage.

Diageo, Paul Walsh, Executive Director, 871 times the minimum wage. You look at those companies and I will have a bet with you, in fact I will have a bet with them, I bet that in their workforces across the UK, either directly employed or indirectly employed cleaners, and others, I bet they could do with a living wage. *(Applause)*

So, Ed, if you make the people who create the wealth get some of that wealth, then actually the economy will start to move again. If good old Stuart can pay himself 691 times the minimum wage, then I am sure the people who clean his offices are entitled to a few more quid an hour, don't you? *(Applause)*

It is time to challenge and to force change and that is what we are going to do, that is what we have been good at. The housing benefit scandal: Ed, my dear Ed, I want you to understand this is all for your good, and good advice from the GMB. You want to have more money? I have just given you a ton of money in the economy here. You do not have to pay people top-up benefits if they get a decent wage, so there's a load of money. That can go straight to the Health Service. That is great, Ed. It is as simple as that.

What about we build more affordable social houses — sorry, council houses? Why am I frightened about that? *(Applause)* We stop lining the pockets of private sector corporate landlords — *(Applause)* — many of whom, places like Wandsworth and elsewhere, whole blocks of flats virtually have been bought up, not the right-to-buy, that was just a vehicle, and they have been snapped up, snaffled up by property agents and all sorts of other people, most of whom have their companies offshore and they jack up the rents, we substitute with housing benefit payments and they take that offshore and do not pay any tax on it. Why don't we use half of the £23bn a year that it costs us to build decent homes for people to live in at affordable rents? Why don't we just do that? You make building jobs, you make manufacturing jobs, you create services, oh, and at the end of it people get a decent place to live. What is so bloody hard about that? At the end of it, by the way, Ed, I have just saved you another £10bn. *(Applause)*

I haven't even touched the tax dodgers yet. I have just given him another £20bn, £20bn here, £20bn there, it is that easy, basically. It is. Do you know why it is? It is because for 20-odd years now, effectively, people from business and vested interest, private equity, or anywhere else, have had their feet not inside the door of senior government departments but on the desk. That is where they have had them. Suddenly now people, politicians, are saying, "Oh, Google, Starbucks, Amazon."

Do you know when we were saying it? We were saying it five, six, seven years ago. That is when we were saying it from these rostrums. You are, but I am not the smartest knife in the drawer but even I could see that people were getting incredible tax advantages. The rest of us, who pay PAYE, we cough up; that is what we do. Maybe we do not all like paying it but we understand you pay taxes for a civilised society, that is what you do. Then you see corporates effectively making tens of billions out of this country, and then doing that. They do *that*. They do *that*. Some of them are making so much money, they do *that*. *(Laughter)*

Ed, it is time to tackle it. I was pleased Ed Miliband went down to Google and said to them, "It's about time you started paying your tax." I also believe there is something else. Why do I go and find Starbucks and they have these coffee bars, and they have them in public premises. How are they allowed to do that? Frankly, they don't pay their tax. We as a movement should absolutely boycott them. They don't even pay their workers a decent wage. Imagine the money they are making, they are putting it offshore, and their own workers are on minimum wage, or a few pennies more.

Amazon, wonderful, a third of their workforce are on zero hours. It throws itself back to the Liverpool Docks. People stand outside for a bit of work. These are the people you are holding up and, by the way, Amazon, great job creator, who do you think is actually creating all the jobs? Where do you think all the High Street jobs are going? How are they able to buy and purchase, because they are getting round paying VAT and they are getting round paying proper tax. Their defence, they pay tax because their workers pay tax.

It is a scandal and it has to end. I am sick and tired of telling politicians, reach out and do something. It becomes a bit embarrassing when actually, and I have to say this, the Tories and the Liberals are a bit more aggressive about tax policy with these people than Labour is publicly. It is time for that to change. Be bold about it. The majority of people in this country know that that tax regime is wrong. They are being cheated, they are being deceived, and it is time to end. Be bold about it. Frankly, would my life fall apart if Starbucks buggered off? No, it really would not. *(Applause)*

Our message is clear, Labour, just be bold, be radical, be truthful. Tory Lite is not going to do it. It just is not going to do it. Employment and trade union rights are going to have to be on the agenda for the next election. Make no mistake about that. *(Applause)* I will tell you why, because the Tories have put them there. The Tories have put them there. Are we to say nothing as a movement and a party when the time comes for the public to vote about a government that has denied access to justice to thousands of people who have been victimised at work, who have to find £950 in order just to go to a tribunal to get their employer to cough up? The Tories have done that. Don't we have the courage as a movement and as a party to say that is wrong and, frankly, while you are at it, what about giving people employment rights from day one? It seems a pretty sensible idea to me and a lot of people need it. *(Applause)*

You heard Dave this morning, went to a tribunal, had everything, had the evidence, he had been blacklisted, he had been victimised, the company had to admit it, they had to admit it, the documents were there, but he lost on a technicality. You know what the technicality was, that actually he had been employed through an employment agency. There is a simple way of dealing with that injustice as well, is there not? Isn't it just about time that agency workers have exactly the same employment rights as permanent staff? *(Applause)*

There are answers. You see, Ed, there are answers. They are answers people want, working people out there in the workplaces, every single day. I went recently to an Asda store and I will tell you, I spent a couple of really good hours with Asda workers. Do you know what, their issue was not about pay. Do you know what it was about? It was about respect; it was about respect and dignity. When you come to work you may have to sell your labour, unless you are all Lottery winners who just do this for a laugh. That is what you have to do in life, you sell your labour, but you do not ever have to sell or give away your respect or your dignity. *(Applause)* Too many employers think that through fear and through bullying they can take away the dignity and respect. Well, there are a few less of those around during the last few years and there is certainly a few less around the Asda stores I visited up in East Anglia. That is the way we have to be. We are proud, and we are union.

I have a couple of other little things, Ed, I want to give you a bit of advice about while I am at it because I have the floor. One, let's take back the railway industry into public ownership. *(Applause)* Come on. It does not have to cost us a bloody penny. Every time the franchise ends, we take it back. It is easy. They paid the money. Take it back.

Be honest about it, the most difficult things for a government to give away is our heritage and yet through the '80s and the '90s they gave them away. They said they had sold them but they actually gave them away. I think the railway industry should be back under public ownership and I think the

water industry should be back under public ownership, and I think we should do it in the first term of a Labour government.

Why on earth you would hand over control of a natural asset like water to the private sector, any asset, but a natural asset like water? The great thing about it as well — I don't get it, I am not switched on to this — this stuff falls out of the sky for free and yet by the time it comes out of your tap someone is making billions out of it.

Basically, it is not a big demand, I am not asking for the earth, but give me rail because I think that you can do it, and give me water, even if we have to pay for it, but I think there is a way of making sure you don't have to do too much of that. Give me those two in the first term and I will tell you something, I will be a very, very happy bunny. I think even Terry might be satisfied with that, and that is saying a lot.

I also say about blacklisting, Ed, listen to me, please, just come out and be bold and make it plain, absolutely, not a single firm who is found to have blacklisted working people in this country, trade unionists, activists, environmentalists, not a single firm should ever be given a public sector contract again until they have purged their guilt. (*Applause*)

I am going to finish, I suppose, where I started with the Tories and the LibDems. They attack working people: surprise. They attack the disabled, the poor, they attack the NHS, and they attack trade unions. We are not just surprised by any of this. We just cannot be. The reason they do it is that they actually despise, and I am going to use that, they despise the first group, and they fear the last. They despise, actually, the disabled. I am sorry I am going to say it, they despise them. The poor, look down on them, give them a shilling and move on. The NHS, well, look it is all right at the moment because we can make a load of money out of it and when we are finished we will be off to our own private hospitals.

Trade unions, they fear us. They do. You think I am joking. I am not puffing that up, they fear us. I will say this, our trade union has actually more members than the Liberals and the Tory Party put together. (*Applause*) Apart from me on Thursday evening, we haven't got a swivel-eyed person amongst us. (*Laughter*) Look at our job, Congress, and look at what we have already had this week, look at the passion, look at the fighting, with Margaret and Dave, and Owen. What are we talking about, we are talking about what we are and what we do, and you have to fight. Margaret, and the others at Hillsborough, if they had given up would the world be a worse or a better place? I think you know the answer. Dave, maybe Dave could have just said, "It's not my job. Let someone else do it." But he did not. The injustices that face us, face our society, our families, our members, it falls to us, and it will always fall to us because trade unions are actually the most fantastic movers of good that probably have been about in modern society.

I say to you this, I am really proud about our union but I think we have a load of battles ahead, and I mean it when I say that. You wear those shirts and those badges with every ounce of pride that you deserve because what stands between the destruction of the Health Service, workers' rights, and a decent society, what stands between the destruction of all those from this Government, frankly, comrades, is you. Thank you very much, Congress. (*Standing ovation*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Paul. I think he's recycling those bottles; as they're going out one door, he's bringing them in another. Thirsty! Colleagues, we are now nearly coming to lunch. Are there any questions on any pages of the General Secretary's Report? (*No questions raised*) Can I ask you now to vote on the General Secretary's Report? All in favour please show? Anyone against? That is carried.

The General Secretary's Report was ADOPTED.

THE PRESIDENT: Because you have been so good, we are a little bit late, 2.15 return, please. Have a good lunch. Thank you.

Congress adjourned.

AFTERNOON SESSION

Conference re-assembled at 2.15 p.m.

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Congress, please come to order. This afternoon we are going straight into the motions, starting with Motion 129.

EMPLOYMENT POLICY RIGHTS AT WORK ZERO HOURS CONTRACTS MOTION 129

129. ZERO HOURS CONTRACTS

This Congress calls upon the CEC to mount a campaign to highlight the increasing practise of the introduction of zero hours contracts which is creeping into the private and public sectors.

We also call upon the Labour Party to support us in this and openly condemn this insidious practise which is unpicking the very fabric of the hard fought for employment terms and conditions and will cause untold hardship and insecurity to many of our members, particularly in the low paid sector.

MOTIL PLASTICS BRANCH
Wales & South West Region

(Carried)

SIS. S. PICKSTOCK (Wales and South West): Congress, I move Motion 129 – Zero Hours Contracts. President, we call upon our union to implement and run a campaign to expose the increasing and immoral practice of employers imposing zero-hour contract and their workforces. This practice became popular in the late 1980s and 1990s. They were linked with low-paid jobs, a lack of employment rights and only being paid for the work the workers actually did. At the height of privatisation and contracting out, these zero-hour contracts were seen as a model of flexibility and cost saving. These were usually restricted to low-skilled jobs, such as catering, retail, shop assistants and cleaners in the care sector, but this insidious practice can now be seen growing into employment areas and it is causing extreme controversy as these contracts are being considered in NHS trusts. These proposals would see midwives, cardiologists, anaesthetists and other trained health professionals being placed on zero-hour contracts rather than ordinary employment contracts. It is of great concern in putting life-or-death professional staff on these contracts, and it is mistreating these highly skilled and trained staff, who are delivering specialised care, in the same way as fast-food burger restaurants or contracted cleaning agencies.

Employers are constantly sending home their employees because the sales are down, as businesses, stores and restaurants work on predictive business from last year's sales. These contracts have already been used for highly-skilled white collar staff.

We are calling on the Labour Party to ensure that low-paid workers in the UK are not exploited further, thereby contributing to additional poverty within society.

Another area of concern where the quality of service is paramount is the private-care sector. It is vital that the staff are in work at all times. It is not a 9-to-5 situation in many care homes. The residents and their relatives need to be assured that the residents' needs are met no matter what time of day it is, not whether the managers think it is a quiet period and staff can be sent home. You cannot view care of often vulnerable people on a time-management basis. They should be a priority and more important than the company's bank balance.

The area or concern about zero-hour contracts is that an individual who is working under these terms are not meant to be employees. Employees have rights which have been hard fought for over many years by the trade union Movement. I am talking about rights such as maternity leave, the right not to be unfairly dismissed, the right to redundancy payments and many more, which have protected the British workforce. These contracts are finding their way into all areas of employment, and many organisations and companies, who are using zero-hour contracts, are those that want to introduce them just for the cheapness and flexibility on their terms, with little care or concern to their workers in the service they deliver. This is, and should be, a matter of extreme concern to us all and we need to lobby for the control of these contracts. We call upon the Labour Party to support us in our campaign. Please support. Thank you. *(Applause)*

BRO. N. HOLMAN (Wales and South West): Congress, I am a first-time delegate. *(Applause)* President, the British labour market is clearly in a mess. The rapid growth of people, mostly young and desperate, are trapped into zero-hours contracts. The number has doubled between 2004 and 2011, and it is nothing short of a disgrace, that they are scrambling around in a twilight zone of so-called jobs where they have to stay in "standby" at the beck and call of their employer. The worker is artificially employed, caught between a rock and a hard place, and not receiving state benefit and earning very little or no money at all. Zero-hours contracts are part of a society in which insecurity is rife and where the genuine people seeking employment are openly exploited. The privatised parts of the National Health Service are major users of these types of contracts, along with the retail and hospitality industries, where they are increasingly commonplace. It is a device which provides employers with a pool of people who are, effectively, on-call and easy to discard when the needs arise. Everyone should have the basic right to security of hours, rather than being treated as if they have to earn in unemployment and show gratitude for tiny benefits or working for nothing at all. The employer is under no pressure to train workers or afford them any employment guarantees at all.

Congress, we would expect nothing less from a right-wing Government which practises divisive labour methods, but we should be able to count upon the Labour Party to adopt a more progressive-policy approach.

The Central Executive Council should also initiate a forceful campaign to highlight the spread of these contracts and their impact upon individuals and our country. Unfair treatment of our members must stop. Please support this motion. *(Applause)*

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Colleagues, if you are going to keep continuing when the red light comes on, it means that we are not going to get speakers up in debate. You are robbing the other fellows of coming to the rostrum. Please respect the light. *(Applause)* Could I have the mover of Motion 130.

AGENCY WORKERS REGULATIONS MOTION 130

130. AGENCY WORKERS REGULATIONS

This Congress does not agree with the SWEDISH DERROGATION which was applied to the AGENCY WORKERS REGULATIONS. We believe it has made the Regulations useless and detrimental to our members. Its impact on recruitment of full time workers and their pay has been nothing short of disgraceful.

We instruct the CEC to demand the change back to the AWR initial recommendations.

R35 ROCESTER JCB GENERAL BRANCH
Birmingham & West Midlands Region

(Carried)

BRO. C. BURTON (Birmingham & West Midlands): President and Congress, the Agency Workers Regulations, which have been much applauded, came into force in October 2011. They were backed by both the main political parties and the CBI. It gave hope for a vastly expanding and growing army of agency employees. It did not spell the death of the economy as big business had hinted at, but it was actually welcomed by industry. On the face of it, equality of wages offset recruitment costs and training expenses, so on the whole agencies and hirers alike did not seem unduly bothered by the new regulations.

Bring on the Swedish Derogation, diverting away from equal pay and conditions, which after 12 weeks was deemed lawful where the agency, as the employer, provides a permanent contract with minimal requirements between assignments. It is exempt from rights to equal pay and even holiday pay. As a result, workers who sign up for a “Take this or have nothing” contract have been seriously short changed and, as a result, accepting less pay than a permanent employee doing the same job. The PBA – pay between assignment contracts – does have some advantages with employees’ rights, but not to the extent of a permanent contract. Also it can be an advantage to continue to use an agency worker rather than to cycle or lay off and re-hire. The downside is that eventually payment structures are seriously undermined.

In essence, the Labour Party should make a commitment to back a return to original ideology of equality when the regulations are reviewed in the summer of 2013, or when they get back into government and are in the driving seat.

We need a government to back up this against the inequalities that our brothers and sisters are being subject to. Thank you. *(Applause)*

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Seconder?

BRO. G. GOLDSMITH (Birmingham & West Midlands): Malcolm, Congress, being classed as a worker rather than an employee is quite low on my priority list. What I would rather be classed as is an employee on equal pay with equal rights. The Swedish Derogation, which was designed to support professionals in Scandinavia who fall outside the very high percentage of union membership, has now been bastardised and used as a stick to beat our agency workers here with. It is just another example in a long list that this Con-Dem Government have altered to the detriment of our workers. We can and should be proud to call ourselves “workers”, but not at the expense of our basic terms and conditions. I second the fact that the Labour Party and our lobbies should scrap the Derogation and, in doing so, safeguard what is fine part of our economy – the agency worker. Thank you. *(Applause)*

THE VICE PRESIDENT: I call the mover of Motion 132.

CARERS MOTION 132

132. CARERS

This Congress notes that unpaid carers in employment are often subject to unfair employment practices resulting in termination of contract due to the absence workplace policies that should be in place to support and protect a group of people that actually save economy 19 billion pounds a year.

This Congress calls to vote on new legislation that invokes a national policy on employers that helps support what have become a vulnerable and increasing group of employees that have become an easy target for an uncaring government.

LEEDS LOCAL GOVERNMENT STAFF BRANCH
Yorkshire & North Derbyshire Region

(Carried)

BRO. M. SYKES (Yorkshire & North Derbyshire): Congress, I am a first-time delegate and speaker. *(Applause)* I am moving Motion 132 – Carers. What is a carer? A carer is someone of any age who provides unpaid support to family and friends who, under normal circumstances could not manage due to illness, disability and mental health issues. They are the largest source of care in the UK, a group of people who save this economy £119 billion a year.

Carers in employment undertake two jobs. One of them is unpaid. In their paid job they are often denied the time to deal with their relatives, disabled members of the family and sick dependants. The emotional pressure and guilt is immense. 625,000 men, women and children, who provide high levels of care, suffer themselves from physical exhaustion, ill health and mental breakdowns. Many find themselves alone, isolated and in debt, with little in the way of a future and with even less in the way of support to sustain the very basics of living standards. Congress, that is a disgrace. There are six million carers in the UK, which works out to one in eight adults. In 20 years that figure will rise by nine million. Three million adults juggle their care between home and work. 1.3 million people have now devote their retirements to care. 1.25 million carers in work give over 50 hours a week to care for their sick dependants. One in five employees have to give up work due to the immense pressure and stress. The financial benefits are such that – if you give up work and do more than 35 hours a week – a full-time carer will receive £58.45p. That works out at less than £1.67p an hour. Compare that to the £6.08p minimum wage, and that really does put life into perspective.

Employers have a legal duty of care to their workers. There needs to be a better, more informed and accountable understanding of our caring workforce, without subject to measures that force them into procedures that can result in the termination of their employment contracts. There needs to be a better, flexible, pro-active approach that screens those employees who are vulnerable, and without having to ask, are offered the support and care that allows them to continue in their role as carers. That can only benefit the employee, the organisation and some of the most vulnerable people in our society.

Congress, times are always tough, but with rising living costs, salary freezes and job losses and cuts in essential services, many families struggle but often it is the families affected by illness and disabilities that are hit the hardest. In particular, it is those who try to keep down a job and provide unpaid service, not often by choice, to those very vulnerable people who they have to care for.

I call upon this Congress to campaign for this and any further government to strengthen the Care Bill of May 2013, which falls short in many areas, and puts in place further legislation that provides support for carers in public and private sectors of employment, equips cares to continue their role by providing support for their relatives and family, raise the financial limit of £58.45 to a level that at least reflects that of the minimum wage. Give carers hope for the future and a quality of life that returns them to the dignity and sacrifice that they show their sick dependants, families and relatives who they love the most.

This Government are responsible for taking away badly needed funding from the voluntary sector, where caring organisations are being hit and spending on social care has fallen by £3 billion a year due to this Government's efficiency cuts. This Government are responsible for dismantling our National Health Service and responsible for closing hospitals, care homes and day care centres. Existing

services are under immense pressure to deliver what is the unachievable. They are under-staffed, under threat and, sadly, they are under this Government. Congress, that situation has to change and it will be GMB that will change it. Thank you. *(Applause)*

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Secunder?

SIS. S. BOOTH (Yorkshire & North Derbyshire): Congress, I second Motion 132 – Carers. Flexible working can allow employees to manage both their work and caring responsibilities. The Work and Families Act 2006 gives carers the right to request changes to their working patterns to better manage their caring. The request covers changes in hours, times or places of work. However, with the ferocity at which this Government is cutting services, workplaces are running on skeleton staffing and the workers who remain are doing the work of three people. This makes requests for flexible working less likely to be accepted and the employer will be able to use “business reasons” for refusing a request. The legal reasons they can use are, and it is a long list, “Burden of additional costs; Detrimental effect on ability to meet customer demand; Inability to reorganise work amongst existing staff; Inability to recruit additional staff; Detrimental impact on quality or performance; Insufficiency of work during the period that the employee proposes to work and primary structure changes.” That list is being used more and more to refuse carers the time to care.

Representing members, often in despair, at the thought of having to choose between work or their loved ones is heartbreaking and unnecessary. Once more, I repeat the plea of my colleague, for Congress to campaign that this and any future Government strengthens the Care Bill of May 2013, to campaign to raise the financial limit of £58.45 to a level that at least reflects that of the minimum wage and, finally, to give carers and their families the hope and dignity that they deserve. Thank you. *(Applause)*

CHRISTMAS HOLIDAYS MOTION 133

133. CHRISTMAS HOLIDAYS

This Congress notes:

- The push by supermarkets to open 365 days a year, including Christmas.
- The desire by supermarkets for long shelf means that suppliers are already pushed to work over Christmas.

This Congress believes:

- Good work life balance means that all workers should have a right to a Christmas holiday.

W15 WILTSHIRE AND SWINDON BRANCH
Southern Region

(Carried)

BRO. A. NEWMAN (Southern): Congress, I move Motion 133 on Christmas Holidays. Colleagues, about 18 months ago the first involvement of the GMB in the Swindon area with the Carillion workers was when they came to us and said that they were not allowed to take Christmas holidays. I worked in the Health Service when I was 18 -- it was my first job and I was a porter – and I was proud to work Christmas Day because there was a need for it. So we said to them, “Are you sure that this isn’t a business need?” He said, “No, none of us at all are allowed to take Christmas holidays between December 10th and January 12th. There are no holidays at all. It is a complete ban.” The management denied this, but we had team briefing Power Points and we had the notes that we handed out speaking of a complete ban on Christmas holidays for a month. For a devoutly Christian group of workers, this ban was felt particularly keenly. I have to say that after 21 days of strike action, Christmas holidays can now be taken. After 21 days of strike action every single manager on that contract, who was in the

hierarchy above our members, has gone or is going. Up until a few weeks ago, it was all but the general manager. She is now being moved. What we have shown is that standing up to the management has led to a clean sweep of bullying managers out of the company, and our members are still in position. That is the way to stand up to people.

However, this motion did not come to our branch from the Carillion members. It came to us from our members in manufacturing, who were saying that because of pressure from the supermarkets, even when supermarkets don't open on Christmas Day, they expect their suppliers to be working. Everything that is sold in a supermarket is made by someone, and because of the supermarkets' requirements for shelf life, they want 365 day working, which means people working through Christmas Day, for no real reason. Opening a shop on Christmas Day generates no more extra money for the economy. The very first supermarket, which I think was Tesco, that opened on a Christmas Day might have made a few extra pennies, but all the other supermarkets have been forced to do it by commercial pressure. Because they pay double time for Christmas, they are actually losing money because no more extra money is being spent. They felt the need to push for that. This is completely wrong. There needs to be a work-life balance, so that we can say that there are some things more important than shopping. If you ran out of milk, I am sure you could find a little corner shop open. We don't need every supermarket in the country open 365 days of the year. We have to push back about this and say that it is important to have a work-life balance. People have a right to a family life, they have a right to spend time at home and with their friends. The need for companies to make ever more and more profit, riding over people, has got to stop. We have got to draw a line in the sand and say that people are more important than profits. Comrades, I move this motion. *(Applause)*

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Andy. Secunder?

BRO. S. YOUNG-ROGERS (Southern): Congress, this is my first Congress. *(Applause)* I call upon you to support this motion because I, personally, have been affected by this situation, as have many of my colleagues. Three years ago myself and my work colleagues were called to a room and told, "You will now be working Christmas". There were no ifs or buts: "You are working Christmas." The only reason they gave us was that they did not want to lose the customer. It was not money but the customer. I have now worked every Christmas since that time with no exception. This year, again, I am working Christmas.

You may ask, Congress, "How does this affect you?" It may not, not this time, but those who remember, cast your minds back to Sunday trading. Since Sunday trading was introduced it has affected many more lives as the years have gone on. More manufacturing was required and more transport was required to supply the demand for goods. As you know, we lost family life on a Sunday because that day was always set aside for family and friends' gatherings. If we continue to allow supermarkets to trade unchallenged, we will fail to return our rights to be with our families at this festive time, but we will also need to continually challenge so that we retain our family values which forms part of the pillars of society.

May I ask Congress just to think to yourselves about this. This Christmas many of you will be at home celebrating. You will be with your children, grandchildren and friends. Many of you will be planning now to be with the same people. Let me finish by saying to Congress that, personally, this year, my sons, my daughters and my grandchildren will be with their other grandparents. The only day I have off is Christmas Day, so when Boxing Day comes and I am working, I have no Christmas, I have no friends and I have no family because I am working. I ask you to support this motion. *(Applause)*

WAGE BOARD FOR AGRICULTURAL WORKERS MOTION 134

134. WAGE BOARD FOR AGRICULTURAL WORKERS

This Congress calls on the Con-Dem government to reverse its decision on scrapping the Agricultural Workers' Wages Board.

GMB MID Lincs BRANCH
Midland and East Coast Region

(Carried)

BRO. R. WHILDING (Midland & East Coast): Congress, I move Motion 134, Wage Board for Agricultural Workers. This Congress calls on the Con-Dem government to reverse its decision on scrapping the Agricultural Workers' Wages Board. It was established in 1948 by a Labour Government, and it covers about 150,000 agricultural workers. The Board is made up of eight employer representatives, eight worker representatives and five independent members. The agricultural workers' employment rights, including tied accommodation, are determined by the AWB which, through an agricultural wage audit, is updated annually.

Even when Margaret Thatcher was Prime Minister, the AWB was maintained, because power relations between farm workers and farmers were recognised as being so unequal that a regulatory system was still needed. The Government's own figures show that getting rid of the Board could see wages in the industry fall by £13 million. Some say the supermarkets and the growers are behind the Board's abolition to drive down already low wages and increase profits.

Congress, the AWB costs the Government £170,000 a year to run, and just £62,000 during 2011-2012. So the abolition is not about administration costs. From its actions, this Government have clearly indicated that democracy is dead. Over 60% of the bodies who responded to Defra's consultation on the future of the AWB stated that they were in favour of a retention of the Board. In abolishing the AWB, it is certain that the wage structure that exists will be destroyed, resulting in skilled labour exiting the sector and being replaced by cheaper labour. As with most other sectors, the use of the National Minimum Wage as a wage rate, skilled labour will be replaced by unskilled labour, creating further concerns for the food industry.

To illustrate just how far the NFU is out of step, the NFU deputy president recently stated that the time for the AWB is over as it has now been superseded by modern-day developments like the National Minimum Wage. Congress, how can a system which confirms working hours to a fixed rate of pay be considered modern with the AWB, when the AWB sets graded rates which reflects the skill levels, and they are all above the National Minimum Wage?

Congress, the rural workers and families affected deserve a voice in Parliament, and the Government have gone out of their way to ensure that they do not get one. The Agricultural Wages Board has set a minimum wage level for farmer workers in England and Wales for more than 60 years. Abolishing it could cost the low-paid rural worker and the wider rural economy up to £260 million. Please support this motion. *(Applause)*

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Secunder?

BRO. S. ALLINSON (Midland & East Coast): Congress, I second Motion 134 – Wage Board for Agricultural Workers. This Congress calls upon this Con-Dem Government to reverse its decision on scrapping the Agricultural Workers' Wages Board. The AWB was set up in 1948 to provide a fair wage and skill structure for agricultural workers. It is used as a bench mark for other employment in the food industry and was the only wage council not scrapped in the 1980s. This council services 152,000 farm workers in England and Wales, but in April of this year it was abolished without even debate or a vote. The abolition of the AWB is wrong on three counts. Firstly, it will take money out of the workers' pockets and out of the rural High Street at a time when the rural economy needs it most. Secondly, it will be bad for our food industry, as a race to the bottom on pay will not help to attract

new recruits to the industry. Thirdly, it will put a higher strain on the smaller employers who could end up in employment tribunals due to the increased burden of employment regulation. As I said, the AWB was set up by Clement Attlee in 1948. The decision in April ended nearly 70 years of protection for farm workers. Brothers and sisters, I believe that the people who pick the fruit should have the money in their pockets to be able to buy the fruit and not rely on the food banks to feed themselves and their families. The abolition of the AWB will more impoverish the rural working class, and it is yet again another strand of the social engineering agenda of this Con-Dem Government. Thank you. *(Applause)*

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Does anyone want to come in on the debate?

BRO. M. DOLAN (Yorkshire & North Derbyshire): Congress, I am speaking in support of Motion 133. We must demand that this stops for non-essential services. Retail is not essential. Retail companies are actually making a loss out of this. They have actually admitted that. They said “We are not making money, but we are not going to let Tesco do it while we are not.” That’s wrong. Please support this motion. *(Applause)*

THE VICE PRESIDENT: If there are no more speakers, I call on Gordon Richardson, on behalf of the CEC to give the qualifications for Motions 130, 132 and 133.

BRO. G. RICHARDSON (CEC, Manufacturing): Congress, I am speaking on behalf of the CEC, supporting Motions 130, 132 and 133, with a qualification in each case. Motion 130 opposes the use of the Swedish Derogation by some employers to subvert the principles of the Agency Workers Regulations. The GMB is firmly against the Swedish Derogation. It has undermined the regulations that we fought so long and hard for. The qualification is that the motion asks us to revert back to the initial recommendations, but the CEC believes that a better way forward would be to keep the provisions of the EU Directive and push to strengthen the Agency Workers Regulations by removing the scope of the employers to use the Swedish Derogation.

Motion 132 refers to the problems faced by unpaid carers in employment. The motion calls for it to be compulsory for employers to offer carers flexible working hours and reasonable time-off arrangements. In this instance, the qualification that there is already a statutory scheme in place, which employers must abide to. So the motion’s demand for legalisation has already been met. However, the scheme does need to be improved and widened in scope. The GMB will campaign for better support for carers in employment by seeking improvements to the current scheme and also putting this to the Labour Party for further consideration.

Finally, Motion 133 draws attention to those employers in the retail sector who want to open their stores on Christmas Day. There is no justification for this whatsoever, and the GMB is opposed to shop workers having to be at work on Christmas Day. The qualification relates to the phrase “all workers should have a right to a Christmas holiday.” This is well intentioned and appropriate for those in the retail sector, but no worker should be pressurised to work in a store or supermarket on Christmas Day. However, we do recognise that some workers do have to be at work over Christmas, including many of our GMB members. For example, those who deliver vital emergency services and provide excellent care, health and safety of NHS patients and the elderly. With this qualification the CEC fully supports the views expressed in Motion 133. With this qualification, the CEC fully supports the views expressed in Motion 133.

On a personal note, on the first motion on the Swedish Derogation, in 2008, where I work, there were 12 agency workers. There are now 1,200. Just think about it.

Please support Motions 130, 132 and 133, in each case with the qualifications that I have set out.
(Applause)

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Does Birmingham & West Midlands Region accept the qualification on Motion 130? (Agreed)

Does Yorkshire & North Derbyshire Region accept the qualification on Motion 132? (Agreed)

Does Southern Region accept the qualification on Motion 133? (Agreed)

Congress, the CEC is supporting all of these motions with the qualifications for Motions 130, 132 and 133. I will now put them to the vote. All those in favour, please show? Anyone against?

Motion 129 was CARRIED

Motion 130 was CARRIED.

Motion 132 was CARRIED.

Motion 133 was CARRIED.

Motion 134 was CARRIED.

**INDUSTRIAL & ECONOMIC POLICY
COMMERCIAL SERVICES
SAFE GUARDING CAMPAIGN
MOTION 137**

137. SAFE GUARDING CAMPAIGN

This Congress to call on the National Officer to organise more talks between employers, the Union and MP's to put a ZERO tolerance to violence at Job Centres. We would then ask for the lessons learnt from this to be passed on to the larger Security Industry.

S20 SECURITY BRANCH
Birmingham & West Midlands Region

(Carried)

BRO. W. CARSON (Birmingham & West Midlands): Congress, I move Motion 137 – Safe Guarding Campaign. The S20 Security Branch calls upon Congress to request the National Officer to organise more talks between employers, the Union and MPs to register a zero tolerance to violence at Job Centres.

Security officers understand that there is a risk of violence in the work that they carry out, but what one should not accept is that it should pass as a joke. GMB already has a safeguard charter which aims to raise safety and industry standards, improving practices, improve training and increase awareness across the industry. The GMB along with employers, clients and the Government should be working to improve training, to provide protection and ensure that there is financial support for the guards who suffer violence in the course of their employment. There is a need to start with the Job Centres and then any lessons learnt should be passed on to the wider security industry.

The S20 Security Branch, supported by the Birmingham & West Midland Region call upon Congress to support this motion and, in doing so, lead the way for a safer working environment for the security guards and staff employed in Job Centres. We must send a clear message to society that violence in the workplace will not be tolerated. Thank you.

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Thank you. Seconder?

BRO. D. TUBB (Birmingham & West Midlands): I am a first-time delegate and first-time speaker. *(Applause)* I second Motion 137 – Safe Guarding Campaign. I call on Congress to support and pass this motion. The GMB has led the way and should continue to do so by facilitating and promoting the joint working of GMB, employers, clients and MPs to ensure that security guards in Job Centres are valued and respected, and not the subject of violence and abuse while carrying out the duties of their role.

Unfortunately, reports of violence are on the increase. Security guards employed within Job Centres are there to ensure a safer working environment for Job Centre staff. However, this leads them to be the butt of frustration of the general public who, more and more, find themselves at the sharp end of the Tory cuts.

It is important that we support our security guard members by giving them a strong voice in recognition of the service they provide and not allowing them to become yet another Tory casualty. Through our National Officer we aim to make zero tolerance to violence in the workplace a given in the security industry. Thank you. *(Applause)*

CHANGES TO REGULATION OF THE PRIVATE SECURITY SECTOR IN ENGLAND AND WALES

MOTION 138

138. CHANGES TO REGULATION OF THE PRIVATE SECURITY SECTOR IN ENGLAND AND WALES

Congress, the London Security Branch is very concerned at proposals which could lead to greater non-compliance, facilitate more cutting of corners by security firms and make security officers less accountable.

The provisions outlined by the Government are not detailed enough to come to a conclusion. The new regime will require greater inspection, but there's little detail on how well equipped the Regulator will be to undertake such tasks. It is important to reiterate the important role private security plays in society and why it is so vitally important any rise in standards is not compromised.

The biggest risk is the removal of the national licence card and giving the individual licensing requirements to the industry. Removing the national licence card will therefore carry the following risks:

1. It will make it easier for those without licences to work in the sector – if displaying a licence is not a condition, it will no longer be obvious if someone does not possess a licence.
2. Companies will be able to deploy staff that haven't been licenced much more easily – with a national licence it's much more likely any unlicensed staff will be exposed.
3. If the creation of a licence card is given to the company this will also undermine the effectiveness – the company will have control of the licences and so will be able to issue them themselves (this opens up the risk of non-licenced staff being given licence cards).
4. It will also make it harder for the public to judge if a person has a legitimate licence if there are hundreds of different types in circulation.

The London Security Branch calls on the GMB not to agree to any Government changes until there are guarantees on the continuation of a national licence card issued by the Regulator and there are assurances in place when it comes to inspection resources.

GMB (LONDON) SECURITY BRANCH
London Region

(Carried)

BRO. Z. HUSIN (London): Congress, the London Security Branch is very concerned at and which could lead to greater non-compliance, facilitate more cutting of corners by security firms and make

security officers less accountable. The SIA would no longer be the first point of contact for applicants. This allows these companies to create a false market which depresses wages, impacts on public safety and makes responsible companies look bad.

At present the system is open to abuse and, therefore, it will be abused. One of the biggest flaws in the current system is the lack of incentive for anyone to report anyone for malpractice throughout the licensing process.

The London Security Branch calls on the GMB not to agree to any Government changes. Please support this motion. I move. (*Applause*)

BRO. D. RAWLINGS (London): Vice President and Congress, I second Motion 138. Private security plays an important role in society. It is a substantial resource in crime prevention, protecting the country from terrorist acts to our public safety on the streets. It has increasingly taken on roles traditionally associated with the police and other public bodies. While the concept of the Government is pushing towards the right direction in reducing the general levels of administration and related bureaucracy to the business, the proposed changes will take us one step forward and 10 steps back. It is important that we do not comprise any rise in standards. We cannot allow them to cut corners when it comes to public safety.

The Government's proposed changes pose too many risks. Leaving licensing to firms in this sector will expose the risks of pre-2001 problems re-emerging, which were plagued with criminal infiltration, protection rackets and regular use of excessive violence by some door supervisors. There is also a danger that serious and organised crime elements would find it easier to get themselves re-established. Private security companies have extremely tight margins. Most contracts are won purely on price. Companies will be tempted to cut corners. There will be an increased risk of contractors utilising staff who have not yet undergone licensing to fill gaps on a short-term basis.

The proposals give such scope for the industry to open up the risk of the regulations being shaved to meet the needs of the industry and not the public. Security standards will fall, thereby putting our safety at risk. We need to improve standards, not gamble with our safety. We cannot dive into changes with our eyes closed when it comes to our security. We cannot allow any changes that will take us 10 years back in the wrong direction or, even worse, as the Government often does, just by changing a name. We need assurances. Our security and safety is important. I urge Congress to support this motion. (*Applause*)

NATIONALISE THE WATER SUPPLY INDUSTRY MOTION 139

139. NATIONALISE THE WATER SUPPLY INDUSTRY

This Congress calls on the GMB to campaign and seek the commitment of the Labour Party to take measures when back in Government to renationalise our water.

The water companies would have you believe that water is a commodity that we have to pay for – it is not. Gas and electric are commodities we could manage without if we had to, but water is life or death – with it you live – without it you die, as does every animal and plant on planet earth.

Yet our water supplies are in the hands of private companies that year on year increase the cost of our bills to enable them to make huge profits to pay out to shareholders and finance large salaries and bonuses to the bosses of these companies.

Yes we need to pay for maintenance of pipes and treatment of sewage but this should be a non-profit making industry. Just think how much lower everyone's water bills could be if there was no shares dividends, executive's

wages and bonuses. Our nation's water supplies should be nationalised to provide a benefit to everyone in the nation.

B10 BANBURY BRANCH
Birmingham & West Midlands Region

(Carried)

BRO. D. TUBB (Birmingham & West Midlands): Congress, the motion is: Renationalise the water supply industry. I've got a problem. The General Secretary pinched all my information before lunch but, anyway, I'll have my four minutes regardless.

Water! What does it mean to us? It is what everything on this planet needs to live. In short, it is life. So why are water supplies in the hands of private companies that, year after year, increase our water bills by saying that they need the extra money for investment? The truth is that they want it for profit. Look at the chief executive of Thames Water. He received a £425,000 salary, and then took a bonus of £418,359, making a total of £843,359 last year. Remember, this is one person in one company. How many more have large salaries and bonuses that Thames Water pay out? Let's not forget that there are other water companies doing just the same thing.

Just think how much lower our water charges could be if only one water company ran the supplies. In France, 16 cities, including Paris, have taken back their water supplies from private companies, and Berlin and Budapest are in the process of doing the same.

I want to quote what the General Secretary said in the GMB magazine: "Water is a natural resources. It falls from the sky free." I move. *(Applause)*

BRO. W. CARSON (Birmingham & West Midlands): Congress, I second Motion 139 – Nationalising the Water Supply Industry. The obscene commodification of a natural resource has gone on long enough ripping off ordinary people. In the past 12 months household water bills in England have increased by an average of 5.7%. The English water industry was sold off to the private sector by the Conservatives in 1989. Scottish Water stayed in full public ownership. Scottish Water has no pressure to provide dividends to shareholders, to reward wealthy investors. Water, which falls out of the sky, is a resource that everyone needs. You don't even have to be a Marxist to agree that there is something fundamentally wrong about water being sold off in order for global conglomerates to make even more profits from hard-pressed families.

Action to end the great water rip-off is urgently needed. We must renationalise the water industry now. Thank you. *(Applause)*

OPPOSE OFGEM'S CUTS MOTION 142

142. OPPOSE OFGEM'S CUTS

Congress condemns the savage cuts being imposed on investment in the gas industry by the industry by the industry regulator, Ofgem. The 20% cut in gas distribution and 45% in gas transmission, coupled with changes to the gas mains replacement programme, will compromise safety and threaten security of the gas supply.

Congress calls for a GMB campaign at national, regional and branch level to ensure that a future Labour Government launches a strategic review of the gas industry. The review should focus on ensuring that the gas industry has proper levels of investment to ensure that high safety standards are maintained, whilst also protecting consumers' interests and the environment.

The failed and discredited regulator (Ofgem) should be scrapped, and any review should set out how future regulation of the gas industry will be achieved and put forward proposals for Ofgem's replacement by a body which, as well as protecting consumers, has a statutory duty to ensure the necessary investment in both the gas infrastructure and the skilled and directly-employed workforce needed to operate and maintain it.

173 NORTH WEST GAS BRANCH
North West & Irish Region

(Carried)

BRO. D. HUGHES (North West & Irish): Congress, I am moving Motion 142. I am a first-time delegate and first-time speaker. *(Applause)*

Congress, I would like to motion Congress today concerning the gas regulator, Ofgem, and the savage cuts in funding it has imposed on the gas industry. Congress should condemn the investment cuts and funding to the regulator of gas businesses, and these funding cuts will have a knock-on effect with regards to safety and employment. A 20% - 30% in the funding for gas distribution, and a 45% in funding for gas transmission, is nothing short of disastrous for those employees who work in the industry and for the wider general population. Already we are at ground level for seeing the immediate changes in personnel numbers in the industries affected by the cuts in funding. TUPE transfers are taking place and re-organisations are in progress with the threat of substantial job losses, running into thousands. Negotiations for new terms and conditions have taken place, and others are currently in progress. These are detrimental to what is currently in place and are detrimental to our members' earnings and job security. All these changes are being driven by the industries which have been squeezed by the excessive cuts in funding by Ofgem, and they are tightening the corporate purse strings.

In the space of time that Ofgem has been operating as a regulatory body, can they actually display evidence that they have reduced the costs of the average energy bill to the customer by cutting funding to the regulated industry. The average annual energy bill is £1,400 as at December of last year, up an estimated £250 on the two previous years. This has led to an increase in fuel poverty among the low paid and elderly. Quite simply, they choose whether to heat or eat. Can they say that they have not cut investment in the replacement of the national gas infrastructure, both transmission and local distribution networks, particularly the gas-buying system, which could impact on safety.

Can they say that they are not just another governmental department which is hell bent on lining its own pockets while pressurising members working in the gas industries to take financial penalties due to their imposed cuts? Ofgem's savage cuts have not delivered the results intended. Ofgem, as a regulating body, has failed in its remit to deliver the cost savings to the consumer. Ofgem must go. It must be replaced by a system of regulation that ensures that customers don't get ripped off. A new regulation system must ensure investment in replacing the gas infrastructure, investment in jobs, skills and safety to keep the country safe and warm.

We call on GMB nationally, the CEC and all affiliated gas branches to condemn the current cuts in funding to the gas industry and its repercussions, and to oppose any further cuts in funding that may be proposed by the failed regulator, Ofgem. Thank you. *(Applause)*

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Seconder?

BRO. A. McLEAN (North West & Irish): Congress, I am a first-time speaker and seconding Motion 142. *(Applause)*

Ofgem, the energy regulator, has been a miserable failure. They have fiddled with bills and the cost to families of gas has rocketed in struggling to heat their homes. Ofgem's answer to these soaring bills

has been to slash spending and investment. As we speak, these cuts are costing the jobs of our members. Safety is being compromised as old gas mains are not being replaced. These cuts to spending and investment will not even take a single penny off the bills of people in this country. Our Union deserves great credit for leading the fight against Ofgem and for exposing Ofgem's failings. A future Labour Government must scrap Ofgem and engage with the GMB to ensure that there is adequate investment in gas and gas safety. Thank you. *(Applause)*

A STRATEGY FOR GAS MOTION 143

143. A STRATEGY FOR GAS

As the Union for gas workers, GMB recognizes that over 80% of UK households are heated by gas. As a result, the nation will be dependent on gas for many decades to come.

However, Congress condemns any new dash to burn gas in order to produce baseload electricity. Congress believes that burning more gas to produce baseload electricity represents the economics of the madhouse, given that it will only serve to increase gas prices for domestic customers. Moreover, Congress recognizes that low-carbon alternatives like nuclear power are much better suited for producing baseload electricity.

Given that it will play such an important part in the energy mix for generations to come, Congress calls on the CEC to campaign for a comprehensive strategy for gas. The strategy should include:

Ensuring that there is sufficient investment in the gas infrastructure to keep it safe and efficient;

A commitment that the gas infrastructure is installed, operated and maintained by trained and properly rewarded direct labour;

Greater efforts and more investment being put into developing the next generation of energy-efficient gas boilers;

Tackling fuel poverty by placing obligations on the Government and energy companies to ensure that all homes are insulated to the highest possible standard and made as energy-efficient as possible to ensure gas bills are kept to a minimum;

Ensuring that new sources of non-conventional gas like biogas and shale are developed in an environmentally sensitive way;

Scrapping the current system of regulation overseen by Ofgem.

173 NORTH WEST GAS BRANCH
North West & Irish Region

(Carried)

BRO. D. HUGHES (North West & Irish): Congress, I am still a first-time delegate but not a first-time speaker. Vice President and Congress, I would like to motion Congress today about a strategy for the gas industry moving into the future. As the union for gas workers, GMB recognises that, nationally, over 80% of the UK domestic households are heated by gas. As a result, the national will be reliant on gas for the foreseeable future and for many decades to come. Congress should condemn any new proposals to burn gas in order to produce base-load electricity. This represents the economics of the madhouse. This strategy would only serve to increase gas prices for the domestic customer nationally.

We, as Congress, should recognise that there is a viable, low carbon alternative to burning gas for the production of base-load electricity. That alternative is nuclear power. Recognising that gas will play such an important part in the future of the energy market for generations to come, we call on the CEC to campaign for a comprehensive strategy for gas into the future, and this should consist of ensuring that there is sufficient investment in the gas industry infrastructure to keep it safe and efficient; by securing a commitment that the gas infrastructure is installed, operated and maintained by a trained, properly rewarded and direct-labour workforce, which would be underpinned by recruitment and apprenticeships; by ensuring that the strategy that includes efforts to tackle fuel poverty and place

obligations on governments and energy companies to ensure that homes are insulated to high standards, and that they are made as energy efficient as possible to ensure gas usage and, therefore, gas bills are kept to a minimum, and by ensuring new sources of non-conventional gas, like biogas and shale gas, are developed in an environmentally sensitive way. Greater effort and investment must be put into developing the next generation of energy-efficient gas boilers. Furthermore, support should be given to the call to scrap the system of regulation currently overseen by Ofgem.

We call on the GMB for a campaign at national, regional and branch levels to ensure that any future government launches a strategic review of the gas industry. This should focus on ensuring that the gas industry has proper levels of investment to underpin and maintain the high levels of safety required, while also protecting the interests of the consumer and the effects on the environment.

Finally, we call for the failed and discredited regulator Ofgem to be scrapped, and any future review should incorporate and set out how new forms of regulation will be achieved. A review should put forward proposals for Ofgem's replacement by a body which protects consumers and has a statutory duty to ensure investment in both the gas infrastructure and the skilled and directly-employed workforce needed to operate and maintain it. Thank you. *(Applause)*

BRO. A. McLEAN (North West & Irish): I second. There are those in the so-called environmental lobby who will tell you that gas has no further. Let me tell you, Congress, this is nonsense. Hundreds of thousands of skilled workers are currently employed in the gas industry and these jobs cannot easily be replaced. The majority of our British currently use gas for heating and cooking. The truth is that they will do for generations to come. Gas is the fuel of the future, and it is essential to the British people and to the UK economy. That is the reason why it doesn't make sense to burn and waste this valuable asset to produce electricity. We need to think very carefully how we use this precious resource and why we need to oppose George Osborne's proposed "Dash for Gas".

Our Union locally, regionally and nationally has done a great job in arguing the case for gas. Congress, we are seeking your support. Please support our campaign to ensure that we have a strategy for this critical industry. Thank you. *(Applause)*

FRACKING MOTION 144

144. FRACKING

This Congress is concerned about support given to fracking compared with the lack of support for carbon capture and sequestration (CCS).

YORKSHIRE COAL STAFFS BRANCH
Yorkshire & North Derbyshire Region

(Carried)

SIS. P. ROSS (Yorkshire & North Derbyshire): Congress, I've been campaigning for the introduction of carbon capture and sequestration – CCS – for 16 years. As well as being the only option to meet emissions targets as we continue to burn coal and gas, if CCS is introduced it could give a lifeline to the UK coal industry. So far the nearest we have got to is a pilot project, which removes CO₂ from a small amount of flu gases at a coal-fired power station in Yorkshire. But because there is no one to take away and bury the CO₂, it is just added back into the flu gases and sent off into our atmosphere.

Successive governments have pledged to fund CCS projects but so far nothing has actually got built. The most advanced project, as far as planning goes, shovel-ready, as it were, and with European backing, did not even make the current Government's shortlist. Governments keep saying, "As well as

helping us to meet our emissions targets, these are technologies that we can export to generate income”, but when?

So I come to fracking. It seems that almost everyone, including the UK, but apart from France, wants to jump on the bandwagon of getting cheap gas this way, regardless of potential environmental issues, but the downside of fracking may not be the contamination of aquifers, impacts on air quality or that it might increase the risk of earthquakes, but, according to a recent report, rather than implement CCS or develop renewables, countries will burn the fracking gas. This will, therefore, have a long-term impact on not meeting emissions targets.

Recently, the chief executive of the Drax Power Station said: “Fracking in the US would have a detrimental impact on the UK coal industry.” Why? Because US energy companies are preferring to use the cheap fracking gas so US coal companies are looking for somewhere to offload their unwanted coal cheaply, like the UK, as if our coal industry didn’t already have enough problems.

The chief executive of IGas was on *BBC News* last night, boasting that they have discovered decades of gas reserves – mind you, the licence was for £5 million, so are they going to pay more? – and I hate to make them feel inadequate, but we’ve got hundreds of years of coal reserves. If you think that this gas will, as he said, decarbonise the UK, he is deluding himself. Gas is still a fossil fuel. It is not the fuel but what you do with it that is important. Even though the Government thinks that fracking is okay, their Energy and Climate Change Committee has said that this gas will not bring down energy prices. The Treasury should not basing the UK energy strategy on the expectation of cheap British shale gas. Geological conditions in the UK are very different to the US, anyway. However, the Government are probably working on the assumption that it will cost them less to allow fracking than to develop CCS projects. Fracking or not, by the time any CCS is up and running on a commercial scale in the UK, it will probably be too late to help save the UK coal industry. We may still be burning coal, but will it be ours? No. Probably it will be from the ‘fracking US’! (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you. Secunder?

BRO. I BROOK (Yorkshire & North Derbyshire): Conference, I am a first-time delegate and first-time speaker, seconding Motion 144. (*Applause*)

CCS was introduced to reduce emissions from existing energy production from fossil fuel. However, fracking, according to current research, takes huge amounts of water and chemicals, and injects them at high pressure. This process uses known toxins and up to six hundred chemicals. In the USA there are 500 wells which use eight million gallons of water for fracking, and each well can be fracked 18 times. Currently, the US is using 72 trillion gallons of water for fracking are being used, with 360 billion gallons of other chemicals. During the process methane gas and toxic chemicals leak out and contaminate nearby ground water. Methane levels are found to be 17 times higher in drinking-water wells near fracturing sites than in normal wells.

There are over a thousand documented cases where drinking water, which has been contaminated, has been used in towns next to areas of gas drilling, resulting in sensory, respiratory and neurological damage. Only 30% to 50% of the fluid used in fracturing is recovered. The rest of the toxic fluid is left in the ground and it is not biodegradable. Much of the fluid is left in open pits to evaporate into the air, thereby releasing alcohol and volatile compounds into the atmosphere, creating acid rain. Hydraulic fracking produces around 300,000 barrels of natural gas a day, but to do this it causes a number of environmental, safety and health hazards. As a father and a grandfather, it is my duty to ensure that my family is brought up free from such dangers and damaging practices. Please support. (*Applause*)

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Well done, Ian.

INDEPENDENT GAS TRANSPORTERS MOTION 145

145. INDEPENDENT GAS TRANSPORTERS

This Congress agrees that GMB will mount a political campaign within the trade union and labour movement to ensure the next labour government abolishes past and all future charges levied by independent gas transporters that have been imposed on property owners who have/will have gas supplies provided by an independent gas transporter.

GOOLE BRANCH
Midland & East Coast Region

(Carried)

BRO. P. EYRE (Midland & East Coast): Congress, many times a delegate, many times a speaker, but the same twitchy bum. *(Laughter)* I am moving Motion 145 – Independent Gas Transporters.

If you are served by an independent gas transporter's (IGT) network (ie not Transco) you may find that the price you pay for gas is slightly higher than the standard published price provided by the gas supplier. This is because the gas supplier must pay both Transco and the IGT to deliver gas through the pipes to your home. In practical terms, there is nothing wrong with having the IGT deliver the gas to your home. The downside is the additional cost element.

Many house builders use the IGT to save money when they are building new properties as the independent gas transporters will offer, in most cases a more competitive price for all the connection work than Transco. The problem occurs when you then wish to compare the prices offered by the gas suppliers. Some of the low-cost gas suppliers will not quote for a supply to property connected via an independent gas transporter and the majority of other suppliers will charge a premium. So whilst the house builder gets a good deal when installing the gas network, you, the domestic consumer, end up paying for this in increased costs for ever.

Energylinx is truly unbiased, and unlike the majority of energy brokers, we list every single gas and electricity supplier in the UK. We have been campaigning to stop this situation as more and more new houses or new gas installations are being carried out by the IGT. To find out whether you are connected to the gas distribution system via an independent gas transporter is quite simple. The clue is that if the M number (MPRN) shown on your gas bill is 10 digits long and begins with 74 or 75, then you are supplied by an independent gas transporter. You should find your M number on either the front page or reverse of the front page of your recent gas bill. Congress, please support this motion. *(Applause)*

BRO. M. SHORT (Midland & East Coast): Congress, I second Motion 145. I am going to keep my contribution short and sweet. I am sure that Bob Pelly will agree to this. There is a simple answer to this question. Bring it back into nationalisation. If that happened, maybe pensioners could afford to put the gas on instead of turning it and turning it off. Maybe my mum could be a bit warmer. It's in everyone's interest to support this campaign. Thank you. *(Applause)*

NUCLEAR MOTION 146

146. NUCLEAR

This Congress calls on Government and The Opposition to provide certainty on the future of Nuclear Power so that thousands of workers working directly and indirectly in the industry know that there is a sustainable future for this vital power source within a green and safe energy policy.

SELLAFIELD IND BRANCH
Northern Region

(Carried)

BRO. M. ARMSTRONG (Northern): Congress, I am a first-time delegate and a first-time speaker. *(Applause)* I move Motion 146 – Nuclear. The future of the nuclear industry is in a difficult state. Several high-profile companies have pulled out of the next generation of nuclear build. Some countries have turned away from it. In the Northern Region, in west Cumbria, we have had generations of GMB members, their families and communities employed in the nuclear industry. It has kept alive many local communities, especially when other heavy industries in west Cumbria have declined or disappeared. What is more, the GMB has a record that is second to none in leading on health and safety standards within the industry. Indeed, we have led the legal fight to develop compensation schemes for our members in the industry. Health and safety in west Cumbria is at its best when the GMB are leading the way.

The recent debate on where to store nuclear waste has caused much debate in Cumbria. It is an absolute disgrace that the leader of the Labour group on the Cumbria County Council voted with the Tories to vote against moving to the next stage on whether to have a new storage facility in Cumbria. It is bad enough that he got into the Coalition bed with the Tories in Cumbria, but what is worse is that he took the Queen's shilling and took a seat in the Cabinet. He has already put GMB members out of work by implementing Tory cuts. What is worse is that he has put up a major barrier to private sector employment by voting with the Tories against nuclear. Politicians in Westminster and some local politicians in the county council have shown a complete lack of guts and foresight by putting their own short-term decision making before providing a sustainable energy source for the UK and the hope for the future in direct employment and, indirectly, into the supply chain across Cumbria.

We need a political consensus at Westminster. If the Tories can't provide it, Labour should signal that it will give the lead. Please support before the lights go out. *(Applause)*

BRO. A. PARKES (Northern): Congress, I am a first-time speaker and first-time delegate, seconding Motion 146 on Nuclear. *(Applause)* When the Public Accounts Committee reported on the nuclear partnership at Sellafield, it showed that we were right to call for greater state intervention in the nuclear industry. The level of jobs and regeneration that have already been made in Cumbria through the partnership is acknowledged and welcomed. However, more work needs to be done to ensure more jobs and more regeneration with much less income being spent abroad. We need a greater willingness to say, clearly, that money spent on top executives' salaries is simply not acceptable. We need to recognise that the public money put in must show a greater value, representing better prospects for local employment and creating sustainable jobs within a strong local economy.

We need central Government to take a much greater role in investment in the nuclear industry. We need a safe and secure energy supply that is not at the mercy of foreign governments. Our policy, as laid out, shows that we need a green and safe energy policy that includes nuclear. The skill base that our members have developed along with their employers is massive. We simply can't afford to lose these skills and jobs in both direct employment and the supply chain. It is scandalous that central Government refuses to commit to the longer term. If they are not prepared to show a commitment, how can we expect the private sector to make the investment decisions? Politicians at Westminster must show leadership. They must commit to a balanced green and safe energy policy that includes nuclear. Thank you. *(Applause)*

PRIVATE HIRE, MINIMUM FARES MOTION 147

147. PRIVATE HIRE, MINIMUM FARES

Congress calls for a change in legislation to allow local authorities to set minimum fares based on the local economy for the Private Hire Industry. This would be a nation-wide act and would enable drivers to earn a reasonable living wage as others enjoy.

At present drivers are expected to maintain and fuel their cars, pay tax and rent or commission as well as provide for themselves and their families.

Drivers currently are working in many cases unacceptable hours to make ends meet.

A set minimum fare for professional drivers would stop operators from creating a market that rewards customers rather than workers.

The fares set by the local authority would be legally binding and deviation would carry penalties for the operators/drivers who fail to comply.

GMB PROFESSIONAL DRIVERS BRANCH
London Region

(Carried)

BRO. P. O'CONNELL (London): Congress, I am from the Professional Drivers branch. This is my first Congress and as a first-time speaker. *(Applause)* I am moving Motion 147 which seeks GMB support to end the appallingly low earnings for mini-cab drivers. Members of the GMB Professional Drivers Branch suggest a minimum fare be set. The qualification by the Central Executive Council is accepted by London Region so that the level of minimum fare should be nationally set rather than have local variations. Currently, there exists no agreed minimum fare in private-hire vehicles. Let me explain. Under present law the fares are left to operators to fix in mini-cab offices. Drivers must not set fares because the police consider that would be touting for business, which is an arrestable offence, but with no limit on the number of cab offices the competition is intense, which pushes down fares. I am regularly taking passengers to Heathrow Airport for the same price that my mini-cab office charged 10 or 20 years ago. Usually, I drive back empty. The consequence is that most drivers work below the minimum wage, yet no one is prosecuted because most drivers are self-employed. If drivers complain, they are told to look for another company.

The mini-cab offices which exploit us charged the self-employed drivers a weekly fee, which goes up every year regardless of the severe drop in the number of passengers they give us. Intriguingly, you can see the state of the economic downturn by observing how long is the queue of taxis waiting outside main railway stations. These days they typically wait two or three hours for a passenger, and if they are asked to drive to a hotel just round the corner, the fare, obviously, falls short of the minimum wage, but then the taxi joins the back of the long queue waiting idly for the next job. The mini-cab trade is suffering as much as the black cabs are for lack of business.

Drivers are hurting badly because, on top of the fortune made out of us by mini-cab offices, there is insurance for hire and reward rocketing up. As Paul Kenny said in the *Sunday Mirror* fuel prices have increased way more than general inflation, on top of which repair and car maintenance bills are constant. If we are penalised with a £130 council parking penalty after waiting for a disabled passenger, perhaps even help with a wheelchair, the fine can wipe out two days' pay for a driver. That is why there is a large churn in the number of drivers every year, who give up and choose not to seek annual re-licensing of their vehicle. One in four private-hire drivers cannot afford to stay even one

year in the trade. It is shocking that, in order to pay all the bills, the drivers who do stay in the trade typically work seven days a week for 12 or 16 hours a day.

I, therefore, ask Congress, please, to waste no time in supporting professional drivers who joined this Union to earn fares that provide a living wage and reasonable working hours. Most of the GMB branch members are self employed and they are hurting on as little as £3 an hour. Please end that shame and support Motion 147 with the CEC qualification. *(Applause)*

BRO. H. MEHMET (London): Congress, I am a first-time delegate and a first-time speaker. *(Applause)* I am seconding Motion 147 – Private Hire, Minimum Fares. I am not a cab driver but, like many delegates here, I am an occasional paying passenger of private hire vehicles. As the mover of the motion explained very well, it is shocking that the fares are so low that the large mini-cab firms are blandly advertising for driving jobs in which they offer licensed private hire drivers guaranteed employment, up to £300 for a six-day week, 12 hours per shift, which amounts to far less than the National Minimum Wage. The licence authorities choose to pay no attention to this scandal, but the GMB can make a difference and protect drivers who are paying over the odds to some mini-cab companies. There are about 60,000 licensed private-hire drivers. The biggest employer is Addison Lee, which was the biggest donor behind the Tory campaign for the Mayor of London, yet the majority of the drivers work for small firms based in the suburbs. The suburban drivers work even longer hours, usually seven days a week. This is a good time for the GMB to intervene because the Law Commission is looking to reform some of the laws that currently regulate the taxi and private-hire trade in England and Wales. The GMB will make a submission for the introduction of minimum fares in order to give respect to drivers who are having to work all hours, and are often going into debt as the only way to feed their families. Thank you. *(Applause)*

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Does anyone wish to speak in the debate?

BRO. M. AKBAR (London): Congress, I am speaking in support of Motion 138. What a wonderful team we have got leading our country, which is taking the Mick, and taking liberties with our rights and terms and conditions. I dislike the trio of Cameron, no-clue George (“I agree to disagree”) and Clegg (“I agree the above”). Please support.

BRO. A. GROAT (Southern): I would like to speak on Motion 137 – security and zero tolerance. Security staff who work on the front line in Job Centre Plus offices have experienced a recent upsurge in incidents of violence and intimidation as a result of the Government messing around with the benefits that are available. They have been telling people “No”. When things go wrong, our people have to step in and put it right. Unfortunately, they are now facing a situation that whereas before they could talk things down, people are now becoming a lot more vigorous in what they want to do. There is knife crime and people being threatened with syringes. There is a lot of verbal threatening of “I’ll threaten your parents”, “I going to come and burn your house down and burn your car”, and, “I’ll see you outside.”

While we are security, we accept that there is a risk in that we still have a right to be able to do what we need to do. Let me just say one other thing. There is a member sitting in this very building. As a result of an incident, he found he had a new family friend. For a week or so he had a stalker. Everywhere he went, the stalker went. I ask and urge Congress to support Motion 137. Thank you. *(Applause)*

THE VICE PRESIDENT: I now call on Lorraine Parker of the CEC to give the qualifications to Motions 145 and 147.

SIS. L. PARKER (CEC, Public Services): President, I am speaking on behalf of the CEC. We are supporting all motions, but Motions 145 and 147 we are supporting with qualifications. Motion 145 raised concerns about the extra costs for households which have gas delivered by an independent gas transporter. The CEC supports the call for consumers whose gas comes from an independent transporter to pay less in future. That is consistent with our belief that energy prices are far too high.

The qualification is that the motion calls on a future Labour Government to abolish both past and future charges levied by independent gas transporters. The CEC believes that no government would agree to force the independent transporters to pay back past charges because they have been operating within the energy market rules. It is the over-complicated energy market which is at fault, not the independent gas transporters. As a result, households with an independent gas transporter are disadvantaged under the current system, so GMB can and will argue for the future reform of the energy market. However, these independent companies have not done anything illegal, and it would not be credible to ask a Labour government to take action which would put them out of business and reduce the gas-supply industry to a smaller number in view of the big energy companies.

Motion 147 draws attention to the number of private-hire drivers who are struggling to earn a living wage and working excessive hours. This is dangerous for drivers and for customers. The motion calls for a system of local authority enforced minimum fares to improve pay and conditions for drivers. The CEC qualification is that there is a risk that some local authorities might not set the minimum fare high enough to give drivers a living wage. To support drivers struggling to make ends meet, the CEC believes that the better proposal would be a system based on a universal minimum fare. This could be set nationally but enforced locally. Please support Motion 145 and 147 in each case with the qualifications I have explained on behalf of the CEC. *(Applause)*

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Does the Midland & East Coast Region accept the qualification on Motion 145? *(Agreed)*

Does the London Region accept the qualification on Motion 147? *(Agreed)* Thank you.

Congress, the CEC is supporting Motions 137, 138, 139, 142, 143, 144, 145 with a qualification, 146 and 147 with a qualification. I now intend to take them all at once. All those in favour, please show? Anyone against? Carried.

Motion 137 was CARRIED.

Motion 138 was CARRIED.

Motion 139 was CARRIED.

Motion 142 was CARRIED.

Motion 143 was CARRIED.

Motion 144 was CARRIED.

Motion 145 was CARRIED.

Motion 146 was CARRIED.

Motion 147 was CARRIED.

THE PRESIDENT: Composite 16.

BETTING SHOPS, HIGH STAKE GAMING MACHINES AND FIXED ODDS TERMINALS COMPOSITE 16

C16. Covering Motions:

260. BETTING SHOPS *(London Region)*

261. BETTING SHOPS, HIGH STAKE GAMING MACHINES AND FIXED ODDS TERMINALS (*London Region*)

BETTING SHOPS, HIGH STAKE GAMING MACHINES AND FIXED ODDS TERMINALS

Congress agrees that gambling can become a serious addiction and is increasingly the cause of serious financial problems in families. This motion notes with concern the rapid proliferation of high stake gaming machines and fixed odds terminals in betting shops. These additions to conventional gambling are rightly referred to/are known as “the crack cocaine of the Gambling Industry” and are mushrooming in every High Street, and poorer communities.

Congress notes the campaign by Fairer Gambling who have released figures which state that more than £2billion was gambled using “fixed odds betting terminals”. The growth of these machines and establishments coupled with the industry call for further deregulation should set alarm bells ringing. There must be a cap on the number of these machines in individual betting shops.

The Government should carry out a review of FOBT’s that considers reducing the maximum stake from £100, increasing the time between plays and the way the machines are licensed. We also believe that the best way to prevent the further clustering of betting shops is to change their planning category, giving residents and local government more say over their local high street.

This motion is not calling for a return to the days of back street bookies but calls for control of the concentration and form of gambling on our High Streets to be controlled by Local Authorities.

(Carried)

SIS. F. FRANKLIN (London): Congress, I am moving Composite 16 – Betting Shops, High Stake Gaming Machines and Fixed Odds Terminals.

President, this composite is not anti betting nor is it anti betting shop nor anti plc bookmaker. It is a genuine attempt to bring reason back to the betting industry. In the main, betting is fun, enjoyed by millions of people up and down the land. When you see queues forming up outside the betting shops on Grand National day, you know that the punter is having a punt that they can afford. It’s a bit of fun. If they win, great. If they lose, no big deal. Other people gamble on a daily basis. That, too, can be fun or professional, and if it is within the punter’s financial capabilities, then no harm is done, win or lose.

Responsible gambling and the provision of it is beneficial to the economy. Problems arise when a punter cannot afford to lose but continues to do so. The more one loses, the more one has to speculate to recoup the losses, which is a recipe for financial ruin. That recipe has been increased many fold by the introduction of the fixed odds betting terminals. At a race track there is a minimum of 30 minutes between races, and at a greyhound stadium there is a minimum of 15 minutes between races. At the begging shop, there is a minimum of five minutes between any live horse race and a greyhound racing event. That means, colleagues, that there are time restrictions on the number of bets that can be placed. However, colleagues, with the introduction of the fixed odds betting terminal, that restriction has been removed. Now a punter can stake up to £100 every 20 seconds. That is £300 a minute or £18,000 a hour – a goldmine to bookmakers.

Bookmakers would have us believe that it is opening up the market or giving more diversity of choice. What it really means is that it is a cash cow for them. To milk that cow, they open early, close late, before and after normal racing, just for exploitation.

Colleagues, most of you will have noticed the alarming increase in the number of betting shops opening up and down the country. This is not in response to an increase in demand for traditional betting. It is so that betting-shop companies can increase the number of fixed odds betting terminals

that they have, because there is a limit to four per outlet. What more evidence do you need that these machines are cash cows? Congress, responsible betting is fine but there should also be the provision of responsible betting facilities. Let us make it quite clear that the maximum stake on a roulette game on a fixed odds betting terminal is £100 and the maximum pay out is £500. If a punter plays roulette in a casino and places £100 on a single number and won, he would win £3,600. So not only is the time against the punter, but so are the odds. There are countless stories of bankruptcy, family break-ups and even suicide of people hopelessly in debt through addiction to these machines. That addiction, colleagues, is caused by a desire to seek for a better life or a manic drive to recoup losses.

The gaming industry gives just 1.1% of its profits to the Responsible Gambling Trust, and that would provide just one centre in the country for the rehab of gamblers in difficulties. The Government have no infrastructure in place to deal with the rising number of problem gamblers. To be fair, gamblers must take responsibility for their own actions. But betting industry has a morale responsibility in this. It has to reduce the speed of these games. It has to reduce the maximum stake and it has to reduce its hours of opening. It has to act now and if it does not suitable legislation must follow. Betting shops must take responsibility for their actions. Thank you. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Frances.

SIS. D. PETERSON (London): Congress, I second Composite 16. Anywhere you go in the UK you will find a betting shop on every high street. If you go to the poorest and most deprived areas of any large city and town, and you will find clusters of betting shops that are often crowded with people all day, mostly with people who can't afford the money they are betting. This situation is made worse by the gaming machines that are now installed in these shops. Gambling, especially with these machines, can quickly become addictive and also can have dire consequences. Not only does addiction lead to further hardship, but in extreme cases it can lead to family breakup, loss of home and living. I have first-hand experience of this. I was married to a compulsive gambler whose life was ruled by the opening times of betting shops and dog-track meetings.

The planning authorities could help if betting shops had a category of their own. This would give greater control to local authorities to be able to limit the number of betting shops and how they are placed out in their areas. Please support.

ENERGY BEST DEALS MOTION 268

268. ENERGY BEST DEALS

Congress says all households should already be on the lowest "best deal" tariff.

Congress also says to the energy suppliers there should only be one and not multiple rates.

EAST DEREHAM BRANCH
London Region

(Carried)

SIS. J. SMITH (London): President and Congress, I move Motion 268 – Best Energy Deals. This motion is the result of watching the tea-time television news. It was announced that Ofgem had told energy companies that all their customers should be made aware of their lowest tariff rate and not be being billed on a much higher multiple-rated tariff as now. One could say that we could shop around and change companies, but that is not to say it is the cheapest tariff. Also it has to be remembered that there are a vast number of the general public who do not have a computer nor have the ability to be computer literate. There are also members of the public who have to rely on others and with their independence cannot do this. This can be any age factor. I say to you, as highlighted by Ofgem, that

the lowest tariff rate automatically should be known to the consumers. Should anyone want a different type of energy tariff, that is fine, but from Ofgem's warning we should not be penalised by the energy companies not offering nor making us aware of the various options, starting with the lowest tariff. All our energy sources can come from one source. Therefore, there should be no need for multiple tariff ratings and heed be given to Ofgem's recommendation. I move and ask you to support this motion.

THE PRESIDENT: Seconder?

BRO. A. McLEAN (London): Congress, I second Motion 268. President, the energy companies have a responsibility to ensure that all households are on the lowest best deal tariff. Although it is acknowledged that some companies now provide, as a matter of course, price comparisons, and information on their own best-deal tariffs. This goes some way towards resolving the present issues. There are, however, some people who consider changing tariffs should be difficult and daunting process. We consider that the Government should introduce measures to ensure that all energy companies provide tariff comparison information on their bills and move customers automatically to their lowest and most competitive tariff or, alternatively, introduce one flat tariff for all. I, therefore, ask Congress to consider these points and support Motion 268. Thank you. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you. Does anyone wish to speak in the debate? *(No response)* Thank you. I call Evelyn Martin from the CEC to speak on Motion 268.

SIS. E. MARTIN (CEC, Public services): Congress, I am speaking on Motion 268 on behalf of the CEC. President, we are supporting Motion 268 with a qualification. Congress, Motion 268 refers to the number of wholesale energy tariffs. These are confusing for everyone except the energy companies. The motion aim is for us all to get a better deal from the energy companies. Everyone is sick and tired of the rising cost of heating their homes, especially during the long, cold winters that we seem to be suffering from lately. Something needs to be done by the Government and Ofgem to help us afford our energy bills. A good start would be for the suppliers to place customer on the cheapest tariff which meets their needs, unless they specifically request otherwise.

On this point the motion is correct and fully supported by the CEC. However, the demand in the motion for only one rate is a problem. The CEC qualification is that having only a single rate will reduce choice for energy consumers. For instance, some people are prepared to pay a little more for a green energy tariff. Others may have their tariffs based on cheap, off-peak usage. Having only one tariff could create an energy market which is even less consumer friendly than now. The CEC believes we need many fewer tariffs but more than one to choose from. That is a better way to help the consumer. Please support Motion 268 with the qualification which I have given. Thank you. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Does London Region accept the qualification? *(Agreed)*

I now put Composite 16 and Motion 268 to the vote. All those in favour, please show? Anyone against?

Composite 16 was CARRIED.

Motion 268 was CARRIED.

ANNOUNCEMENT

THE PRESIDENT: Delegates, before moving on to the next item, I would like to welcome Chris Jansen, the Managing Director of British Gas Services, who is in the Hall together with other senior management members from the company. *(Applause)*

GMB SPECIAL CONGRESS AWARD

THE PRESIDENT: Can I now come to the next delightful part of the proceedings, the GMB Special Congress Award. Congress, we cannot finish the Commercial Services debate without mentioning the great work of our stewards, and I call on Paul Kenny, in particular. Paul.

THE GENERAL SECRETARY: President, Congress, lots of people do the most fantastic things for the members and for the union, and they do it over a long period of time and the truth is we very, very rarely honour them properly. You also find that they very, very rarely ever go about telling all the fantastic things — we are the worst people of all for telling the great things we do. Behind me on the stage are three of the British Gas National Shop Stewards. I have got to know them over the last few years and they are a pretty impressive bunch of trade unionists, I can tell you that.

Ted Pearce, who has worked in London, has been a shop steward I think since the early 1980s and in the late 1990s he became national chair, a position he will hold until August when he stands down.

Ray Tillbrook, who is from Essex, has been active in the union since the early 1980s and becoming Southend shop steward in 1990. In 1997, Ray became a regional shop steward, again before joining the national shop stewards team in 2002. He will retire this month.

Finally, Kevin Lover, who is from the Isle of Wight. We have a little bit of a difficulty because I understand he is a big Chelsea fan! Is that right? Yes, well. Kevin became a shop steward in the late 1970s, has been a national shop steward since the late 1980s, and has served as a national convenor and vice chair to the national team, and has been in situ since the current structure was set up in the mid-1990s. Kevin retired in April.

All three, Congress, have lived through huge changes in the industry, including privatisation and the break-up of the company when Transco was created. They have seen literally hundreds of restructures, reviews, and rounds of redundancies. One of their huge achievements has been keeping open the final salary pension scheme for existing members and the fact that new engineers join a career average pension scheme rather than a DC scheme. This will be a huge benefit to the 200 apprentices who start this year and whose jobs and whose futures rely a lot on the determination of the National Shop Stewards Committee to ensure that apprenticeships stay strong in British Gas. (*Applause*) The National Shop Stewards in British Gas Industrials look after around 8,000 industrial workers and they work with a team supporting nearly 200 other shop stewards. Their communication network is absolutely brilliant. They have a new GMB App that every engineer will have on their Smartphone and it is on display at the British Gas stall outside in the Exhibition Area. British Gas engineers work from home. There was a time many years ago when they met at depots. That all went. They became a splintered workforce. They should, according to all of the prophets of doom, be difficult to organise but, actually, they have a 98% membership density. (*Applause*) I am reliably informed if they ever catch up with the other 2% they will be in the union as well. The National Stewards would be desperately disappointed if they ever got less than a 90% turnout in GMB ballots and I know from my own experience when they were called upon to organise a ballot against the employer who was going to teach us a lesson at the time, if I remember rightly, I saw the shock and horror and look on their face when in fact I think there was a 98% turnout and a 97.9% vote for industrial action. Needless to say, we did not need it and it is funny how it brings people to their senses when they see returns like that. I have to say that organisational arrangement and what follows, that is the real legacy of Ted, Kevin, and Ray, and I would like you to put your hands together, appreciate them for all the work they did, and I will ask Gary Smith perhaps just to top up some of what I have said. (*Applause*)

BRO. G. SMITH (National Secretary): Congress, President, it is a great honour to represent the gas industry. I started my apprenticeship with Scottish Gas back in the early 1980s and it is fantastic now to represent the industry. It is absolutely humbling for me to stand with the three national shop stewards who are retiring today because they are great friends of mine, they are great comrades, and they have been absolutely outstanding GMB activists in the time that I have been National Secretary dealing with British Gas.

Our General Secretary often makes the point that we stand on the shoulders of those who go before us. We should remember about the history of this union, an illiterate gas worker leaves the West Midlands and in the teeth of employer opposition and government hostility he set out to build this mighty and proud union. Ted, Ray, and Kevin, they like nobody else carry that mantle of our founder, Will Thorne, through thick and thin they have been there with the trade union. This industry has been nationalised, the industry has been privatised, the industry has been broken up into British Gas and what was then Transco; through good times and bad they have held our organisation together and I think they deserve enormous credit. This is an industry, if you have to believe what people tell you, given that they are home-based, given all the changes that are going on, it is an industry that should not be organised to the levels that it currently is, or it still is.

We have seen some almighty battles over the past few years and Ted, Kevin, and Ray, have been at the forefront of them. I do not have time to go into all of them, Mary, but a few years ago new management regime comes in, and absolutely did not treat us with the respect we deserved, first time Paul Kenny met them he said they were contemptuous of us. Within a few months followed up by industrial action ballot they knew that we were in business and that was delivered on the back of the work of the shop stewards and the 200 other British Gas reps, many of whom are sitting here in the audience today. *(Applause)*

British Gas have given us some sponsorship for the Congress this year, I am delighted to say that, I am grateful for the sponsorship, they have the stall, many of the shop stewards are in attendance, but believe me, they are not in here because we tugged the forelock and because we showed fear, they are here out of respect and, above all, respect for the work of Ray, Kevin, and Ted. It has been a great, great privilege and a great honour to work with them. Thanks very much, guys. Thank you, Mary. *(Applause)*

(Presentation of Award amid applause)

BRO. T. PEARCE: Congress, this is very humbling, actually. I was not expecting to say anything and the lads sitting up the top there know that I generally don't do anything like this unless I am very well prepared for it. Paul Kenny said earlier that it is actually a privilege to be a shop steward. It is a privilege. For me it has been a real privilege to serve on the national team and to deliver what I consider to be excellent terms and conditions for all our members. But I could not have done it as chair if I had not had support of the 21 regional stewards that are sitting up there, and Kevin and Ray standing behind me. So, what I would like to say is thanks to all the national officers that we have dealt with as well because we could not have delivered a lot if we hadn't got a strong union behind us. I would like to say thanks to Paul Kenny as well. Thank you very much, Congress. As you see, I am quite emotional about this but thank you very much. *(Applause)*

BRO. R. TILLBROOK: Congress, can I just say thank you very, very much for this. When I started all those years ago as a trade union rep I never ever thought that I would be standing in front of the best union and all its members. I have to say I have been very, very proud and honoured to represent those members and this great union of ours. Thank you very much. *(Applause)*

BRO. K. LOVER: Thanks, Congress. As usual with Gary, he gave us about 10 minutes' notice that we would have something to say. I haven't got a lot to say but if I cast my mind back to when I became a steward, back in the early 1980s, young, brash, and I thought three months and I'll change this company, six months and I'll change the world. Well, it don't quite work that way but I adopted a little thought in my head which I have kept with me all the way through my time as a steward up till now, and that is, do the best that I can for the people that elected me, and if you do that you ain't going to go far wrong. Thank you. (*Applause*)

(*Standing ovation for the three stewards*)

THE PRESIDENT: Congress, thank you and thanks to the stewards up there who are extremely proud. I have just told them my boiler is broken in London, would they go down and fix it, but they were having none of that!

Can we now move to the next part of the agenda, composite 4, Collective Redundancy Rights, to be moved by London, seconded by Midland. Then I will call 110, Redundancy Consultation Period, moved by London, seconded by London, then composite 5, Statutory Recognition, moved by Midland and seconded by Midland, and 119, TUPE – In Simple Language, Midland Region.

**EMPLOYMENT POLICY: RIGHTS AT WORK
COLLECTIVE REDUNDANCY RIGHTS
COMPOSITE 4**

C4. Covering Motions:

108. WORKERS RIGHTS (*London Region*)

109. 90 DAYS CONSULTATION (*Midland and East Coast Region*)

COLLECTIVE REDUNDANCY RIGHTS

This Congress deplores this Government's attitude to workers by reducing the consultation periods for notice of redundancies and bribery by getting employees to take shares and lose further rights.

This Congress calls on the CEC to campaign to restore the 90 days ruling on consultation in redundancy situations.

(*Carried*)

BRO. M. PRESHAW (London): In 1976 I left school and watched my father and other people fight for normal working rights, the rights of a proper job. Now I am standing up here today and I am going to talk to you about the right of redundancy. What happened to your right for work, proper work? These greedy people in government are reducing the amount of time that you are consulted about redundancy. They are making it easier for the companies now to exit the UK with their manufacturing jobs and everything else, easier and quicker. I will ask Congress to force the Government to extend the consultation, make it proper consultation in ways of saving our jobs instead of selling our jobs. Your 90 days is notice, it is not consultation. You get nothing for training. It is just, "Here's a few quid, there's your notice," and they use a bribe now, behaviour money; if you don't do any industrial action now, you get an extra three months' redundancy. Where are the jobs to follow? They are crucifying communities with redundancy. Please extend it, do not shorten it. That is all I really have to say because I am going to start getting emotional with the closure of our manufacturing industry that has just been sold off for a few quid and as fast as possible. Thanks very much. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thanks, Mick. Midland?

BRO. S. ALLINSON (Midland & East Coast): President, Congress, and visitors, we call upon the CEC to vigorously campaign to restore the 90-day ruling on consultation for collective redundancies. Since April 2013, companies considering laying off a hundred or more employees have to take a minimum of 45 days consultation period during which they are expected to talk to the unions and staff before deciding how many and which jobs will be lost. Under the old rules on collective redundancy this minimum period was 90 days. These changes come as part of this ConDem Government's wide review on employment law. So, what do we need this time for? The 90 days should be used to hear the reasons for any redundancies, hear the numbers and different types of employee affected, hear why individuals are being provisionally selected, hear how the selection process will be conducted, hear the time scales for the process, hear the redundancy payment calculations, consult on how the redundancies can be avoided and mitigate the impact, and consult on any options for alternative work, all relevant stages that need thorough discussion and not just one-way dictating.

Having been through this process recently I can tell you that 90 days does not seem long enough. I fully understand the members' calls of, "Why is it taking so long. I just want it over," calls that I record daily but I stand firm knowing that without thorough consultation these calls may be changed to cries of, "Why aren't we getting any training", or, "How come it's only government minimum on my package?" We must have a concerted effort to challenge this Government on our workers' rights. The TUC recognises that these attacks are just another way this Government can make it easier to sack people, another strand of social engineering. I second. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thanks very much. Well done. Motion 110, London to move.

REDUNDANCY CONSULTATION PERIOD TO BE HALVED TO 45 DAYS IN THE SECURITY SECTOR
MOTION 110

110. REDUNDANCY CONSULTATION PERIOD TO BE HALVED TO 45 DAYS IN THE SECURITY SECTOR

Congress over the last 2 years Officers and Branch Secretaries have attended more redundancy consultation meetings with Security Officers in our Security industry due to Government cuts. We are accusing the Government of making it easier to sack people after a Minister announced that the period before large-scale redundancies can take place is to be cut from 90 to 45 days.

Reducing the consultation period gives unions less time to work with employers to find ways to save jobs. Removing redundancy rights from fixed-term contract staff would create more jobs and financial insecurity for temporary staff and reduce their chances of redeployment.

Congress, what we should not forget, the plans meant trade unions would no longer have the legal right to be consulted about widespread redundancies of staff who happen to be on fixed-term contracts- many with long years of service.

The GMB London Security branch calls on GMB that the need to consult unions has made an important contribution to that, and also given staff, many of whom will have had years of loyal service, time to think through their options.

GMB (LONDON) SECURITY BRANCH
London Region

(Carried)

BRO. V. WEST (London): Congress, let's be under no illusion about the direction that this Tory-led government wants to travel in, a direction that attacks trade union rights, and erodes legal protection for our members. Britain already has one of the weakest employment legislative frameworks in Western Europe but the Tories are not content with that dubious badge.

Since coming back to power in 2010 they have slowly but surely going back on employment rights, the right to claim at employment tribunals raised from one year to two years, and now the statutory notice and consultation period for large scale redundancies over 100 halved from 90 days to 45 days, coupled with workers on fixed term contracts having their rights totally removed. This erosion of employment rights is an attack on every one of our members in industries such as the security industry, which rely on high numbers of temporary fixed-term staff or even permanent staff have to move from job to job such as the Olympics or other large scale but short-term events, the erosion of statutory consultation rights will leave thousands of workers with increased job insecurity and little or no prospect of them or their trade union representatives having enough time to identify suitable alternative jobs to avoid redundancies.

The Tories continue to crow about cutting red tape but what they really mean is a charter to cut workers' rights and job security, a charter that also cuts back on health and safety in the name of reducing red tape, a charter that cuts back on employment rights to appease their friends in big business, in other words, a sackers' charter.

Let's go back from this Congress to redouble our efforts to defend employment rights but let us also say to the Labour Party, loud and clear, repealing this pernicious legislation must be central to the next manifesto and not reneged upon once you get back into power. I move. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Vaughan. Secunder?

BRO. C. WHEATLEY (London): First-time speaker. *(Applause)* Handing tax breaks to millionaires this Tory-led government has announced policy after policy designed to make it easier and quicker to throw ordinary people out of work and then ministers seek to blame them for being unemployed. Reducing the consultation period gave unions less time to work with employers to find ways to save jobs and under these proposals staff facing redundancy could be left with less of a pay-off as a longer consultation period often leads to improved pay-offs.

The London Security Branch calls on the GMB, the need to consult unions has made an important contribution to that and also given staff, many of whom will have had years of loyal service, time to think through their options. Congress, please support this motion. *(Applause)*

STATUTORY RECOGNITION PROCEDURE COMPOSITE 5

C5. Covering Motions:

116. CAMPAIGN FOR THE REDUCTION IN STATUTORY RECOGNITION PERCENTAGE RATE WHEN BALLOTING ELIGIBLE WORKERS *(Midland and East Coast Region)*
117. CAMPAIGN TO REMOVE/REDUCE WAITING PERIOD IF RECOGNITION PROCEDURE FAILS AT FIRST ATTEMPT *(Midland and East Coast Region)*

STATUTORY RECOGNITION PROCEDURE

This Congress notes the current 40% requirement in favour of recognition, regardless of whether the union has the majority of voters in favour of recognition, is set far too high and is not "reasonable in all circumstances". This Congress notes that currently a three year period must elapse before a union can re-apply for recognition if a previous attempt has failed. This needs to be removed or considerably reduced.

(Carried)

SIS. C. MASON (Midland & East Coast): President, Congress, this composite motion is dealing with two parts of the statutory recognition procedure. This is usually the last option available when trade

unions and employers cannot reach an agreement. As a workplace rep I basically knew nothing on this process. The fact is workplace reps usually only get established after the recognition process has been won. My limited knowledge was the fact unions are to run a ballot and win, which seemed pretty reasonable to me. It was not until my interest in employment law found me on a training course which opened my eyes to how unreasonable the statutory recognition process was.

The first time I was told trade unions could win the ballot and still not win recognition because of the extra percentage requirement I thought my tutor was joking. I could not believe in a democratic society that after winning by a majority vote that it was not enough. I found proof on the Central Arbitration Committee website, on 4th September 2012 a trade union applied for recognition. There were 72 eligible voters, 25 of them voted yes to a union, five voted no, the rest chose not to vote which gave 37.5% in favour of recognition, result recognition denied. The minimum percentage requirement is 40%. It seems the only purpose this percentage requirement serves is to make it more difficult for unions to secure recognition, literally trade unions are being set up to fail with unrealistically high requirements.

That setting someone up to fail rang a bell, I knew I had heard it before somewhere, and then the penny dropped, I remembered it is in most bullying and harassment policies. This does not end there. Having won a majority but lost because of this ridiculous percentage rate, the trade union is then banned for three years. Where is the justification in that? If you can make sense of this, then please, please, explain it to me.

Physical assault, a footballer bites another player, 10-game ban; drunk driving, criminal offence, perhaps maybe what, 12-month ban; my god, trade union application to defend workers' rights, outrageous, compulsory 3-year ban. Someone really needs to be told applying for recognition is not a criminal offence. *(Applause)*

These are good questions for you to take away with you and ask at your next political meeting because this piece of legislation was not put there by the Conservatives, it was introduced in the year 2000 by the Labour Party. That is right, the same Labour Party we heard from yesterday, Mr. Miliband and Mr. Burnham both commented on the strength and force of our Movement when we work and build together. A lot is said about repealing the Conservatives anti-union laws. Well, Congress, I will settle for the Labour Party just repealing their own anti-union legislation - *(applause)* - and learn that building and working together means give and take, not just take, take, take.

Congress, do not just support this motion today, I am asking for more than that, please take it back to your members and talk about it; share your knowledge. Congress, I move. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Well done, Cathy. Secunder?

BRO. B. HELEY (Midland & East Coast): Congress, you have heard my colleague, what is right and just about the present legislation when balloting for recognition. If the same rules applied to our politicians that apply to our ballots, i.e. they need a 40% majority, then, quite literally, we would not have the ConDems in power as they only had 36% at the last election. In fact, they would not have many elected politicians of any party sitting in the Palace of Westminster, and the town halls would also look a bit bare.

Politicians all work on the system of first past the post wins, no matter what the turnout. If one man and his dog are the only ones that cast a vote at a political election, then their candidate wins. It does not matter that 99.9% of the electorate did not turn out. It does not matter, so why do we have this 40% of those eligible to vote? It is not fair. There should not be any bar on it, yet if we do not get 40% we are barred for three years. If one of the party favourites does not win the seat they parachute

in a by-election. They are not ruled out for three years because they failed to get elected so why one rule for them and one for us? There should be one fair system that applies to all, be it national or local.

Our members are being hung out to dry in some anti-union establishments because of the current legislation. Let's get our heads together and fight for change. We talked about change yesterday, let's do it. We are usually up for a fight, with Paul leading, so let's seek justice and equality, and let's get our teeth into this one. Congress, please support this motion. I second. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Well done. Motion 119, In Simple Language.

TUPE – IN SIMPLE LANGUAGE MOTION 119

119. TUPE – IN SIMPLE LANGUAGE

This Congress calls upon the GMB to provide a simple and up to date and concise electronic understanding, on our National and Regional websites, of the extremely difficult Transfer of Undertakings Legislation.

Further to engage with government in the simplification of the subject which, since 1981 has tied even solicitors in knots!

SCUNTHORPE DISTRICT & APEX BRANCH
Midland and East Coast Region

(Referred)

BRO. D. LASCELLES (Midland & East Coast): President, I believe it was back in the 1990s that under your guidance at the Spa Hall at Scarborough I first approached John Hendy QC with a question on behalf of GMB members in the Midland and East Coast Region confused by the TUPE legislation. More recently, and for the benefit of anyone new to Congress who does not know or has not already heard about it this week, this is not a reference to my personal needs for a hairpiece, although they do seem to be coming on, but rather the difficulty that GMB members have in understanding what is meant by the Transfer of Undertakings Protection for Employees Regulations, abbreviated to TUPE, and where it leads to when you are affected by it.

I just want to say that it was just before Christmas this last year that I got called as a Branch Secretary on Scunthorpe Steelworks to one of the slightly outsourced parts of Tata Steel, to a director who in recent days had spent something like £2,000, along with his HR business consultant, to get advice on what was about to become and has indeed now become a transfer of undertakings. He told me, sat in his office just himself and myself, “£2,000 and I came out from an office in Leeds even more confused than when I went in.” So, there you go.

Congress believes, then, that the Government is keen to simplify so some success may be possible even when our own party is not in power but not, I hope, at the expense of reduced rights or stature for GMB members. The blank expressions on the faces of members at the mercy of the Transfer of Undertakings Regulations seen by me personally over the years prompts this motion for an up-to-date web-based reference which the Midland and East Coast Region, I can say in closing, is happy to refer with this motion. Thank you, Congress. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you very much, David. Secunder?

BRO. M. RALSTON (Midland & East Coast Region): Madam President, Congress, if TUPE was a language it would speak Coalition, not sure what it is there for, designed to confuse, and not fit for purpose. When I am dealing with TUPE issues I find it to be over-complicated and confusing. My technique is to project confidence knowing that managers and head teachers know less about TUPE than I do, bluffing when I am unsure. There must be an alternative. After attending a fringe meeting

on TUPE in 2011 and watching solicitors struggle to answer questions from members, I thought, “What chance do I have?” The motion calls for clear guidance and for the GMB to engage with the Government. Support this motion. I second. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you very much, Matt. Is there anybody who wishes to come in on the debate? No? Okay, can I call Brian Farr, from the CEC, on composite 5 and motion 119?

BRO. B. FARR (CEC, Manufacturing): Congress, the CEC asks you to support composite 5 with a qualification and to refer motion 119.

On composite motion 5, the qualification is that the GMB policy calls for a simple majority of those voting in a ballot to be sufficient to secure an award of recognition by the Central Arbitration Committee. GMB policy also calls for no time bar to apply to later applications being made. Congress, under present CAC rules to win recognition in a ballot a union has to have both the support of those voting and at least 40% of the workers in the bargaining unit. GMB has long argued that this is undemocratic and invites the employer to intimidate workers into not voting. In addition, a union cannot reapply for recognition, as you have just already heard, for three years if the application is unsuccessful. Again, this invites aggressive conduct by the employer to deny workers effective representation.

GMB is generally supportive of the statutory procedures and has used it to its advantage since it was introduced 13 years ago. However, there are shortcomings in the procedure such as those rightly highlighted in the composite. The design of the recognition procedure places few restrictions on employer advantage in the workplace and this must be addressed by a future Labour government.

On motion 119, the CEC is asking you to refer the motion to allow the union to continue to develop guidance on this difficult subject, TUPE. GMB already works with the Labour Research Department, and others, with the regional solicitors to produce guidance in understandable language, which is not an easy task. Some of that guidance is technical and would best be kept off the website. In addition, engaging with this Coalition Government on simplification of TUPE is likely to be very difficult since their approach to simplification is to remove it. It is a simple underlying objective of the European Acquired Rights Directive which has been lost, the safeguarding of employees’ rights when a business transfer takes place.

Congress, the CEC asks you to support composite 5 with the qualification that I have outlined and to refer motion 119. Thank you. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Brian. Does Midland and East Coast Region accept the qualification? (*Agreed*) Thank you very much. Does Midland accept reference? (*Agreed*) Okay, thank you. Can I now move to the vote on composite 4, 110, and composite 5? All those in favour please show? Thank you. Conference, as you just heard, Midland accept reference, agreed? (*Agreed*) Thank you.

Composite 4 was CARRIED.

Motion 110 was CARRIED.

Composite 5 was CARRIED.

Motion 119 was REFERRED.

THE PRESIDENT: We now move to the next part of our agenda, and I will be calling 314, London, 315, Northern, 316, Northern, 317, London, 318, London, and 319, Birmingham, the movers and seconders.

**INTERNATIONAL
TRADE UNION FRIENDS OF ISRAEL/PALESTINE SOLIDARITY
MOTION 314**

314. TRADE UNION FRIENDS OF ISRAEL /PALESTINE SOLIDARITY

This Congress unashamedly notes that this Union is affiliated to the Palestine Solidarity Campaign.

Congress also notes that this Union is not affiliated to the Trade Union Friends of Israel.

Congress notes our 2011 decision that “this Union should take a lead in driving forward the disinvestment and boycott initiatives” of “companies who profit from illegal settlements, the Occupation and the construction of the wall”.

Congress notes that a major priority of Trade Union Friends of Israel is to “fight the boycott” and thus to campaign against the policy of this Union.

Congress determines that GMB members should not receive funding or otherwise be facilitated to either participate in TUFI sponsored visits to Israel or speak to TUFI platforms.

Congress believes that our Union should recognise and honour its affiliation to the Palestine Solidarity Campaign by sending a representative on the next available PSC organised delegation to the Palestinian territories.

NORTH WEST LONDON BRANCH
London Region

(Carried)

SIS. J. HUNT (London): The point of this resolution is not to rehash the arguments surrounding the politics of Palestine and Israel. We are fully aware the GMB is affiliated and fully supports the Palestinian Solidarity Campaign and that in Congress 2011 made the following decision: “This union should take a lead in driving forward the disinvestment and boycotting of companies who profit from illegal settlements, the Occupation, and the construction of the wall.”

That position, I believe, is a good and proper one that is in line with not only the sentiment of the British Trades Union Movement but also of the International Trades Union Movement. This motion therefore seeks to ensure that the union continues to commit its support to the Palestinian Solidarity Group by sending a GMB rep on an organised delegation to the Palestinian territories. The motion also notes that the GMB is not affiliated to the Trade Union Friends of Israel and herein lies the contradictory position which this motion seeks to address.

As a priority for the Trade Union Friends of Israel is to fight the boycott, this stands in complete contradiction to the position of the Palestinian General Federation of Trade Unions who operate under very, very difficult circumstances, under conditions of military occupation, with checkpoint barriers, and the wall, and who have called for international support for the boycott. The Palestinian General Federation of Trade Unions have made protestation that they have been misrepresented by the Trade Union Friends of Israel. The General Secretary has specifically objected that the Trade Union Friends of Israel portray the relationship between the Palestinian General Federation of Trade Unions and their Israeli counterparts as a sign of normalisation between the Palestinian and Israeli trade union movements. He also reaffirmed at that point their call for a boycott.

Therefore, this motion states the GMB should not receive funding that would otherwise be endorsed by participating in the Trade Union Friends of Israel sponsored visits to Israel or speak to their platforms; indeed, the Trade Union Friends of Israel literature and websites make great play with this and publicly refer to the union delegation visits, which has included reference to GMB representation.

Congress, this is an intolerable contradiction and I am genuinely perplexed why the CEC is opposing this motion which seeks to restate policy and disassociate the GMB from an organisation that we are not affiliated to and stands in opposition to our stated policy on Palestine. Surely it would be a better idea for unions internationally to look to the growing organisations within Israel who support the boycott. Just finally, and this is somebody I would not normally quote, the recently retired TUC General Secretary, Brendan Barber, made a statement in January 2012: “The Israeli settlements are illegal under international law. The TUC does support a boycott of goods from Israeli settlements because these are illegal, make life a misery for Palestinians, and they are ruining any chance of peace.” Please, Congress, support motion 314. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you. Secunder?

BRO. D. FAITH (London): President, Congress, the Trade Union Friends of Israel claim that they are in the business of promoting unity between the Israeli union, Histadrut, and the Palestinian union, PGFTU. This is a bogus claim. In a speech to a British trade union delegation the Palestinian trade union leader, Sae’d, specifically condemned the TUFU in trying to portray the relationship between the union and Histadrut as a sign of normalisation between the Palestinian and Israel trade union movements. He accused them of dishonest behaviour. He confirmed that the relationship is one of unequals and this is the point, Congress, the CEC is asking you to oppose this resolution on the grounds of even-handedness, they are both as bad as each other, or we should support both sides, etc, etc. We should never take an even-handed approach to injustice or oppression. We did not take an even-handed approach to apartheid, we took sides. We do not take an even-handed approach to blacklisting, we take sides. So, please, Congress, do not be fooled by TUFU, take the side of those fighting injustice and support this motion. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Danny. Motion 315, Arab Spring.

ARAB SPRING MOTION 315

315. ARAB SPRING

This Congress applauds the citizens of those countries in the Middle East who are campaigning to overthrow dictatorship in this region, and replace with democratic elected Governments.

Congress also recognises the part that women are playing in this process and that their contribution should be recognised with a view to advancing equality for women in a democratic society and not revert back to previous suppressing regimes.

NORTHUMBRIA UNIVERSITY AND GENERAL BRANCH
Northern Region

(Carried)

SIS. A. STEWART (Northern): Congress, the uprising against regimes that have kept people down for decades has gathered considerable pace in the last couple of years. The way that women have been at the forefront of change in some of the countries in the Middle East reflects the years of misery that dictators subjected their people to and it needs to be said, Congress, that many of those dictators have been, and still are, propped up by Western governments. It seems that countries only offer their support to citizens trying to change their countries from within if there is something in it for them.

Congress, look at any of the democratic movements for change in the so-called Arab Spring and you will see in many cases that women are leading the way with things we take for granted, the right to education, the right to vote, the right to stand for office, and the right to equality. Congress, the last

thing these countries need, so they tell us, is to replace one dictatorial regime with another and it needs to be said loudly that the dictators running the show in these regimes are men, and in some cases pursuing a manmade perversion of the religions that they profess to follow. No different to the problems Western religions have faced down the centuries, a manmade version of a male-dominated religion, nothing to do with the basic principles behind them.

Congress, tens of thousands of innocent people have been killed in the uprising so far. We cannot turn our back on these countries, what we should be doing is promoting our international equality agenda, promoting our principles that are part of the equality work streams so that groups such as women are not left out of any democratic move for change. I move. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Well done. Secunder?

SIS. E. STOBART (Northern): Congress, the misery heaped on families across the countries caught up in the Arab Spring is heartbreaking. The images on our TVs every day for the last couple of years of death, bloodshed, and misery, of the innocent people being injured, maimed, and killed, makes you want to shout and scream for the world to do something about it. The dictators who have ruled with an iron fist and an iron grip in some cases have gone but many, however, still remain. Congress, in supporting this motion, I think it is vital that the GMB campaigns on an international basis to protect the rights of those that are being bullied and intimidated.

In the case of the motion, it is scandalous that women have been at the forefront of change for the better of themselves and their families but yet in some cases they are not getting the support they deserve. If we want to be able to hold our heads up high as a country and aspire to have ethical foreign policy we must walk the talk. Our country should be at the forefront of promoting genuine equality and, Congress, so must we as the GMB. Please support. I second. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Well done. Motion 316, Syria.

SYRIA MOTION 316

316. SYRIA

This Congress calls on the Coalition Government to help end the suffering of innocent people in Syria and that the best possible means of ensuring a sustainable future for the region is a peaceful and negotiated settlement.

CARLISLE CITY LA BRANCH
Northern Region

(Carried)

BRO. M. SISTERSON (Northern): Congress, the uprisings that have taken place across the Middle East have been going on now for well over two years, a response to dictatorships, sufferings, and in many cases brutality. Thousands of innocent people have died and many of them children. Reports from Syria over the last few months have mentioned that children are being given guns to fight with. Children as well as women and other innocent civilians are being used as human shields by both sides. Congress, the suffering and maiming, the injuries, the deaths of innocent people, and the one million refugees from a once great country will cast a shadow over the region for a generation. Most of the dispute in Syria is down to two things: one, a dictatorship of the president and his ruling clan; the other is the poverty that the people of Syria have been subjected to.

Congress, the brutal civil war has to stop. The world has watched and waited to see what is happening, to see which side will claim victory. There will be no winners in this conflict, not in Syria, not in the Middle East, not in the world. What is required is a negotiated peace, not a peace that is just a pause

for breath for both sides to get more arms and start again but a genuine negotiated peace, a peace that includes a roadmap that puts Syria onto a sustainable footing, a peace that deals with the two problems I have mentioned, dictatorship and poverty. Congress, we have had enough death and destruction over the last 10 years in the Middle East. We need to have a political solution and one that is done thoroughly with diplomacy. I urge your support. I move. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Mark. Secunder?

BRO. C. TAYLOR (Northern): Congress, the world has stood back from Syria for far too long, with at least 70,000 killed, hundreds of thousands injured, and a million refugees fleeing across the border; that is the scale of two-and-a-half years of unrest and civil war in one of the key countries in the region. The shelled civilian areas now show that much of Syria is in ruins. Parts of the country are in a desolate state. The cost of putting the country right after the civil war is eventually over will be enormous. Congress, the world must show that it has the stomach for ending this conflict. The Arab Spring has led to an uprising in ordinary people taking power into their own hands, and who would argue with that. However, what we have in Syria is a no-win situation; both sides are fighting each other to a stalemate. The only people who are losing out are the innocent men, women, and children of Syria. Other countries bordering Syria are now seeing a massive influx of people who are fleeing for their lives and that is only leading to resentment and tension across the region.

Congress, it is important that the United Nations makes a real and sustained effort at a negotiated settlement. The British Government should be helping with that process to ensure that Syria and the region can try and end the suffering and live in some kind of peace. I second. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Well done, Colin. Motion 317, Justice for Colombia.

JUSTICE FOR COLOMBIA MOTION 317

317. JUSTICE FOR COLOMBIA

Congress, the killings of trade unionists have continued in Colombia, with at least 17 colleagues assassinated in 2012. Our colleagues also face imprisonment, death threats, false accusations and are often forced to flee their homes, simply for speaking out in defence of trade union and human rights. The majority of these crimes are carried out by state forces and paramilitary groups, and in 95% of cases, no-one is brought to justice. Congress condemns the fact that despite this situation the European Parliament recently voted to approve an EU Colombia Free Trade Agreement.

An armed conflict has raged for more than 50 years in Colombia, mired with intense political persecution and causing severe humanitarian conflict; over 5 million Colombians are currently displaced from their homes as a result of violence, the majority of them women and children. Despite the opening of peace talks between the Government and the FARC Guerrilla group in November 2012, the Government refuses to agree to a bilateral ceasefire, and hostilities, including indiscriminate bombings and open combat, continue in civilian areas. The attacks on civil society activists have increased in recent months, with members of Patriotic March, a civil society opposition movement for peace and social justice which many unions are involved in, among those most persecuted.

Those who speak out against this situation are targeted, such as Lilianny Obando, Colombian Trade Unionist and single mother, imprisoned for more than 42 months without being convicted of any crime. Lilianny was released in March 2012 following a JFC Campaign. However Activists continue to be detained on a massive scale, with over 7000 political prisoners currently held in Colombian jails. In December 2012, David Ravelo, Colombian Human Rights defender who worked closely with the USO oil workers union was convicted to 18 years in prison.

The Colombian Trade Union Movement and other civil society representatives, including Colombians for Peace, have made it clear that social inequality – the root cause of the conflict – must be addressed in order to put an end to the war, and that civil society must play a role in the process.

Congress congratulates Justice for Colombia's (JFC) successful work in supporting Colombian Trade Unions and civil society – work that the Colombian Trade Union Confederation (CUT) leadership has described as "crucial to the survival of many leaders". Conference therefore calls on GMB and all affiliates to:

1. To support the Justice for Colombia Peace Campaign
2. To continue to oppose the EU- Colombia FTA
3. To continue to provide financial and political support for Justice for Colombia
4. To write to all branches, encouraging them to affiliate to Justice for Colombia.

NORTH WEST LONDON BRANCH
London Region

(Carried)

BRO. R. POLE (London): Comrades, the GMB can be justifiably proud of its support for Justice for Colombia and its international work throughout the region. I am sure that many of you here can vividly recall from past congresses the moving and heartbreaking accounts from trade unionists from Colombia of the very real dangers they face on a daily basis, torture, imprisonment, death threats, homes destroyed, and the very, very real possibility of being murdered simply for being what we all are, trade union activists and defenders of human rights: 235 murdered between January 2007 and December 2012, all assassinated as a result of their trade union activity with 90% of the murderers not being brought to justice.

Since this resolution was submitted there has been a breakthrough in peace talks in Colombia which has given hope of land reform, with the joint statement being issued from FARC and the Colombian government. However, the situation is still delicate and negotiations still ongoing. It is still one of the most dangerous places in the world for trade unions. This resolution highlights other atrocities committed against those that have spoken out. Social inequality has to be addressed, as has the question of 7,000 political prisoners rotting in Colombian jails. Therefore, our continued support remains crucial. I would encourage you all to visit the stall here, sign up with your support, and arrange for a speaker from Justice for Colombia to attend a branch meeting, as our branch has done. By passing this resolution we would ask GMB to continue its support for Justice for Colombia, continue to oppose the EU Colombia Free Trade Agreement, to continue to provide financial and political support and to write to all branches encouraging them to affiliate to Justice for Colombia. These are all simple political steps that will continue to provide real solidarity for our brothers and sisters and enhance our union's position as a champion union campaigning for basic, decent, civil, human, trade union rights. Please pass this resolution unanimously. I move. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Dick. Secunder?

BRO. H. SMITH (London): Attacks on civil society activists have increased in recent months with members of patriotic marches and civil society opposition movement for peace and social justice, which many unions are involved in, are among the most persecuted. Those who speak out against this situation are targeted such as Liliana Bando, a Colombian trade unionist and a single mother. The Colombian trade union movement and other civil society representatives, including the Colombian peace movement, are clear that social inequality is the root cause of the conflicts that must be addressed in order to end these wars and that civil society must play a role in the process. I also believe there are more direct causes. A cash-crop Colombia is remarkably rich in natural resources, and exports petroleum. BP is the second largest foreign investor in the country. Coal, Colombia has the largest open-cast mine in the world. Emeralds, over half of the world's emeralds are Colombian.

Nickel, gold, copper, iron ore, natural resources, gas, agriculture in which 25% of the workforce is employed is also crucial to the economy, and the country exports large quantities of bananas, sugar cane, palm oil, and cut flowers, among other products. Colombia and other South American countries that are encompassed in this situation need a radical change of government. I refer to this Simon Bolivar manifesto which emphasises that these countries have the right for changes to take place and I emphasis the terminology, *Viva Siempre Colombia*. Thank you. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Henley. Motion 318, Mali, to be moved by London Region.

MALI
MOTION 318

318. MALI

Congress rejects David Cameron's reasons given for the sending of troops into Mali, claiming "they will not be on frontline duties, but used to train the Mali Army".

In Vietnam the USA started as Advisors to the South Vietnam Army, and ended with a full all, out war which cost the lives of over 68,000 American troops and a further 500,000 Vietnamese people.

We went to war in Iraq on the basis of a lie, our Tony Blair took this country to war on the basis of a falsehood, we cannot allow that to happen again.

This country along with a number of countries have been fighting in Afghanistan for the past 10 years, not only have over 400 British troops lost their lives, but thousands of troops have been left scarred by their experiences, and badly injured and thousands of Afghanistan people have been killed or injured by the war, to what end?

When will the British Government learn we cannot be the world's policemen, we need to learn our place in the world, and not think to bomb and the bullet solve the world's problems.

As trade unionists we know well that peace comes best around a table when we sit down and resolve our differences, our politicians have a lot to learn. We must stay out of Mali.

EDMONTON/ENFIELD BRANCH
London Region

(Carried)

BRO. H. MEHMET (London): Congress, recent events have overtaken this motion and this issue may not be so important at this time but we should remember the cost, not only the death but the destruction if we allow our governments to back illegal wars or support rotten regimes. The basis of going to war in Iraq was a lie and that fact will hound Tony Blair for many years. The war has left Iraq's people and their country devastated. The war in Afghanistan, according to *The Guardian* newspaper, has cost at least £37bn, including £2,000 per family in Britain. How many in this interval have to die through missile or drone attacks. Then there is the cost in troop casualties, the damaged men and women whose lives will never be the same. When will the British Government and all the parties learn we cannot be the policemen of the world? We should stay out of Mali, stay out of any involvement in Syria, and let's have the peace talks before we have the war. The GMB stands for two basic principles, peace and socialism. Please support the motion. I move. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you very much. Seconder?

BRO. J. OSBORNE (London): Just before I second the motion can I quickly say Happy Birthday to Angela from the North West and Irish Region. (*Applause*) On 29th January 2013, David Cameron announced that he would be sending around 350 troops to support the French operation in Mali, which

means he has some explaining to do. Two weeks prior to that he promised there would be no British troops on the ground in Mali. The week before that Cameron promised Britain he would only send tens, not hundreds of troops to help in the fight. Now the number is growing as is Europe's role in the Western African conflict. Out of the 350 military personnel being sent to Mali, up to 40 will train soldiers in Mali, and 200 British soldiers are to be sent to neighbouring African countries to assist in the training of the Army. Here we go again. Does it sound familiar? We have been here before some ten years ago when Tony Blair said we were just going to Afghanistan to help in the fight when what he really meant was we are going to war with Iraq and Afghanistan. The British public are wary and weary after Iraq and Afghanistan and most people are saying, "Oh, no, not again." I do not believe Cameron's promises, this is nothing more than a mission creep to send our troops to yet another war. If he thinks that he will be getting public support for this intervention he is out of his tiny little mind. If our troops are forced into a combat role, the blood will be on Cameron's hands. His pledge of 350 troops comes with a promise that they are there for military support, not combat, but the Mali Islamic extremists will not see it that way and, let's be honest, neither will the British public.

As the motion states, we have been at war for the past 10 years in Afghanistan, many of our servicemen and women have lost their lives or have been badly injured causing a dramatic change in their lives and in the lives of their family too. In Afghanistan many innocent men, women, and children have also lost their lives and loved ones to the conflict. We should not and must not let this happen. On Wednesday 22nd May, when 25-year old drummer, Lee Rigby, lost his life on the streets of Britain in the name of hatred, leaving behind a two-year old son and grief stricken family, what did Cameron do, he went on holiday to Ibiza. Congress, I second. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Jamie. I didn't mind him going to Spain, it was coming back I was worried about! (*Laughter*) Motion 319 to be moved by Birmingham.

CONTROLS ON FOREIGN AID MOTION 319

319. CONTROLS ON FOREIGN AID

This Congress calls on the GMB to put pressure on the UK Government to have a rigorous look at the way the Tax payers money is given away in foreign aid. Furthermore we have to be more selective in ensuring who aid is given to and how we distribute it to ensure it reaches its intended targets and not into the back pockets of other Governments corrupt Ministers.

We also have to remember that under this Government we will have growing numbers of homeless and over 3.6 million children in this country living in poverty. It may be that some of the £12.7 million given away overseas may be better spent looking after our own needy and vulnerable.

B10 BANBURY BRANCH
Birmingham & West Midlands Region

(*Carried*)

BRO. D. TUBB (Birmingham & West Midlands): The people of Britain are well known for being generous. We have *Red Nose Day* and *Children in Need* that raise money for aid but this prime minister has doubled the amount we give in foreign aid and nobody seems to check where the aid is going. Let me give you some examples: £300m to India who have their own space programme; Nigeria, and other countries who say they do not want our money, they do not need it; then there is Uganda, we sent £10m in aid only for it to go missing and when it was found it was in the bank account of the prime minister of Uganda.

In this country we have people who cannot pay their bills, the homeless, pensioners, and worst of all, children living in poverty. Two months ago this Government said it would not get anywhere near its

target for child poverty. Recently, it was reported that over half a million in Britain have to use free food banks because they cannot afford food, and the numbers are increasing week by week. So let's start being more selective as to who we give aid to and then use the money saved to help the people in this country and, remember, it is our taxes they are giving away. As the saying goes, *Charity begins at home*. I move. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Dave. Secunder? Secunder? Formally? Thank you.

Motion 319 was formally seconded.

THE PRESIDENT: While I am calling Margaret Gregg to reply, does anyone wish to come in on the debate?

SIS. H. SMITH (Southern): I want to oppose motion 319. We know that aid does not always go where we would like it to go and there are reports of government corruption and who is holding that money, but if motion 319 had just been left at the first paragraph then it would have been fine, but I want to object to the language that was used in the second paragraph which says that money can be better spent looking after our own. I just wanted to query that, who is "our own"? (*Applause*) We are trade unionists and we stand in solidarity with working class people all over the world and they are our own. We heard a lot yesterday about divide and rule and that does not just apply to our neighbours down the road, it applies to our neighbours all over the world. There is enough wealth in the world to go around, the political question is just how it is distributed. Thank you. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Holly. Anyone else? Carry on.

SIS. T. CHANA (London) supporting motion 316. She said: Congress, it is women and children in Syria who need our help and our aid. Women and children, in particular, are always the silent victims of any conflict no matter where it is in the world; unreported sexual violence against women and young children. For example, women and young girls are being used as barter for food and to seek safe haven in countries. They do not choose. They do not have a choice. They need our help. Women and children, in particular, will continue to be used in this way in conflicts that continue. Support this motion. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you.

BRO. R. POLE (London) speaking in support of motion 314. He said: Comrades, some years ago in the dark days of the trade union that I work for the union was affiliated to TUFU as well as PSC. Under a new regime, a previous general secretary, a loyal life member of GMB, in a personal capacity went on a sponsored TUFU trip. On his return he immediately sought the disaffiliation of the union from TUFU, which eventually happened. Why, because he recognised what TUFU was, a sham, bogus organisation which acts as a propaganda tool for the Israeli government, a government guilty of ignoring countless United Nations resolutions, guilty of the occupation and settlement on the West Bank, guilty of the annexation of East Jerusalem, guilty of the demolition of Palestinian homes, guilty of illegal settlements, responsible for the apartheid wall, and guilty for the inhuman siege of Gaza. We should have nothing to do with this organisation. Any support given by a union is used as a propaganda tool justifying the above. TUFU's main policies are in direct contradiction of decisions made by you, our Congress. We in London are proud to have our national PSC representative in our region who many will know, and a terrific job he does. However, he cannot respond to the inevitable questions. How can GMB allow this organisation to have stalls at our Congress or have GMB associated with TUFU visits? It makes a mockery of your decisions, Congress. Support 314. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Dick. Can I now call on Margaret Gregg to give the CEC position on motions 314, 317, 319, and Emergency Motion 1, which I have not called yet. Sorry. Come on then, because I want to call Emergency Motion 1. I was getting Margaret down to be prepared.

SIS. A. BURTON-KEEBLE (Yorkshire and North Derbyshire Region): I just want to ask if we could take the vote for motion 319 separate because I want to oppose that one, but not necessarily the others?

THE PRESIDENT: No, I am afraid you need the authority of the region.

SIS. A. BURTON-KEEBLE: Pardon?

THE PRESIDENT: It is the authority of the region, okay, so if they come I can consider it. All right? Sorry about that. Can I have the movers of Emergency Motion 1, Yorkshire to move?

**POTENTIAL NUCLEAR HOLOCAUST IN KOREA
EMERGENCY MOTION 1
EM1. POTENTIAL NUCLEAR HOLOCAUST IN KOREA**

This Congress notes the escalation of tensions on the Korean peninsula, exacerbated by the sabre rattling by both North Korea and the United States. Any new war in Korea will bring death and suffering to millions. Given the trading links between Britain and South Korea, given that more than 1,000 British servicemen gave their lives to bring peace to Korea from 1950-1953, the British Foreign Secretary has been strangely silent on the situation. Congress calls on the government, as a matter of urgency to work with the United Nations to prevent this brinkmanship leading to armed conflict.

PARKGATE BRANCH
Yorkshire & North Derbyshire Region

(Carried)

BRO. I. KEMP (Yorkshire & North Derbyshire): In the agenda it says Emergency Motion 1 but looking at today's news where it seems we could have war today, maybe even war tomorrow, I think it is Desperate Last Ditch Motion 1.

President, Congress, with North Korea and the United States stepping up warfare rhetoric and arms race, edging ever closer to the brink of war, our Government does nothing. Parliament is recalled over the death of one batty old woman yet the sacrifice of over 1,000 British servicemen in the Korean War is forgotten. The threat of massive economic destruction is dismissed. The possibility of the Korean Peninsula being annihilated is ignored. Talk of massive nuclear strikes may be so much hot air for now but it is not going away as witnessed by today's news of massive troop and missile movements on both sides of the 38th parallel. North Korea has a leader trying to make an impression surrounded by generals itching to try their new toys whilst the US is full of wanna-be Presidents and would-be chairs of the Joint Chiefs of Staff all eager to make their mark. All it takes is one itchy trigger finger or the wrong emphasis on the wrong word and we end up with a nuclear holocaust. Nuclear fall-out does not stop at borders and as the incident at Chernobyl proves the world we live in is very small.

My Dad is a Korean War veteran and he has told me a few tales like how he managed to find out that Rotherham had beaten Newcastle in a Cup replay at St. James's Park, and the American K rations he was able to swap, but not about the fighting. I had to find all that out from the history book, which is why, although the name of the regiment has changed, I wear this with pride and honour for my hero, my Dad.

Now along with every Korean War veteran I have met, including a former captain of the British Lions, he is proud of the fact that we were part of the first United Nations force, a genuinely international

force that actually achieved its objectives. The UN succeeded then. Working with it is the only option now. This motion is a call for diplomacy not a backing of one side or the other. Thatcher's apologies, including William Hague, claim she made Britain a force in the world. Well, if our Foreign Secretary really believes this then he should be doing something to prove it. So, to another Rotherham lad I say this, "Eh ga', you were a dipstick when you were helping to deliver your Dad's pop when you were younger, you were a joke as Welsh Secretary, you were a shambles as Tory Party Leader, and instead of, 'William who', be remembered as 'Hague the peacemaker'. Get off your arse, get to the United Nations, and work to solve this crisis." International cooperation, not confrontation, is the only way to prevent the oncoming storm of barbarism. Congress, I move. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Well done, Ian. Secunder?

BRO. M. DOLAN (Yorkshire & North Derbyshire): President, Congress, 60 years ago the Korean War ended with deaths of more than a million. If Gen. MacArthur had had his way and used the atom bomb, the death rate would have been much, much higher. The threat of nuclear weapons being used in Korea has once more re-emerged. Korea has been used and abused by others for centuries. The time has come for a lasting solution that brings peace to the peninsula. Whilst there is distrust and paranoia between the US and North Korea, and between the two Koreas, there are also genuine grievances and rather than threats of destruction, an international mediation and cooperation by United Nations would let the threat be lifted. Rather than using the situation as a justification for replacement for the Trident the British Government should be pushing for a peaceful settlement in the UN. Even a minor incident in the region will have massive repercussions for the world economy with the effect on trade amongst South Korea, India, China, the US, and Europe. Congress, the British Commonwealth Forces Cemetery in Pusan is the final resting place for many of the British serving conscripts, aged 19, 20, 21, who were killed between 1950 and 1953. Don't let the whole of the Korean peninsula become the world's largest international grave yard. Support this motion. Tell the British Government to take the lead and work with the United Nations to stop the threat of a nuclear holocaust. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Martin. Does anyone wish to come in on this debate? No? Okay, can I call Margaret Gregg?

SIS. M. GREGG (CEC, Commercial Services): Thanks, Mary. Can I just also thank you and Malcolm, and those associated, for the Quality Awards and also to the delegates in my region who actually nominated me for it. Thank you.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you.

SIS. GREGG: President, Congress, speaking on behalf of the CEC to motions 314, 317, 319, and Emergency Motion 1. We are asking you to oppose motion 314 and support 317, 319, and Emergency Motion 1, with qualifications.

Motion 314 correctly notes the GMB is affiliated to the Palestinian Solidarity Campaign but not to Trade Union Friends of Israel. As the name suggests, the latter is a supporter of Israel. We are asking you to oppose the motion as it will inhibit GMB members from speaking on platforms and seeing both points of view in the context of a two-state solution of the Israeli/Palestine conflict, which is a retrograde step. I was part of a TU delegate to Israel and we met with both Israeli and Palestinian workers. We also met with the Histadrut of the TUC Israel, and we also met and went into the West Bank to meet with the Palestinian General Federation of Unions, so there is communication between them and it is very dangerous between them. I was there during the war so I know the fear that was within all the groups associated with it. I am also from Northern Ireland, as you might know by my accent, and I know it is not easy but it is essential to maintain dialogue between all sides and it has

been hard for us in the past but the result in the end has been worth it. Most global unions and parties have dual dialogues and GMB would wish to continue to do this.

Motion 317 sets out the difficulties concerning Colombia and gives credit to Justice for Colombia and outlines four specific demands. We already comply with two of them, which are, to support the peace campaign and the wider JFC agenda. We are also compliant with asking branches to affiliate to the organisation. We cannot, however, make the fourth demand which asks for continued opposition to the EU Colombia Free Trade Agreement as it has already been modified by the European Parliament but we can and will monitor its implementation very closely. With that qualification we can support the motion.

Motion 319 calls on GMB to pressure the UK Government to have a rigorous look at how taxpayers' money is spent on foreign aid. To an extent we already do what the motion asks and there is no doubt that public funds have been allocated to some dubious private sector projects masquerading as aid. However, we must be extremely careful what we ask for, not confuse aid with development, and treat each case on its merits. If that qualification is accepted, the motion can be supported.

Finally, Emergency Motion 1 calls for Congress to pressure the Government into working along with the United Nations to avoid conflict in the Korean peninsula. Stability in that region is always fragile due to North Korea's isolation and its perceived vulnerability to historical enemies in Japan and South Korea accentuated by US military activities on its borders. With the new regime installed in Kim Jong Un the potential for renewed escalation of rhetoric and sabre-rattling remains a distinct possibility as the recent test firing of short-range missiles clearly demonstrates. Maintaining peace in the region is in everyone's interest and the CEC supports the general thrust of the motion. The qualification is that we must recognise our ability to influence the current government on foreign policy is severely limited. I am, however, pleased to report that since the motion was tabled there has been a decrease in the level of tension in the region. The Foreign Secretary, William Hague, has also broken the silence speaking in parliament on 23rd April in a statement which addressed the issues described by the motion.

In summary, the CEC is asking you to oppose motion 314, and support motions 317, 319, and Emergency Motion 1 with the qualifications that I have drawn to your attention. Thank you. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you very much, Margaret. Does London Region accept the qualification? Sorry, who moved 317 in London Region? What do you want the right of reply on? No, you did not move it. You can, when I get to it. All right? Does London accept the qualification on 317? (*Agreed*) Yes. Thank you. Does Birmingham accept the qualification on 319? You do? (*Agreed*) Thank you. Does Yorkshire accept the qualification on Emergency Motion 1? (*Agreed*) Thank you. Now would the mover like their right to reply on 314?

SIS. J. HUNT (London Region) exercising her right to reply, said: Congress, I just have to say I am really not convinced by the CEC's explanation that has been given to us and the arguments that have been put about the Trade Union Friends of Israel delegation visits. I think that is exactly what the Palestinian Federation of Trade Unions is saying. It gives the impression to people like the CEC member who went over to visit that everything is sort of normal and things are getting back to some sort of normality, when they are saying, not me, the trade union organisations are saying, "Don't use us in that way to portray it like that." I think that we have an obligation as trade unionists to help free the people of Palestine and it is not just me that is saying that. Desmond Tutu: "I've been very deeply distressed by my visit to the Holy Land; it reminded me so much of what happened to us black people in South Africa." Nelson Mandela: "But we know too well that our freedom is incomplete without the freedom of the Palestinians." Please go against their wishes for once and vote with us. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you. I just want to make it clear that Margaret went with a delegation from the TUC with seven other unions, not just the GMB, in case anybody misunderstood that. Anyway, can I put 314 to the vote? The CEC is asking you to oppose. All those in favour please show? Those against please show? Carried. (*Applause*) Are the rest of you asleep? That is carried.

Now can I put 315, 316, 317, 318, 319, and Emergency Motion 1 to the vote?

POINT OF ORDER

A DELEGATE: I oppose motion 319 so could we have a separate vote?

THE PRESIDENT: No, because you did not move it. I have called the vote. You did not move it. I gave the region the opportunity and they have not requested it. Yorkshire asked me as well and I have reminded the region, Yorkshire, that if the mover and the region had asked me, I would consider it. There has not been the request, and it is their request. Okay? Sorry about that. I repeat, 315, 316, 317, 318, 319, and Emergency Motion 1, please show your hands all those in favour? Anyone against? They are all carried. Thank you very much.

Motion 314 was CARRIED.

Motion 315 was CARRIED.

Motion 316 was CARRIED.

Motion 317 was CARRIED.

Motion 318 was CARRIED.

Motion 319 was CARRIED.

Emergency Motion 1 was CARRIED.

THE PRESIDENT: We now move on to the next business, Emergency Motion 3, SITRAP, Costa Rica, to be moved by Yorkshire and seconded by Yorkshire. There is no CEC speaker.

SITRAP, COSTA RICA EMERGENCY MOTION 3

EMERGENCY MOTION 3

SITRAP, COSTA RICA

Congress condemns the perpetrators of the robbery that took place on May 26th at headquarters of Costa Rican Agricultural union, SITRAP and notes that thieves removed computers and files from the legal and finance offices, suggesting that the break-in was politically motivated.

CONGRESS also notes that GMB has a long standing relationship with SITRA and that previous financial assistance provided by firstly the London region and subsequently the union nationally allowed SITRAP's legal department to bring cases to court that have recently seen two sacked members reinstated and awarded 5 years' back pay, one of whom has since received death threats.

Congress agrees that GMB will contact the Costa Rican authorities to demand that a full investigation is undertaken in connection with the incident. And congress asks GMB regions and branches to react positively to an emergency appeal for funds so that SITRAP can repair damage and replace computer equipment in the sum of 5,000 US dollars thus allowing them to continue representing their members in the courts.

LEEDS WORKS DEPARTMENT
Yorkshire & North Derbyshire

(*Carried*)

BRO. I. KEMP (Yorkshire & North Derbyshire): Ian Kemp, and the region covering God's own counties. That is just the SITRAP appeal, over £50. (*Applause*) President, Congress, on the morning of Monday, May 27th, officials from the Costa Rican Agricultural Union, SITRAP, discovered that their building in Si Keras on the Atlantic Coast had been burgled sometime over the weekend. It soon became apparent that this was no ordinary break-in. Although the thieves took money, a mobile phone, and a digital camera, they had made a beeline for the legal department's office where they removed files, computers, and minute books. To enter the building they had to overcome a perimeter fence, barred windows, and a locked door yet nobody in the adjacent streets had seen or heard anything, including SITRAP's lawyer who lives in a house next door. In fact, SITRAP's lawyer had been enjoying some success recently and he sought to avoid coming to the conclusion that his efforts were a catalyst for this robbery.

Costa Rica's legal system is notoriously slow and unhelpful to working class claimants but SITRAP's most recent success was to have two members reinstated with five years' back pay after they were sacked by a notorious anti-trade union employer in 2008. This spectacular result has ruffled a few feathers and one of the successful claimants has since received a death threat.

The SITRAP building was completed in the early part of the century after London Region members donated funds in memory of a much loved activist Brian Weller who had passed away, and a plaque bearing his name is displayed on the wall of the main hall. From those beginnings a relationship with GMB developed that included several years of financial support which enabled SITRAP to survive in extreme hostile environment and allowed them to develop the legal services that are bearing fruit today. The loss of confidential files and legal documents is worrying but at least they can be replaced without a great deal of expense.

However, the Costa Rican authorities should be made aware that the GMB will stand by SITRAP as it has done in the past and that what happened is completely unacceptable. What will be more difficult is the replacement of IT equipment and repairs to the building that will include measures to make it more secure. SITRAP estimates that the total cost will be about US\$5,000. For us that is a relatively small amount of money but for them it is a substantial sum to raise. The least we can do is to help SITRAP with the money and I urge branches and regions to respond favourably when an urgent action appeal is circulated in the near future.

On a more personal note, over the years I have heard from trade unionists from across Latin America, from Chile, during the Pinochet years, from El Salvador, from Colombia, and from SITRAP itself, and I have always been struck by their humility and dignity in the face of oppression. If David Cameron thinks he can intimidate me and make me want to stop being a trade union activist by taxing my honoraria, he has another think coming. He can take 20% of it in tax but, Congress, I am pledging here and now to give the other 80% to SITRAP. Congress, SITRAP operate in conditions that we can only dream about in our worst nightmares. Let's not let them down in their hour of need. Congress, I move. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you. Seconder? Formally? Thank you.

Emergency Motion 3 was formally seconded.

THE PRESIDENT: Anyone wish to come in? No? Okay, can I put Emergency Motion 3 to the vote? All those in favour please show? Anyone against? That is carried.

Emergency Motion 3 was CARRIED.

THE PRESIDENT: I now move to Employment Policy: Rights at Work, composite 6, moved by Northern, seconded by Midland, motion 126, Living Wage within the Security Industry, London to move, and motion 127, Labour Party, Birmingham Region. Can I have the movers and seconders, please?

**EMPLOYMENT POLICY: RIGHTS AT WORK
IMPLEMENTING THE LIVING WAGE
COMPOSITE 6**

C6. Covering Motions:

- 123. LIVING WAGE (*Northern Region*)
- 125. LIVING WAGE (*Midland & East Coast Region*)

IMPLEMENTING THE LIVING WAGE

This Congress calls for the Minimum Wage to be increased to a Living Wage on 1 October 2013, for Companies to stop ripping off the taxpayer by earning profit in the UK, but placing the proceeds offshore to avoid tax, and for the taxpayer to pick up the low wage bill through tax credits.

Congress believes that profits placed offshore should be used to pay a Living Wage and for the costs to the State as a result to be minimised.

Congress believes there is no evidence to suggest a Living Wage would increase unemployment and calls for the Living Wage to be implemented UK wide in 2013.

This Congress asks the CEC to instigate a policy of implementing "The Living Wage" where we are party to agreements with employers both for directly-employed staff and those of external contractors employed on their sites and calls on the Labour Party to back this policy.

(Carried)

BRO. D. RIDDLE (Northern): Congress, the campaign to deliver a living wage in workplaces for our members is not only gathering pace but all the evidence is that it has the support from the UK working population. It is a scandal that people have learned few lessons from Thatcher scrapping the Wages Council in the 1980s, a measure responsible for ensuring a generation of workers were put into poverty pay. We all know that low wages, as low as 50p an hour, were topped up by the state by the way of Family Credits. When Labour came into power in 1997 we got the minimum wage topped up by tax credits. At the same time, public sector contracts were privatised, and many companies have since developed a way of trading where they get the contracts from the public purse or where they pay their workers the minimum wage. These companies pay virtually no corporation tax because people like Barclays Bank find creative ways to put their profits out of reach of the tax authorities. This is a modern-day scandal and the scandal is that Westminster politicians have sucked up to business and it has become the modern-day unacceptable face of capitalism.

Congress, what should be happening is that companies should be forced through legislation not just to pay the minimum wage but to pay a living wage as per our policy. Companies trying to rip off the taxpayer and evade or avoid tax should be named and shamed, and they should lose their contracts. The living wage would be a great way of reversing a 30-year culture of corporate greed and would reverse the trend started by getting rid of the Wages Council. It is something that at a stroke would push Labour towards government. Congress, it is something that all in Labour's parliamentary party should commit to. I move. *(Applause)*

SIS. L. GUBB (Midland and East Coast): Congress, this motion was submitted before the GMB had had excellent successes within the local authorities of implementing the living wage, in some cases with external contractors also. However, much more needs to be done within the other local authorities and onwards to private companies.

The living wage debate has been round far longer than most people realise. Way back in 1891 Pope Leo issued a papal bill which considered the Catholic Church's first expression of support of the living wage; even then it was recognised that wages should be sufficient to support a family. It is funny that over 120 years later we are still fighting for a living wage. Low and stagnating pay is fast becoming a national crisis. In-work poverty has risen by 20% in the last decade with more than six people living in low income households. One in five in the UK is paid less than the living wage. The Institute for Fiscal Studies has calculated that for every pound spent paying the living wage the Treasury saves 50p through not needing to pay tax credits and benefits. Congress, as one of the six million in a low income household I second composite 6. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Okay, thank you. Motion 126.

LIVING WAGE WITHIN THE SECURITY INDUSTRY MOTION 126

126. LIVING WAGE WITHIN THE SECURITY INDUSTRY

Congress, since the Living wage was introduced in 2005, an estimated 7000 Security Officers within the top four UK Companies in the regulated Security sector have benefited. The Campaign for a living wage higher than the statutory minimum rate has stepped up a gear with leading politicians backing the drive for better pay.

Last year, London Mayor Boris Johnson announced that the Living Wage rate in the Capital is to increase by 25p an hour to £8.55, worth £4.5million a year for lower-paid workers. The rate outside London will also arise by 25p to £7.45, benefiting thousands of workers, and compares with the national minimum wage of £6.19 for adults.

An independent study of the business benefits of implementing a Living Wage policy in London found that more than 80% of employers believe that the Living Wage had enhanced the quality of the work of their staff, while absenteeism had fallen by approximately 25%. Two thirds of employers reported a significant impact on recruitment and retention within their organisation. 70% of employers felt that the Living Wage had increased consumer awareness of their organisation's commitment to be an ethical employer.

Zero hours is a common working practice within the security sector where an employee is asked to be available for work without any guarantees that work is available or where an employee is told that there will be work available on specific day(s).

The GMB London Security Branch calls on GMB to provide a Forum for leading employers to publicly back the Living Wage.

GMB (LONDON) SECURITY BRANCH
London Region

(Carried)

BRO. Z. HUSIN (London): Since the living wage was introduced in 2005, an estimated 7,000 security officers within the top four UK companies in the security sector have benefited. At a cabinet meeting on Tuesday, 19th March 2013, Haringey Council agreed that the security staff on third-party contracts guarding the council buildings would be paid at least £8.55 per hour as a part of a new contract with the firm. The move means Haringey Council continues to lead the way in ensuring that staff are earning a living wage and is one of just a handful of local authorities in the capital to do so. Please support this motion. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, colleague. Secunder?

BRO. T. DUDHAIYA (London Region): Seconding motion 126. First-time delegate, first-time speaker. (*Applause*) In the security industries there are many, many workers and our members are being treated unfairly by so many employers failing to implement the living wage, currently £7.49 outside London and £8.55 in London. Our members also face the problem of zero-hours contracts, a practice common in security industries. The security sector is one of the fastest growing sectors in the economy and we have many members joining every day. Paying the living wage is not only the moral right but it makes good business sense too. The motion calls on our great union GMB to provide a forum for leading employers to publicly back and promote a living wage. Congress, this is not much to ask. Please support motion 126. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Motion 127?

LABOUR PARTY MOTION 127

127. LABOUR PARTY

This Congress agrees that all workers including agency, casual and part-time workers will receive a living wage rate as the very minimum.

The next Labour Government to introduce legislation to cover all industries public and private. No exceptions or opt outs.

B43 BIRMINGHAM CITY GENERAL BRANCH
Birmingham & West Midlands Region

(Carried)

BRO. D. KEMPSON (Birmingham & West Midlands): Congress, the GMB should be applauded for the work on introducing the living wage in many local authorities. Unfortunately, for thousands of members outsourced to contractors or working for agencies, or casual and part-timers, and zero-hour contracts, it will not apply. For example, if you look at school academies, these could be removed from the NJC; if that is the case, the living wage probably will not apply. A further example is Birmingham City Council have built a new library, the largest in Europe, a Labour-controlled authority. They are talking of outsourcing it. No living wage for those workers. We had many members working with contractors under TUPE, nowhere near the living wage.

Congress, some of these contracts have been left for up to 10 years. One highways contract in Birmingham over 20 years with AME, so unless local authorities upgrade contracts, to take this into account, our members may never ever see or will ever look like getting a living wage. We all know budget cuts to existing contracts is happening on a daily basis and some contracts are sold on to other contractors. Members on the same contracts are on different rates of pay. This is due to the TUPE regulations over the years.

Congress, what should we do? One, we should get a Labour government in 2015 with a working majority. That is crucial. Two, we should get employers, public, private, government ministers, and the trade union, and particularly the GMB, and how it can progress on this issue. Three, we have a statutory living wage for all, no updates for 16-21 year olds, no updates for part-time working, no updates for casual and agency workers, no updates for migrant workers, no updates for zero-hour contracts, a statutory living wage for all. I move. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Well done, Dave. Secunder? Can I call Michael Lock?

BRO. G. BOULD (Birmingham & West Midlands): President, Congress, some of us heard on Sunday as part of a fringe event, A Living Wage in Every Council, some of the moral and economic arguments by Labour councils for a living wage through GMB campaigns. We have also heard from Ed Miliband in *The Guardian* of April how firms could get tax relief on training or capital investment or lower business rates in return for paying the living wage. Ideally, companies should be paying this from their profits. We heard this from the General Secretary earlier today. So, this coupled with local council activity are the building blocks, so no exceptions, build for a living wage, no up-counts, build for that positive future today. I second. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Does anyone wish to come in on the debate? No? Okay, I am going to put it to the vote, London, Northern, and Midland, do you accept the qualification? (*Agreed*) Yes. Thank you. Can I now put composite 6, motion 126, and 127, to the vote? All those in favour please show? I know, I know, I have forgotten Michael Lock. Michael, come on. Sorry, I will take that vote again.

BRO. M. LOCK (CEC, Public Services): The CEC is supporting composite 6 with a qualification. Whilst we welcome innovative ways to fund the living wage, as the motion suggests GMB are campaigning for companies and local authorities to commit to and pay a living wage for all staff as most can well afford to do so. It is current GMB policy to call for the national minimum wage to substantially increase to at least £8 so that the minimum wage becomes a living wage and GMB continues to press the Low Pay Commission to recommend this to the Government. The motion rightly states that there is no evidence that living wage would increase unemployment, in fact companies were concerned about the same thing when the national minimum wage was introduced back in 1999 and again when youth rates were introduced, but their fears never came to light.

Congress, composite 6 asks for the minimum wage to rise substantially from 1st October and whilst we support the urgency of this motion, the qualification is on the timing. The Government has already urged the national minimum wage for October 2013 and whilst £6.31 is nowhere near the living wage, we will continue to campaign for a living wage for all and call on the Labour Party to back this policy. Please support composite motion 6 with this qualification. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Michael. Sorry about that. Now does Northern and Midland accept the qualification? Did you say no? (*Agreed*) All in favour please show? All against? That is carried. Thank you. Sorry, about that cock-up, Michael. There we are.

Composite 6 was CARRIED.

Motion 126 was CARRIED.

Motion 127 was CARRIED.

THE PRESIDENT: We now move to number 9, motion 202, The Living Wage, and composite 13, Living Wage, Birmingham to move, London Region to move, Yorkshire Region to second, and then I will be calling Brian Strutton.

INDUSTRIAL AND ECONOMIC POLICY: PUBLIC SERVICES

THE LIVING WAGE

MOTION 202

202. THE LIVING WAGE

This Congress agrees to run a national campaign with regards to the introduction of the Living Wage into the Care Sector, starting with the care providers GMB are currently recognised with. The campaign will include the lobbying of politicians currently in Government and those of the Labour Party.

The standard of care within this sector and for the most vulnerable in our society has been subject to much debate, around how to stamp out abuse and increase standards, a starting point must be to offer a decent rate of

pay that will attract the most skilled careers back into the business and be able to retain the current experienced ones that are struggling to put food on the table being paid minimum wage.

C40 BIRMINGHAM & WEST MIDLANDS CARE BRANCH
Birmingham & West Midlands Region

(Carried)

SIS. V. MURRAY (Birmingham & West Midlands): First-time delegate, first-time speaker. *(Applause)* Congress, bringing the living wage into the care sector is an absolute must. The living wage is calculated according to the basic cost of living in the UK. Paying the living wage is good for business, good for the individual, and good for society. The choice of being a carer for a career was the most natural progression for me after being a carer caring for my mother from a young age. I love my job, I am very passionate about it, and I do not want to do any other job. The satisfaction I get from being able to allow my residents to live in comfort and dignity is far better than any amount of money, which is the way most carers feel but, unfortunately, in reality the minimum wage is not enough to live on; not only that, it does not reflect the job that we do. Legislation means we are spending more and more time on detailed paperwork, demanding a higher level of skills and more and more in-depth training; that is not to mention the physical side, like lifting, feeding toileting, dressing, and administering drugs. We know our residents inside and out better than the nurses that are paid twice our pay. And let's not forget the emotional demands it has when our residents pass away.

All of this, and much more, on minimum wage, how can that be right when there are some supermarkets that pay more for stacking shelves. In our region we have started a process of interviewing carers around the difficulties they face working in care on such low pay. Please indulge me a while so I can give you a flavour.

Amanda Simpson, who works in a care home in Birmingham stated that through the winter she often pulled a double shift; that was because she did not have the money for extra gas so while she was working she was warm, and she was given a hot meal, as she had got used to living on sandwiches.

Karen Holmes, she works in a care home in Sandwell. She stated since her husband was made redundant she had become the main breadwinner. She had to use payday loans to get from one week to the next. She now thinks she may have to sell her house.

Amy White, who works in a care home in Birmingham, she stated that she was a single parent, working about 50 hours a week. She has to do that because she does not want her kids to be bullied at school because she would not be able to afford to clothe or feed them otherwise. The only problem is she has to sacrifice spending time with them because her mother has to spend time with them, looking after them, but she always makes sure they know she does it because she loves them.

Martin Williams, who works in a care home in Dudley, stated that he once had to use a food bank and he felt very ashamed. This made him feel less of a man as when he worked at Rover the pay meant he was never in that position. He loves the work that he does and feels like he is fulfilling his calling but he is having to apply for jobs at the new Sainsbury's as they pay more.

I feel these quotes express the need for Congress to support this motion more than my words could ever say. If we don't fight for these workers, then who will? Eventually, they will be forced to leave the care sector. One day we may be in need of care ourselves, and where will that leave us? Congress, please support his motion to bring about the national campaign in order to bring the living wage into the care sector. Thank you. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Okay, thank you. Seconder? Formally? Thank you.

Motion 202 was formally seconded.

THE PRESIDENT: Right, can we now move on to composite 13, Living Wage?

**LIVING WAGE
COMPOSITE 13**

C13. Covering Motions:

203. LIVING WAGE (*Yorkshire & North Derbyshire Region*)

204. LIVING WAGE (*London Region*)

LIVING WAGE

Whilst we accept that the minimum earning legislation was a massive and important move forward by the Labour Government, it has to a large extent been overtaken by recent wage freezes, massive increase to all basic living cost and the attack on benefits.

This Congress supports the movement towards the introduction of a living wage which has already been adopted in many local authorities by other employers and the principle being accepted by others.

This Congress calls upon GMB to better publicise and celebrate those local authorities who sign up to implement the living wage, but also increase pressure through campaigning to get all local authorities to do it. As a result of which, Congress now agrees we should adopt the living wage as the standard for the future.

(Carried)

BRO. M. WATSON (London): First-time delegate, first-time speaker. *(Applause)* This is not a contentious motion. In the last few days in Congress we have heard a great deal about the minimum wage and, more importantly, about the living wage. It has been brought up in speeches and in motions, and in fringe events. At the first fringe I went to I got a copy of this document here, this is the report to the CEC for April 2013, *The GMB Campaign: A Living Wage in Every Council*. It tells us things like 81 local authorities are already signed up to the living wage. It also says that every single one of the local authorities in Scotland have signed up to the living wage making Scotland a living wage nation. *(Applause)* Everyone agrees, certainly everybody agrees here, that the living wage is the way to go. The question is why.

The minimum wage has been with us for a long time. It was set by the Low Pay Commission. It is not actually a complicated calculation as to the amount of money you actually have to reach; it is actually a level, a floor to which you are not supposed to drop under. It is a basic right. It is your fair pay for your decent day's work, or hours worked. It is not your welfare, it is not charity, but if you are on it you are probably going to be on some form of benefits. The living wage is different. It has been described quite nicely as that which enables those that receive it and those that actually depend on it as well to lead vigorous, full, and human lives. The living wage is a calculation. It is a calculation based on the basics of life that you need to survive fully. It is on your housing, it is on your food, and it is on your clothes.

Now, we have had a London living wage since 2005. Since 2011, we have had a calculation for a living wage for the rest of the country. It is a sort of combination of the minimum income standard mixed with aspects of the London living wage. The difference between the minimum wage and the living wage at the moment per hour is £1.26 so if you are on a 48-hour week and you are moving from minimum to living wage, that is an increase of £60.48 a week, and there are lots of good economic reasons for why people should be on the living wage.

If you give money to the people at the top, a large amount, with the tax breaks that everybody talks about, then it dissipates at the top. If you give it to the people at the bottom who really need it, the

ones who are on the benefits, they spend it locally. It moves in the local economy, it buoys up the local economy so it is a good thing to do. If you make your local councils a living wage, you can let them flex their political muscles so as contracts with companies come up for renewal you can start to send out letters saying, “We have noticed your contract is coming up for renewal, this is what we need, and by the way it will look very favourably if you have the living wage for your employees.” This is the way in which the living wages starts to spread outwards.

This is a composite motion. It calls upon Congress to agree to adopt the living wage as a standard for the future, it also calls upon them to publicise and celebrate those local authorities who sign up to implement the wage, and to increase pressure through campaigning to get all the local authorities to do so. Congress, I move. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you. Secunder?

BRO. L. MOSBY (Yorkshire & North Derbyshire): President, colleagues, I would ask you for a moment to consider what is meant by the term “living wage”. No doubt everyone in this hall will be aware of the simple term and the campaign that is supported well by the GMB to secure a living wage for every working person in the country. However, I feel that if we were randomly to ask individuals in the street what they thought the living wage should be, the answer may well be surprising. This assumption is based upon my own observations and discussions with colleagues and family and friends.

If, for instance, I ask the man who was earning £60,000 a year, probably Conservative, what he felt the living wage should be, his answer would no doubt be high based directly on what he is currently earning. At the other end of the income scale a worker would no doubt elicit an answer more appropriate to the actual. Our lifestyles are understandably shaped by individual income streams and the term “living wage” will accordingly be viewed different by everyone.

Whilst a living wage is already supported by the GMB, I would ask that even greater effort is asserted on the union to further promote the campaign by all means possible and to support publicising it in every media source available for the local authorities that currently offer the living wage. I second. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you. Anyone wish to come in on the debate? Anyone else?

SIS. M. BARTLETT (London): First-time delegate speaking in support of composite 13. (*Applause*) President, Congress, in February this year my borough, Barking and Dagenham Council, became the first local authority in the United Kingdom to guarantee all its lowest paid employees a minimum wage of £9.03 an hour or £16,425 per year. (*Applause*) Following discussions with the GMB the council’s cabinet agreed that all permanent staff and agency workers would be paid at least £9.03 an hour, which is actually 48p above the London living wage. The increase reflects what local people need to live on as out of the 1,525 staff this policy helped an overwhelming majority lived in our borough.

The decision has impacted on low paid council workers who need it most, like cleaners, catering staff, and teaching assistants, posts that are also mainly filled by women. At a time when the Coalition Government is hitting working people with policies such a bedroom tax, Universal Credit, and changes in the council tax benefit, that average worker across the country is facing the full consequences. The GMB has campaigned tirelessly to ensure that Britain’s lowest paid employees receive help in tough times and our achievement in Barking and Dagenham just goes to show that hard work pays off. The commitment of our lay members and activists, in conjunction with our regional officer, Keith Williams, and local branch secretaries, Brendan Duffield and Penny Robinson, has improved the lives of hundreds of local people.

Congress, through our political and industrial policies we have made the unthinkable a reality and we hope you will take this back to your communities to get the help low paid workers seek to represent. A recent interview with two Barking and Dagenham cleaners revealed how much this means to our members. One said, "It has really helped with the cost of everyday living," and another, "We feel more valued." I myself started my working life through the council's apprenticeship scheme and without it would not have had an opportunity to progress and actually be here at Congress today. My council has committed itself to increasing the average household income across the borough and policy changes like this mean a better life for hundreds of workers and their families.

If this policy was implemented in local councils across the country, it would benefit around 280,000 people but how can we make this possible? It was shared services between the top management that generated the £314,000 needed to fund the policy, and £57,000 of that came in from a single job share. As you can see, minimal top end cuts benefited over 1,500 people. There is an old saying, "Nothing succeeds like success." Well, this is a huge success for us and I hope it will go a long way in raising the GMB's profile.

Congress, I will leave you with a final comment from our cleaners at Barking and Dagenham, "We would like to thank the council and our union, GMB, for what they have done for us. On behalf of all the cleaners, thank you, we are very happy." (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Well done. Anyone else? Brian?

BRO. B. STRUTTON (National Secretary): Speaking on behalf of the CEC in response to motion 202. He said: Motion 202 calls for a living wage campaign focusing on the care sector. The CEC is supporting this motion with a qualification which I will briefly explain. Be in no doubt that the CEC wholeheartedly supports the call for a living wage as the minimum standard in the care sector, of course we do, but much of social care is provided through private sector suppliers and paid for by the public sector. Therefore, the goal we seek of a living wage standard throughout the care sector will not be achievable without a concurrent campaign for proper funding. Please, therefore, support motion 202 with the qualification that we need to campaign on both fronts, wages and funding, to have a realistic prospect of success in this most deserving of causes. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank very much, Brian. Does Birmingham Region accept the qualification? (*Agreed*) Thank you. Can I now put 202 and composite 13 to the vote? All those in favour please show? Anyone against? That is carried.

Motion 202 was CARRIED.

Composite 13 was CARRIED.

THE PRESIDENT: Well, Congress, the end of the day's business. Thank you for being so patient. We have had a long intensive day. Have a great evening.

Sorry, before you go, yes, sorry, colleagues, you have all received *these* on your table this morning, okay? There is incorrect information in there, in error, so will you please dump 'em? (*Laughter*) They will be reprinted and sent out to you. Thank you.

Conference adjourned.